

## Frequently Asked Questions – Cooperative Status

### **How will the Trust be monitored and regulated?**

The performance of the Trust will be monitored by the Governing Body which remains responsible for the performance of the school. The performance will also be monitored by the LA and Ofsted. Accountability is embedded in the LA, Companies House and the Charities Commission. The LA has other powers of intervention if problems arise.

### **How would conflicts of interest be managed?**

There are a number of safeguards to prevent and address problems in the Trust's management and conduct. Trusts will be charitable companies. As charities, Trusts are not allowed to make a profit and the Charity Commission has a range of statutory powers.

Most issues will be best resolved within the Trust or by the schools and Trust and so we expect this power to be used only in extreme situations.

The Charities Commission also recommends that trusts have a policy on how they will deal with any conflicts of interest which arise as a result of the work which the trust undertakes. It recommends that trustees establish a register of interests. In recording all their other interests openly, any actual or potential conflicts of interest can be identified more easily. The register of interests should be regularly updated.

### **How is the trust administration to be paid for and managed?**

It is envisaged that only a small amount of administration will be needed to run the trust eg trust register updating, agendas sent out, minute taking etc. There are various options to pay for such support in existing trusts eg a small levy per school based on pupil numbers; re-allocation of some cluster funding monies to the trust or specific charity fundraising.

### **How does a cooperative trust model work?**

A unique feature of Co-operative Trusts is that they have a Forum with elected members from stakeholder groups, including parents, staff, learners and community organisations. This Forum holds the Trust to account, helps shape its policies and also elects some trustees – but always a minority. Members must buy in – they do not become members automatically. The intention is to give the Trust roots, turning the school from 'the' to 'our.'

### **Is this just another layer of bureaucracy?**

The model is also international, with strong link to global cooperative schools, as well as its strong network of Business and Enterprise Schools in this country which can readily demonstrate clear improvements in attainment and school culture as a result of the ethos engendered. The Co-operative would also become an institutional partner, via one of its local /regional businesses, so it is much more than another layer of bureaucracy.