

**Doddiscombsleigh Primary School
and the United Schools Learning Partnership**

**STATUTORY DETERMINATION REPORT
to
The Governors of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School
For the FGB meeting on Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 6.30pm**

Overview

This document summarises the feedback from the statutory representations period conducted by the Governing Board of Doddiscombsleigh in relation to the proposed change of category of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School to foundation status and acquiring a charitable trust known as United Schools' Learning Partnership. The consultation was supported by Julie Stuchbery-Ullah from the Co-operative College who has produced this report and, in writing it, has sought to ensure that it conforms fully with the following regulations and accompanying statutory guidance.

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 18 to 24.)
- The 'SOPAM' Regulations 2013; i.e. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013); ('The Regulations') and
- 'School Organisation: Maintained Schools – Guidance for proposers and decision-makers' and Annexes B and C

The Regulations specify how proposals are to be published (para 5 of Schedule 1) but they do not otherwise prescribe if any consultation should be carried out. The SOPAM regulations need to be followed and the statutory guidance need to be considered when making changes and these are covered in the executive summary below and in more detail in Appendix A.

Executive Summary

The Governing Board of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School is the decision maker for these proposals. All the representations that had been received at the time of writing, i.e. after the four week statutory representations period (formal consultation) had finished at noon on Friday 22 June 2018, are included here. They include three questionnaire forms and three written comments.

It now falls to the Governing Board to make a decision about whether or not to implement the proposals. The statutory guidance defines the criteria to be considered by the decision maker and these are summarised in the documents as follows:

The requirements of the Trust statutory guidance are:

- a) that the proposal meets the legal requirements of the Regulations;

- b) that the Governing Board has considered the impact of the proposal on:
- i) educational standards and the diversity of provision;
 - ii) demand;
 - iii) school size;
 - iv) proposed admission arrangements (including post-16);
 - v) the National Curriculum;
 - vi) equal opportunities issues;
 - vii) community cohesion;
 - viii) travel and accessibility; and
 - ix) capital.

Each of these points is addressed below.

a) That the proposal meets legal requirements

The proposal was published on the schools' websites, in the local newspaper and at the entrance of the school in accordance with the 2013 Regulations.

Representations were accepted for a period of more than four weeks between 8 May 2018 and 22 June 2018. (The statutory period started on 18 May 2018). See appendices B and C for more details.

The Trust itself meets legal requirements and is established and registered with exclusively charitable objectives. The structure of the Trust meets the requirements of proposed members and trustees and none of the current or proposed trustees are disqualified persons and processes are in place to ensure that this remains the case in the future.

b) That the Governing Board considers the impact of the proposal on:

i) educational standards and the diversity of provision

The rationale for the change to foundation status of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School, and the acquiring of a Trust, is that it will allow Doddiscombsleigh to work closely with a group of like-minded schools to improve opportunities and standards for the children. As a small school, working in partnership will help support the governors' aim of securing sustainable school improvement and widen the opportunities that they can provide for the children. This will occur in an environment of increasing financial restrictions that are being placed on schools. Forming a Trust between all the schools will allow for greater co-operation, sharing of expertise and resources, continued cross-school improvement work and will allow other schools, who are willing to uphold the co-operative principles, to join. The current Management Partnership with United Schools Federation will remain in place.

The vision is to use the strength of the Trust to build on, and strengthen, what the current informal partnership working has already achieved. To create a learning community which seeks further to improve teaching and learning, to raise enjoyment, achievement and

aspirations for all and to ensure children and their families are supported. The values of the Trust are underpinned by the principles of equality, inclusion and commitment to support the well-being of every child and their family in the schools. A variety of school structures have been considered, including academies, but governors feel that this model best meets their context, needs and values.

Creating a shared Trust will help to clarify vision and aims, continue to raise expectations and standards across the schools, and make existing collaboration and associated school improvement strategies more sustainable. Governors believe that to meet the needs of their communities they need to work together as a community. They know that more can be achieved by working together than by working alone. A shared Trust would help to make that belief a reality.

The key aims for the Trust are to:

- Further improve outcomes for all our learners in all our schools with a strengthened focus on school-to-school self-improvement;
- Support each school to become - and then remain - 'Outstanding';
- Strengthen our ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively to enable our schools to grow, develop and improve together;
- Formalise and further develop arrangements already in place for joint working;
- Develop further the skills and expertise of staff across the schools;
- Further share resources and skills across the schools;
- Further increase levels of aspiration across our school communities thereby impacting positively upon standards.

By becoming part of a co-operative school trust, Doddiscombsleigh Primary School will become part of the global co-operative family. Doddiscombsleigh Primary School will become members of the Schools Co-operative Society (SCS), the national network of co-operative trusts.

