

# “Exploring partnership models: cross-phase options”

Experience of the Three Rivers Learning Trust

Schools North East

23 May 2016



## Multi Academy Trust since Dec 2011

Three schools comprise the Learning Trust:

- Chantry Middle School
- Newminster Middle School
- King Edward VI High School
- 2500 students
- 140 teachers
- 102 associate staff
- One Board of 14 Directors
- 3 Rivers - Coquet, Wansbeck & Font – define the greater catchment area of the Trust



## Evolution, not revolution

- 2004 High / Middle School application to DfES to be a Federation Pathfinder. Partnership working well together
- Nov 2004 **PLF** published: Federation plans on hold. Conflict?
- KEVI governors commit to permanent appointments at Middle Schools
- 2007 High / Middle Partnership Project (Student Voice) reporting to a “joint” governor committee. Building trust and relationships
- Sept 2009 - Hard Federation: 3 schools: 1 governing body of 23
- Dec 2011 – MAT formed: single Board of Directors



## Rationale: Educational

To serve our community to provide a coherent school improvement so that –

- Every student has the best chance of maximising their talents and opportunities
- Expertise is shared within the Learning Trust, via the Teaching School, so that every school is deemed at least good and aspires to be outstanding
- Strategic approach to admissions, transition and progression from 9 to 19
- There is curriculum coordination and coherence from age 9 to 19
- Greater community communication, engagement and involvement
- Local aspiration from families for their children to be educated at 3RLT schools
- To provide cross phase system leadership through the extension of the Teaching School



## Rationale: Staffing

- Learning Trust is an organisation which attracts, retains and develops high quality staff across all areas, providing greater career opportunities
- Teachers and teaching leaders are able to focus on the delivery of excellent teaching and outstanding student outcomes
- Develop expert teams across the Trust to support specific areas such as SEND, through Teaching Assistant teams, health and well-being teams
- Expanded opportunity provide the most efficient deployment of staff resources; e.g. develop teams of expert staff who will support any issues of teacher supply across the schools of the Trust
- Career and leadership development opportunities and effective recognition and communication of best practice and research
- Expectation and entitlement of continuous professional development and high quality training



## Rationale: Governance and Leadership

- Continue to develop the highest professional standards to drive aspirational and inspirational performance of both governance and leadership
- Governance has a deep knowledge of each school to enable effective and robust challenge, support and continuous improvement
- Leadership at all levels drive continuous school improvement and the development of staff
- Enable business, political, charity and Higher Education links provide “real world” experiences that deliver a “whole education”
- Governance opportunities are sought after by the high quality applicants from the education, business, political and charity worlds



## Rationale: Resources

- Sufficient, suitable and sustainable high quality buildings and facilities to accommodate the growing Morpeth school population
- Sustainable, financial security to enable effective, long term planning for outstanding staffing and resources
- Enable a strategic approach to population growth, the location of schools, the organisation of learning and to improve the overall quality of facilities
- Ability to respond to consultations relating to issues which impact upon education, such as planning developments and highways
- MAT status has supported capital investment of approximately £5m across the three schools since 2011



## Towards Strategic Collaboration

- One governing body: from 53 to 24 to 14 governors – impact on decision making across the Trust
- Business Director – Trust Business Teams in Finance; Facilities; Data; Catering; Administration
- School Improvement - Deputy Head seconded to Middle Schools; shared languages; creative arts and technology teachers
- Learning Trust Leadership Team
- Collaboration: from Student Voice activities to -
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum & assessment
- Performance and Appraisal processes; Quality Assurance
- Research and Development teams





## Key Factors in the change process

- Circumstances: local solutions – opportunity
- Schools as equal partners
- Drive of (a group) governors
- Relationships of Senior Leaders
- Importance of the consultation process (2009 & esp. 2011)
- Communication
- Building business capacity
- Trust: of staff and parents in particular



## Key features to support the Trust

**Effective links** with the world beyond the Trust to bring information and ideas in; and to make appropriate reports out

A **strong board** which gives strategic leadership and sets out its terms of reference and those of its committees in a Scheme of Delegation

A clear process of **Audit and risk management** which identifies and analyses risks, and takes steps to address them

Efficient **management systems** designed to support the organisation and running of the Trust, the Board and its committees

A range of effective methods for **monitoring** the standards achieved by the schools and for monitoring our financial procedures

A robust and rigorous **School of Concern policy** to take decisive and effective action to address under performance



## Do it again?

- . Independence - yes without doubt or hesitation
- . Income - probably not, although shared services/efficiencies
- . School improvement and CPD – yes, closer support, challenge and understanding across the schools
- . Staffing – yes, capacity for high level appointments
- . Freedoms - yes but not really the curriculum
- . Quality control – absolutely, but with accountability
- . Process & resource efficiencies – absolutely
- . Capital - unexpected benefit, absolutely



## What next?

- Interest from partnership schools
- Growth of Morpeth admissions
- Develop a strategic approach to education with our community
- Teaching School Status
- 3RLT - 5 years MAT experience
- 3RLT - strong commercial partners
- EFA capital funding formula
- Strong HE links
- Desire to review / improve structures and admissions
- National agenda - every school an academy and the loss of local support services

