

Consultation
information
regarding the
Structure of
Governance
at EHLT



Introduction

Elston Hall Learning Trust is consulting on arrangements for governance at local level. Currently, the Trust operates a governance model which includes a Local Governing Board (LGB) for each of its schools. The proposal aims to re energise local governance with the removal of LGBs and the introduction of School Advisory Groups.

We want to hear your views, and Trustees are opening this consultation to our school communities, staff and parents as well as the Department for Education.

To have your say on these proposals please consider the information within this report and respond to the consultation by completing the below Microsoft Forms quiz.

<https://forms.office.com/e/znrYUZ02Xn>

None response will be taken as being in favour of the suggestions, therefore if you have concerns it is important to provide your feedback.

The consultation period will run from **6 January 2025 to 3 February 2025**.

Local Governors will be given the opportunity to consider and discuss this proposal fully at their Spring meetings and the outcomes of discussions will form part of this consultation. We would however still encourage them to provide feedback via this forms.

Any queries please contact Dawn Cooper, HR & Governance Leader on 01902 558003 or dcooper@ehlt.org.uk

Thank you!

Rationale

Over the last few years there has been a steady decline in the number of Local Governors and attendance levels. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and many of our LGBs are under-represented.

Data to demonstrate this can be found on the following page.

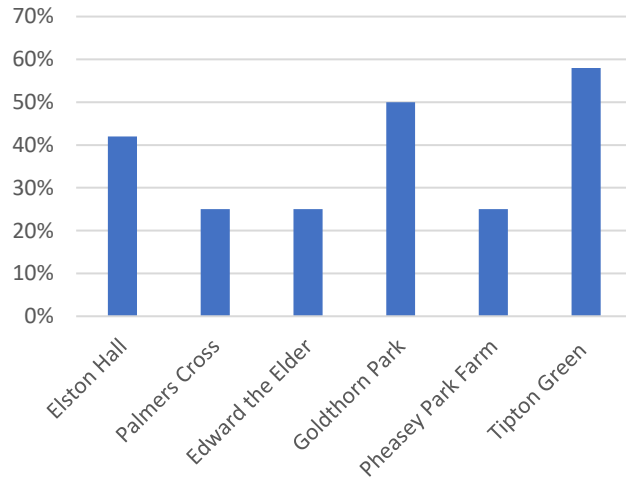
In order to ensure our governance arrangements are as effective as possible, a review of potential different models has been carried out. Trustees have used a range of the Trust's own data, research from Confederation of Schools Trusts and NGA as well as reviewing other Trust's arrangements, to enable informed discussions around the current governance model. It has been considered by Trustees that a change to the existing structure could ensure governance of our schools is sustainable, effective and robust. Informal consultation with Headteachers further demonstrated support of a new model.

Many trusts are moving away from the traditional model of an LGB, opting for forward thinking, and innovative solutions that can ensure the core functions of governance are being effectively carried out, by the right people!

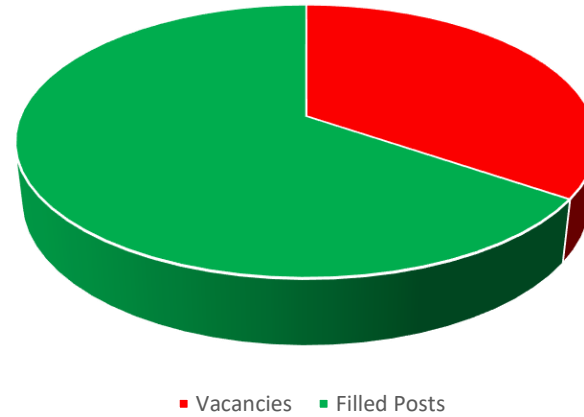
Trustees have carefully reviewed composition of the existing boards and are hopeful that existing Local Governors will want to continue to be involved in a new model.

Membership & Engagement of LGBs

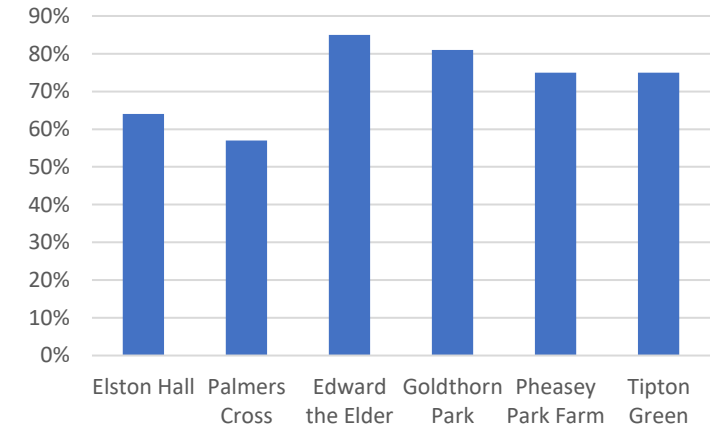
Governor Vacancies as of 11/9/2024



Governor vacancies across the whole Trust



Governors attendance 2023-24



46 Governors have left since September 2021

Overall LGB Attendance figure for 2023-24 - **73%**

Proposed Model – School Advisory Group

The School Advisory Group will be a local committee of the Trust Board and be a full and formal part of the Governance of the Trust.