There are a range of curriculum materials available to the schools and the membership element of the Trust will encourage participation and promote the ethos and culture of each school and the United Schools' Learning Partnership to address national and local agendas through local, national and international engagement with the co-operative movement. The Local Authority will continue to challenge and support the school and take an active part in helping the school and the Trust address national agendas.

ii) **demand**

Should this proposal go ahead, it is possible that opportunities for pupils and staff will be enhanced, thus encouraging local parents to select the school in future.

iii) **school size**

See above comment

iv) proposed admission arrangements;

Doddiscombsleigh Primary School will work in collaboration with the local authority in ensuring strict adherence to the Schools' Admission Code whilst reserving the legal right to review admission arrangements if deemed appropriate. The primary school will continue to have a fair admissions policy and will not introduce selection by ability. The Doddiscombsleigh governing board will continue to work with the Admissions team at Devon County Council, as it does now, regarding the PAN for the primary school. The LA continues to have the responsibility to ensure there are school places for children.

v) the National Curriculum;

Like all maintained schools, Doddiscombsleigh Primary School will teach the National Curriculum and be inspected by Ofsted. Through working in partnership with other schools, the school expects to enhance their curriculum and offer further enrichment activities collectively for children.

vi) equal opportunities issues;

The schools' legal obligation will continue to be met.

vii) community cohesion;

The Trust partners are committed to improving community cohesion and ensuring there is cultural respect and tolerance between different groups of people living together. The Trust will strategically develop opportunities for all children to succeed to the highest levels by removing barriers to access and participation in learning and by engaging with other partners, parents and wider communities both nationally and globally

viii) travel and accessibility; and

There are unlikely to be significant changes regarding travel and accessibility as we shall continue to find solutions to enable children to participate in some activities in other locations, as we do now.

ix) capital.

Trust schools are funded on the same basis as other maintained schools, according to the local authority's funding formula. They are allocated their own capital money on the same basis as other schools.

If Doddiscombsleigh Primary School become part of the Trust, their land and buildings will transfer to the United Schools' Learning Partnership. The assets are held on trust for the duration of its relationship with the schools. The Trust does not have to pay for the land and assets. A Trust has the legal title to the land but holds it 'on trust' for the purpose and benefit of the schools.

The responsibility of the Trust to hold the land for the benefit of the school are set out in its Articles of Association. The actions of the Trust will be determined by these and by the requirements of company and charity law. Beyond checking that the school is adequately insured and maintaining them, the Trust does not have responsibility for the upkeep of the

land or the buildings on it or for contracts for goods or services which the governing board enters into.

Trust school governing boards, Doddiscombsleigh in this case, have day-to-day control over the school premises in the same way that all maintained school governing boards do. Local authorities are responsible for maintaining school buildings, although this is usually delegated to governing boards. Governing boards are able to manage their buildings and services themselves, or to enter into agreements with their local authorities or with commercial organisations for the facilities managements of their premises, if they wish.

Other issues

The nature of a co-operative trust is such that it strengthens and supports the school/s within it via the membership model and the partners who will contribute towards the future development. There is support available to the Trust to develop the membership and stakeholder model and this engagement with parents, pupils, staff and the local community will further support the Trust and the schools and is seen as a strength of the co-operative school trust model.

Recommended Action

It can be seen from the above that the necessary statutory considerations have been well met; and as the Proposals have not been referred to the Schools Adjudicator, the Governing Board of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School is the decision maker for these proposals.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

- a) that the Governing Board of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School approves the Proposals as set out with the proposed Implementation Date of 1 September 2018. The Governing Board should also authorise the associated changes to its Instrument of Government as set out in Appendix E.
- b) that the Governing Board delegates any other urgent matters pertinent to the enactment of these proposals to the Chair of Governors of Doddiscombsleigh, in consultation with the Clerk to the Governing Board.

Trust

Characteristics of the Trust it is proposed to acquire:

- a. The Trust is not seeking to acquire or alter the religious character of the school.
- b. The Trust is already registered with Companies House as a company limited by guarantee.
- c. The objectives of the Trust are wholly charitable with the objective to promote the advancement of education of the learners of the school/s for which the Trusts acts as the legal foundation.
- d. The Proposals clearly set out the mechanisms by which the Trust will promote community cohesion.
- e. Should the Local Authority become Members of the Trust they shall have no greater than 20% of voting rights.
- f. Trustees and Proposed Trustees - at the Implementation Date - are confirmed as not being disqualified from exercising their function either by virtue of:
 - I. Disqualification under company or charity law;
 - II. Disqualification from working with children or young people;
 - III. Not having obtained a criminal records certificate under section 113A of the Police Act 1997;
 - IV. The Schools Organisation (Requirements as to Foundations) (England) Regulations (2007/1287) (as amended) which disqualify certain persons from acting as charity trustees.
- g. The Proposals are for the Trust to appoint a minority of Trust governors to the Governing Board of the school/s for which it will act as the legal foundation.

Consultation and Representations.

A full, open and wide-ranging consultation has taken place on the proposals, with sufficient information and allowance of adequate time for comment. Consultation meetings were held for interested parties including staff, parents/carers, trade union representatives and the public.

A Statutory Notice was published in the Mid Devon Advertiser on Friday 18 May 2018 giving notice of a 4 week statutory representation period running until noon on Friday 22 June 2018. The statutory proposals were also issued on Friday 18 May 2018.

Details of questionnaires and written responses are summarised in Appendices B and C. Copies of these responses are available for governors' perusal at the meeting on 26 June 2018.

APPENDIX B. Representations Received.

A total of 3 response questionnaires were received following over 40 sets of documents being sent to all parents/carers, staff and governors of the school as well as to a significant number of interested parties. These broke down as follows – 3 from parents, none from

staff, 1 from governors and none from 'don't know'. Written comments have been received from the LA and Nigel Williams, Negotiating Secretary, Devon NASUWT. Copies of these are available for governors' perusal.

The number of responses for each question is given below together with the comments received. The background of the respondent, where known, is also given.

The totals may not always tally with one another, as it was possible for respondents to indicate multiple answers to questions and some respondents also left some questions blank.

1. How do you feel about Doddiscombsleigh Primary School changing category and joining a charitable trust, known as United Schools' Learning Partnership?

	Parents/ Carers	Staff	Governors	Other	Don't Know
I support the proposals	3	0	1	0	0
I am not sure and would like more information, particularly on	0	0	0	0	0
I do not think the school should change category and acquire a co-operative Trust because ...	0	0	0	0	0
I support the change of category, but not acquiring a co-operative Trust because ...	0	0	0	0	0

Comments received: None

2. How do you feel about the proposed partners in the Trust?

	Parents/ Carers	Staff	Governors	Other	Don't Know
These are the right partners	2	0	1	0	0
I am concerned about the school working with ... because ...	0	0	0	0	0
I think the school should also think about working with ... because	0	0	0	0	0

Comments received: None

3. How do you feel about this vision?

	Parents/ Carers	Staff	Governors	Other	Don't Know
This is right for the school	3	0	1	0	0
I do not think ... should be a priority in the vision because	0	0	0	0	0

I would like to see ...included in the school's vision.	0	0	0	0	0
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Comments received: None.

4. We propose that the Trust would appoint the legal minimum of 2 governors to DMF's Governing Board.

	Parents/ Carers	Staff	Governors	Other	Don't Know
Yes – this sounds like a good idea	3	0	1	0	0
Yes, but I am concerned about... and I will want more information about this to be sure about the proposals	0	0	0	0	0
No, I would prefer the Trust to appoint more Governors because...	0	0	0	0	0
No, I do not like this proposal because...	0	0	0	0	0

Comments received: None

Q5. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions?

Comments received:

Parent – My biggest concern for school, is that we will continue to be used for training new teachers. Whilst both recent Head Teachers have been brilliant, it has such a huge effect on mine (and others') children to have a high turnover.

Overall. I think this is the best solution for the school in order to borrow resources from other schools. I am still very concerned about the low pupil numbers at the school and feel that the preschool needs to also be brought into the school for the future.

Parent – From the information that I have read and heard at the meeting and in the document provided I support the proposal. Whilst I believe we should continue to be cautious as this is new for the school it appears to be a positive move in an ever-increasingly difficult environment for school funding.

I think we should always maintain an element of autonomy to do what is right for the school and the children in it, whilst at the same time embracing some partnership working where it will benefit the children at all schools involved.

APPENDIX C: Correspondence.

In response to the letter of exploration sent to Dawn Stabb, Head of Education and Learning at DCC on 21 March 2018, a reply was received dated 16 April 2018. The letter included the following paragraphs:

“The vision and values of the Trust you are joining are very clear, and the Trust is well established with a good track record so I would be confident that you will be able to gain much through this proposed change. I am pleased that you continue to remain a maintained school, strengthened by the Trust partnership.”

Dawn also gave details regarding the DfE Guidance 2016 which states that Governing Bodies wishing to discuss a change of category to a foundation school should email the school organisation team. The decision to change from community to foundation is made by the Governing Board.

A copy of the consultation document was sent to Dawn Stabb on 8 May 2018 too.