School Advisory Group Composition:

- The serving Headteacher of the school
- Two parent/community representatives to attend meetings. There could be up to 5 representatives to in order to provide 2 for each meeting.
- A Staff representative
- A Chair, to be appointed by Trustees from the serving parents / community representative

N:B Only two parent/community representatives will be required to be in attendance at each meeting. If there is more than two on the Group, session attendance can be rotated.

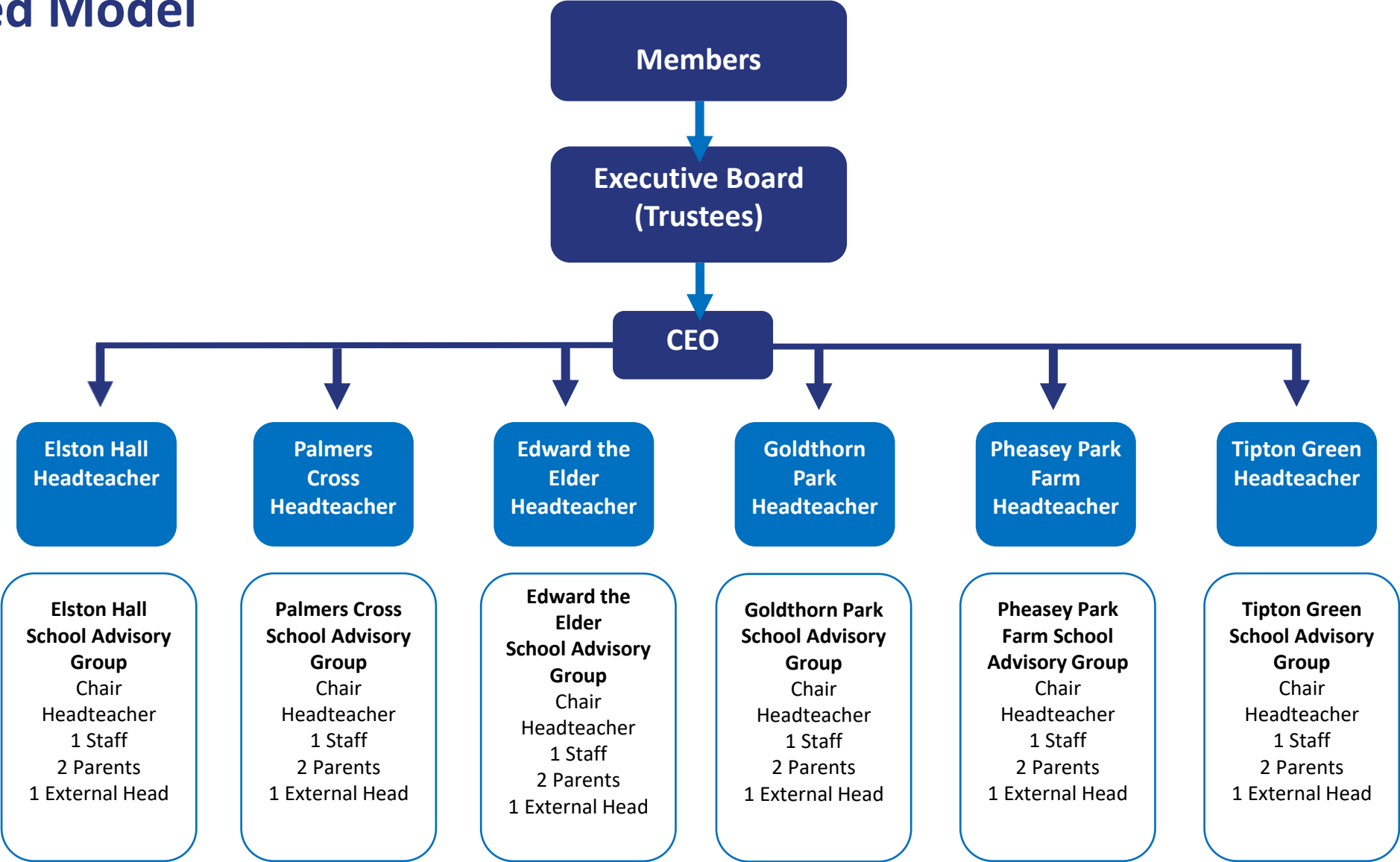
Remit of the School Advisory Group:

The School Advisory Group will meet once a term for a half-day session. An accountability matrix will outline the areas to be covered at each meeting. Themes will be focused on areas the curriculum, teaching and learning or SEND to allow a deep review into that particular area. Each session will also include a monitoring activity around key areas such as safeguarding, health & safety or school management.