In response to the letter sent by Simon Gray to Dawn Stabb on 9 May 2018 regarding assurances from the LA regarding pension arrangements, costs of early retirement and redundancies and related matters, a reply was received dated 15 May 2018. Copies will be available at the meeting on 26 June 2018.

An email was received from Nigel Williams, Negotiating Secretary, Devon NASUWT on 6 June 2018:

“I am responding on behalf of NASUWT members in the school community on the proposal for the school to change its status to a foundation school with a Trust known as USLP. The proposals have a number of merits which the NASUWT will be satisfied with. The school remains as a LA school and continues to follow national pay and conditions as well as following Blue and Burgundy Books conditions as well as continuing to support the facilities fund to support trade union recognition and duties. As the Trust that you are proposing is a co-operative trust working within the USLP we believe that the core values that the school will be committed to within the co-operative movement are values that the NASUWT would support. I am aware that there is a TUC National Agreement and Statement of Joint Principles which the unions are committed to and schools within the co-operative movement. On this latter point I am not clear if in our discussions before half term where we stand with this but I would hope this is resolvable”.

APPENDIX E: Summary of Meetings held on Thursday 24 May 2018

Meeting with Trade Union Representatives between 1.30pm and 2.30pm

Present: Nigel Williams (NASUWT), Tim Hodge (National Education Union NUT), Simon Gray (Chair of Governors) and Julie Stuchbery-Ullah (Co-operative College Associate).

Everyone introduced themselves and Julie informed the meeting that she is Chair of Trustees at Kingsteignton School which is a partner school in the United Schools Learning Partnership but that she is working as a Co-operative College Associate today.

Simon gave a summary of the position Doddiscombsleigh is in regarding the current Management Partnership with United Schools Federation (USF), the recent reduction from 3 classes to 2 classes and the issues the size of the school presents to governors. Working alongside the USF has been very beneficial to the school and will continue to be so. Joining the co-operative trust sits comfortably with the values of the school – Doddiscombsleigh has gained a UNICEF award and they have expertise in this area to offer other schools in the Trust. Co-operative values will enhance the curriculum and support the school in

encouraging the school community to look 'outwards' and widen horizons. Working along side another 6 primary schools as well as USF will open up other opportunities for staff and children. Three of the six schools are small schools and have mixed aged classes so staff can work together on planning and developing strategies for this context.

Tim explained that the RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner) is suggesting that all schools should be in formal partnerships, but that there will be a mixed economy of schools. Simon said that this is why we are consulting to join USLP. There is a commitment for all 11 schools to work together focusing on school improvement.

Simon said that the governors have discussed becoming an academy, but that working with like-minded schools is very important and that should other schools in the Trust consider moving into an academy in the future, then Doddiscombsleigh governors would consider a new proposal. Doddiscombsleigh achieved a Good Ofsted judgement last September. Nigel asked where children go for secondary education when they leave Doddiscombsleigh. Simon informed the meeting that this year, two are going to Teign School, one is going to West Exe School, one is going to Torquay Grammar School and one is moving into the private education system in Exeter. Being part of the USLP may give Year 6 children the opportunity to meet other Year 6 children transferring to the same secondary school during the years prior to transfer.

Nigel asked if SEND was a particular funding issue at the moment. Simon replied that it is not at the moment, but the sharing of expertise across a number of schools is very useful.

Tim and Nigel asked how PPA is covered. The HoS and PE coach covers PPA. Teaching Assistants do not cover PPA.

Julie explained to the meeting that Simon had sent the LA assurances letter to the LA on 9 May 2018 and had received a reply from Dawn Stabb dated 15 May 2018. This letter will be made available to staff and governors. Julie showed Nigel and Tim a copy of Dawn's letter. Julie stated that the Doddiscombsleigh governing board needs to continue to seek advice regarding any employment matters. They will continue to use FIPS processes if, and when required. It was noted that support staff who do not want to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) will need to opt out as they will automatically become members of the scheme when the schools become members of USLP.

There will be a TUPE-like process if the governing board decide to proceed on 26 June 2018. This will take place before the end of term.

Julie referred the meeting to the National Agreement and Statement of Joint Principles agreed by all teaching and support staff unions, the Co-operative College and The Schools Co-operative Society. This document will be made available to staff. The NUT and ATL are now known as the National Education Union but are still working in two sections until January 2019.

Julie presented a draft staffing protocol on employees' terms and conditions and union relations for consideration by the governing board. If the FGB decide to proceed at the meeting in June, this document will be adopted at that meeting. Above union name change needs amending on draft protocol.

Tim and Nigel were reassured that the school is continuing with/developing co-operative values and remaining loyal to the LA. Both said that they are supportive of the proposal.

It was confirmed that existing policies would remain in place if the proposal is implemented.

Meeting with Parents/Carers between 2.40pm and 3.30pm

Present: Simon Gray (Chair of Governors), Martin Harding (EHT), Sophie Browse (HoS), Julie Stuchbery-Ullah (Co-operative College Associate) and 3 parents one of whom is also a governor.

Everyone introduced themselves and Julie informed the meeting that she is Chair of Trustees at Kingsteignton School which is a partner school in the United Schools Learning Partnership but that she is working as a Co-operative College Associate today.

Simon explained that Doddiscombsleigh has been in a Management Partnership (MP) with United Schools Federation (USF) for two years. This has been very beneficial to the school but it is considered a temporary arrangement and so joining the co-operative trust would bring us into a more formal partnership. One benefit would be that we would have access to working with a larger number of schools, some of which are similar in size to Doddiscombsleigh. Another is that the MP with USF would continue. Following a meeting of the USLP trustees in February 2018, we were invited to join the Trust to help our school to school improvement work become more sustainable within a formal structure. Julie came to speak with our board of governors about co-operative trusts generally and we decided to go out to consultation so that, if we decide to join, we would be members in September 2018.

We, as governors, have a strong rationale for this proposal and we want to receive comments from the community – we thank you for attending the meeting. The principles and values of the co-operative movement are important to us and we wish to promote, embed and share these in our work with other schools and each other. There are similar small schools within the Trust which are facing particular issues so staff would be able to work together in terms of planning and expertise in these specific circumstances. We want to continue to drive up standards and increase opportunities for children and staff within a group of schools who are like-minded and demonstrate mutual respect.

The governor/parent in attendance told the meeting that he had tried to take a critical stance to the proposal and that through his research he felt that the co-operative principles and values and the vision and aims of USLP fit with the ethos and 'feel' of Doddiscombsleigh. He stressed that as a small school we need to establish links with other schools to develop depth for our children.

Julie explained about the structural changes ie Doddiscombsleigh would continue to have its own governing board that will continue to be accountable for the school as it is now. The Trust is there to support the work of the school, but is not accountable for it. As the school would become a foundation school, the Governing Board would become the employers of the staff and the school will be its own admissions authority. Staff will continue to have the minimum entitlement to the same terms and conditions of employment as staff in any maintained school. The school is not allowed to introduce selection and will continue to work as part of the LA admissions process. As a co-operative, USLP will be developing a membership of children, staff, parents and other community organisations and individuals, but this process has not yet started. The Trust is currently in discussions with Mole Valley Farmers becoming the co-operative partner within USLP.

Q: Why haven't we moved into the federation? Have different models been considered? Are there any risks?

Martin explained that at the moment all schools are in difficult financial situations and so the USF governing board are currently not prepared to extend the federation. They are not prepared, at present to be accountable for Doddiscombsleigh's budget. However, they are

committed to continuing the MP and Sophie will remain in post here in September. The two other schools with 30 pupils within USLP will be useful in working with Doddyscombsleigh with specific issues and at the same time the widening of the pool of expertise and building capacity across 11 schools will be good for all schools within USLP. It is possible that other like-minded schools may join the Trust over time. We are looking at other partners joining USLP too and are talking to Farms for City Children about linking with curriculum and extra-curricular activities across the schools. The government wants to see schools within partnerships and we think this is the best solution for Doddyscombsleigh at this time. The co-operative trust provides a formal structure whilst the MP will remain in place too. Both the MP and USLP main focus is on sustained school improvement. Evaluation Visits and staff working across schools will continue.

Simon reported that the governing board have considered other models. Other federations have been considered and Multi-Academy Trusts have been discussed. The main focus for Doddyscombsleigh is sustainability and raising standards as well as maintaining our own ethos and distinctiveness. Whatever structure is in place, we want to work with like-minded people who wish to see a small village school be sustainable and offer excellent experience to children and staff. We feel that the group of schools within USLP share this vision.

Parents suggested that the governing board could have shared this with parents and given more information about the work of the federation. They would like to know more about what working with the federation means. They are aware of the extra-curricular activities that children do, but don't know about the Evaluation Visits, observations, moderation of work and the HoS working with other experienced staff. Parents do not necessarily have concerns, but want to know if the school has drawn on the right resources. This information might help attract new families and parents would be able to tell other people in the village about how things are developing.

Sophie said she will include relevant information about the points above in newsletters and publicity material. Sophie reported that there has been an increase in the coverage of Doddyscombsleigh in the Mid Devon Advertiser and Simon reported that new flyers and banners are ready to be issued next week.

Q: Can you give examples of other schools that were very small?

Martin explained that Brixton, St Mary's had 30 pupils when USF first worked with the school and there are now 105 pupils on roll. It was a different scenario to Doddyscombsleigh as many families in the village were choosing to send their children to other schools. Once standards started to rise, local parents chose their local school.

Parents reported that there are children in the village going to other schools and that some parents drive through Doddyscombsleigh to go to different schools – we need to attract these parents to look more closely at what we're doing.

Simon reported that the governing board has a Standards Committee which is 'drilling down' into data about individual children and allocating resources in the most effective way within a two-class structure.

Sophie explained that she is leading intervention activities and has been able to tell new parents about the advantages of the two-class structure and her ability to challenge and stretch individual children in specific areas. Her focus has recently been on Year 6 children but there is a programme in place for next half term for other children based on what the data shows for individuals. She reminded parents that they achieved a Good Ofsted judgement in September with a two-class structure.

Parents said that the benefits of a two-class structure need to be included in the newsletter and publicity information.

Q: Are there any financial benefits from joining USLP?

Martin said that the USLP had already negotiated a good deal with the HR provider for the 11 schools and that it is anticipated that this approach will be adopted for other services when appropriate.

Q: What is the difference between a federation and a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

Martin gave a brief overview which included the following:

Federation = one governing body accountable for the schools within the federation, any number of schools can be in a federation (several in Devon have 5 schools), schools are LA maintained schools, an Executive Headteacher is accountable for all schools within the federation, Heads of School are accountable to the EHT for the day-to-day running of each school, governors may choose to have one joint budget and the governing board can de-federate should they wish to.

MAT= One trust board accountable for all schools within the MAT, the government wants MATs to be large (one in South Devon has 4 secondary schools and 8 primary schools), there may be local governing bodies for individual/clusters of schools but they are not ultimately accountable, budget comes from the DfE rather than the LA, from our experience at Kingsteignton School they are expensive to run and bureaucratic, there needs to be a CEO in place and it is a permanent arrangement.

Change will continue to happen – governors may decide to become part of a MAT in the future. We need to see what direction the government takes, but we need to continue to focus on what is best for all our children and staff now and in the immediate future. Focusing on standards and good Ofsted judgements is our core business. Working in partnership supports this as inspections take place regularly across 11 schools and we learn from each inspection about what is expected/has changed.

Julie reported that the Union Representatives that Simon and she met with earlier this afternoon thought that the new Education Secretary, Damian Hinds is supporting a mixed economy of schools rather than insisting that all schools will become academies.

A discussion took place about the importance of the pre-school and the ability to sustain it. This will not become part of the USLP and governors recognise the importance of discussing this and developing an action plan.

Julie asked parents to fill in the questionnaires and return them so that the governors have feedback to consider at their meeting on 26 June 2018. She also asked people to ask those who have not attended to participate by returning completed questionnaires.

Meeting with staff between 4.05pm and 4.50pm

Present: Simon Gray (Chair of Governors), Martin Harding (EHT), Nigel Williams (NASUWT), Julie Stuchbery-Ullah (Co-operative College Associate) and 3 members of staff.

Everyone introduced themselves and Julie informed the meeting that she is Chair of Trustees at Kingsteignton School which is a partner school in the United Schools Learning Partnership but that she is working as a Co-operative College Associate today.

Simon explained that Doddiscombsleigh has been in a Management Partnership (MP) with United Schools Federation (USF) for two years. This has been very beneficial to the school but it is considered a temporary arrangement and so joining the co-operative trust would bring us into a more formal partnership. One benefit would be that we would have access to working with a larger number of schools, some of which are similar in size to Doddiscombsleigh. Another is that the MP with USF would continue. Following a meeting of the USLP trustees in February 2018, we were invited to join the Trust to help our school to school improvement work become more sustainable within a formal structure. Julie came to speak with our board of governors about co-operative trusts generally and we decided to go out to consultation so that, if we decide to join, we would be members in September 2018.

We, as governors, have a strong rationale for this proposal and we want to receive comments from members of staff. The principles and values of the co-operative movement are important to us and we wish to promote, embed and share these in our work with other schools and each other. There are similar small schools within the Trust which are facing particular issues so staff would be able to work together in terms of planning and expertise in these specific circumstances. We want to continue to drive up standards and increase opportunities for children and staff within a group of schools who are like-minded and demonstrate mutual respect.

Julie explained about the structural changes ie Doddiscombsleigh would continue to have its own governing board that will continue to be accountable for the school as it is now. The Trust is there to support the work of the school, but is not accountable for it. As the school would become a foundation school, the Governing Board would become the employers of the staff and the school will be its own admissions authority. Staff will continue to have the minimum entitlement to the same terms and conditions of employment as staff in any maintained school. The school is not allowed to introduce selection and will continue to work as part of the LA admissions process. As a co-operative, USLP will be developing a membership of children, staff, parents and other community organisations and individuals, but this process has not yet started. The Trust is currently in discussions with Mole Valley Farmers becoming the co-operative partner within USLP.

Q: Will there be a change to grading structures? Can pay scales be changed?

A: At the moment there would be no intention to change staffing structures at Doddiscombsleigh. However, should re-structuring need to take place in future, this would be a decision made by Doddiscombsleigh's governing board and not the Trust as the FGB continues to be accountable for the individual school. Should re-structuring take place the appropriate consultations would take place following HR advice. Job evaluation would continue to be used as Doddiscombsleigh would remain a LA maintained school.

Q: If the governors become the employers of staff at Doddiscombsleigh, have they got the HR skills they need?

A: Governors undertake Safer Recruitment training for when they are involved in any recruitment process. The school buys HR advice from a service known as HR1 and would continue to take advice on any HR issues. This is normal practice and sometimes there may be a governor who has experience of HR issues, but an LA maintained school would still be required for follow specialist advice. If the governors decide to progress with this proposal, HR advice will be followed regarding a TUPE-like process in July.

Julie explained that Simon Gray had sent a letter to the LA in May 2018 and had received a reply from Dawn Stabb regarding the fact that existing processes currently in place for maintained schools to do with pensions, costs regarding early retirement, employment matters and redundancies will continue if Doddiscombsleigh becomes a foundation school.

This letter is available for staff to read. She also referred to the National Agreement and Statement of Joint Principles agreed by all teaching and support staff unions, the Co-operative College and The Schools Co-operative Society. A draft staffing protocol on employees' terms and conditions and union relations will be adopted by the governing board on 26 June 2018 if they decide to implement the proposal.

Nigel reported that he, and Tim Hodge (National Education Union) who attend the meeting earlier today, support the proposal being discussed. There has always been a close relationship between the unions and the co-operative movement. They are pleased that the governing board have proposed to remain members of the LA maintained family of schools.

Q: Does the Trust have charitable status?

A: Julie said that USLP is constituted as a charity – any income must be used to support the charitable aims which must focus on education and community cohesion.

Q: Did the governors think about the timings of making changes?

Simon said that although there have been a number of changes in staffing and class structure during 2017/18, the governors are trying to secure the future of the school and felt that a move into a formal structure is necessary.

Simon thanked staff for attending the meeting and asked that they send any comments to the governors using the questionnaires.

Public meeting between 6.30pm and 7.35pm

Present: Simon Gray (Chair of Governors), Martin Harding (EHT), Sophie Browse (HoS) Julie Stuchbery-Ullah (Co-operative College Associate) and 6 parents

Everyone introduced themselves and Julie informed the meeting that she is Chair of Trustees at Kingsteignton School which is a partner school in the United Schools Learning Partnership but that she is working as a Co-operative College Associate today.

Simon explained that Doddiscombsleigh has been in a Management Partnership (MP) with United Schools Federation (USF) for two years. This has been very beneficial to the school but it is considered a temporary arrangement and so joining the co-operative trust would bring us into a more formal partnership. One benefit would be that we would have access to working with a larger number of schools, some of which are similar in size to Doddiscombsleigh. Another is that the MP with USF would continue. Following a meeting of the USLP trustees in February 2018, we were invited to join the Trust to help our school to school improvement work become more sustainable within a formal structure. Julie came to speak with our board of governors about co-operative trusts generally and we decided to go out to consultation so that, if we decide to join, we would be members in September 2018.

We, as governors, have a strong rationale for this proposal and we want to receive comments from the community – we thank you for attending the meeting. The principles and values of the co-operative movement are important to us and we wish to promote, embed and share these in our work with other schools and each other. There are similar small schools within the Trust which are facing particular issues so staff would be able to work together in terms of planning and expertise in these specific circumstances. We want to continue to drive up standards and increase opportunities for children and staff within a group of schools who are like-minded and demonstrate mutual respect.

Martin explained that currently all schools are in difficult financial situations and so the USF governing board are currently not prepared to extend the federation. They are not prepared, at present to be accountable for Doddiscombsleigh's budget. However, they are committed to continuing the MP and Sophie will remain in post here in September. The two other schools with 30 pupils within USLP will be useful in working with Doddiscombsleigh with specific issues and at the same time the widening of the pool of expertise and building capacity across 11 schools will be good for all schools within USLP. There will be a Spending Review next year and so the possibility of joining USF may be re-considered then.

Julie explained about the structural changes ie Doddiscombsleigh would continue to have its own governing board that would continue to be accountable for the school as it is now. The Trust is there to support the work of the school, but is not accountable for it. As the school would become a foundation school, the Governing Board would become the employers of the staff and the school will be its own admissions authority. Staff will continue to have the minimum entitlement to the same terms and conditions of employment as staff in any maintained school. The school is not allowed to introduce selection and will continue to work as part of the LA admissions process. As a co-operative, USLP will be developing a membership of children, staff, parents and other community organisations and individuals, but this process has not yet started. The Trust is currently in discussions with Mole Valley Farmers becoming the co-operative partner within USLP.

Doddiscombsleigh would continue to implement the same policies as it does now and the governing board, not the Trust, would be responsible for this for the individual school. The governing board would continue to purchase services, but they may decide to participate in buying services with the other schools in USLP – this has already taken place for HR services which saved some costs.

Q: What is the difference between an academy and a maintained school in terms of buying services?

Martin explained that the LA have, in the past, been able to buy and provide services for all schools within the LA and now the pool of maintained schools has become smaller. All governing boards already decide where to buy services from. If a school joins a MAT, a percentage of the budget is used to pay for services. The advantage of the 11 USLP schools buying services and licences together is that the cost often depends on the number of pupils involved.

Q: Can the pre-school be involved in the USLP?

A: The Doddiscombsleigh Pre-School is a stand alone pre-school and so is not part of the USLP. Martin reported that some schools with nurseries are considering changing them to pre-schools. Some parents in attendance are responsible for the pre-school and would like the opportunity to see how this provision is organised in other schools within USLP and what options are available. This is an example of how the expertise in different settings might help decision-making at different locations.

A discussion took place regarding the marketing of Doddiscombsleigh and how the USLP might help with this. Sophie outlined what parents had requested at the meeting this afternoon – please see above notes.

Simon explained that the timing of this consultation had been considered by the governing board and that it had been decided that a decision should be made before the end of the year so that things are in place for September. Governors are keen that greater opportunities for staff and children are in place as soon as possible. For example, the possibility of Year 6 children getting to know other Year 6 children throughout the year in

preparation for going to secondary schools could be agreed in planning this term for the next academic year.

Simon reported that the governing board has a Standards Committee which is ‘drilling down’ into data about individual children and allocating resources in the most effective way within a two-class structure. Sophie is leading intervention activities and there is a programme in place for next half term for children (other than Y6) based on what the data shows for individuals.

Q: Will there be more support for children with SEND?

A: The intervention programme will target specific needs for individual children including providing challenge to extend children in areas in which they may be talented. The overall provision for SEND will remain within the Management Partnership with USF. Parents should contact Sophie about concerns regarding specific children.

Q: A parent reported that the Parish Council are wanting to investigate the possibilities of funding improvements to the school land and the use of the playground. There may be possibilities regarding the pre-school too. Would this be of interest to the Trust as the land will be held in trust by USLP?

Julie said that further research would need to be carried out about this, but Doddiscombsleigh’s land will be transferred from the LA to USLP to be used for education purposes. Discussions about what the Parish Council would like to do would need to take place and then the legal situation would need to be clear before decisions were made. The meeting agreed it would be worth investigating.

Simon thanked everyone for attending the meeting and Julie asked people to send in completed questionnaires by noon on 22 June 2018 so that the governors have feedback to consider.

APPENDIX E: Proposed Reconstituted Doddiscombsleigh Governing Board Composition.

Designation	Current	Proposed
Parent	3	3
Staff	1	1
Executive Headteacher	1	1
LA	1	1
Co-opted	3	1
Foundation (USLP)	0	2
Total	9	9

DRAFT INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

**Devon Local Authority
Instrument of Government**

1. The name of the school is Doddiscombsleigh Primary School
2. The school is a Trust school
3. The name of the Governing Board is “The Governing Board of Doddiscombsleigh Primary School”.
4. The governing board shall consist of:
 - a) Three parent governors
 - b) One local authority governor
 - c) One staff governor
 - d) The Executive Headteacher*
 - e) One co-opted governor
 - f) Two foundation governors appointed by United Schools’ Learning Partnership
5. Total number of governors is 9 *except at any time when the Executive Headteacher has given notice that she/he chooses not to be a governor when the total number of governors shall be 8.
6. The name of the board entitled to appoint foundation governors is “United Schools’ Learning Partnership”.
7. This instrument of government comes into effect on 1 September 2018
8. This Instrument was made by order of Devon Local Authority
on [leave blank for LA to insert date].

A copy of the instrument must be supplied to every member of the governing board (and the executive headteacher if not a governor), any trustees and to the appropriate religious body.