Provisions:

- The initial representatives will come from existing Governors who wish to be involved.
- Removal of any existing delegated authority.
- School Advisory Group will produce a concise report for Trustees following each session.
- Link Trustees can attend sessions dependant on focus.
- Trustees will communicate key Trust issues to the School Advisory Groups at each meeting, via the Headteacher.
- External Headteacher for each meeting to be agreed by the Chief Executive. This could be a Trust Headteacher or an external colleague.
- In terms of compliance the members will carry out mandatory training, safeguarding checks, declare their business, personal or financial interests, and be recorded on GIAS.
- Panels (Complaints, Pupil and Staff Discipline) to be the ultimate responsibility of Trustees, though Trustees may appoint a pool of School Advisory Representatives willing to be trained to act on their behalf.

Proposed Model



How we believe this might improve Local Governance

Trustees believe that this new model will bring a fresh approach to the local tier. The following potential advantages in particular should be noted:

- ✓ Opportunity for representatives (parents, staff and community) to have more meaningful involvement and impact on school improvement.
- ✓ Robust monitoring and challenge.
- ✓ Shared learning and collaboration between Headteachers, from attending each other's sessions.
- ✓ Only 2 parents / community members required at each session, attendance challenges may be alleviated.
- ✓ Reduction in the numbers needed for each Advisory Board to operate will alleviate recruitment challenges to an extent.
- ✓ No more inquorate meetings / no hold up of essential business.
- ✓ Greater depth of information from local level will go to Trust Board
- ✓ Workload considerations for Headteachers in the removal of the need for a termly report.
- ✓ Wellbeing of staff Governors / Headteachers removing evening meetings.
- ✓ Strengthen 2-way communication between Trust Board and the local tier.
- ✓ Meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

Role Descriptor for a School Advisory Group Member

Role Purpose

The role of the School Advisory Teams aims to help the Trust Board fulfil its purpose, strengthening governance, by providing robust challenge and scrutiny at school level. School Advisory Teams are tasked to seek assurances for Trustees in the following areas.

Safeguarding

- Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures reflect the safeguarding challenges and context of the school.
- Monitor the implementation of safeguarding policies and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Foster a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all pupils in the school.
- Work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Monitor the school's estate, ensuring that appropriate policies are adopted and followed in order to keep pupils and staff safe.

SEND

- Ensure that the trust policy for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is implemented and adapted to the specific school context where necessary.
- Seek assurance that staff are trained to implement pupil strategies and support plans.
- Ensure pupils with SEND have the resources they need to succeed.
- Work in partnership with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) as well as other stakeholders and the wider MAT community to ensure that pupils with SEND are well-supported and included in all aspects of school life.
- Monitor the overall effectiveness of the school's SEND provision, referring to pupil outcomes and other relevant data.

Role Descriptor for a School Advisory Group Member continued...

Standards

- Ensure that the trust's vision, ethos and strategy is adopted and applied by school leaders.
- Work with senior leaders to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them in line with the trust's strategic objectives.
Monitor school performance and improvement through regular reviews of performance data, including exam results, attendance rates, and pupil progress, to ensure that the school is meeting its targets.
- Ensure that the trust's curriculum is being provided to pupils in an appropriate manner for the school's context.
- Ensure that the required policies and procedures are in place and that the school is operating effectively in line with these policies.
- Establish a strong relationship with the headteacher in order to provide effective support and challenge.

Stakeholder engagement

- Champion consultation with stakeholders such as parents, staff and pupils, and use these insights to provide advice to Trustees.
- Provide the trust board with insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by the school's local community.

Contribution to the School Advisory Group Sessions

School Advisory Group representatives should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution by:

- Attending sessions, reading any school documents which may be shared in advance and actively participating in sessions.
- Establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior leaders and colleagues on the committee.
- Undertaking induction training and engaging in ongoing development.

Timeframes

Consultation Period	6 January 2025 – 21 February 2025
Trustees consider responses and agree the new model including terms of reference, Scheme of Delegation and Articles	10 March 2025
Give LGBs notice and assign any Governors interested to new role	Mid-March
Approval of updated articles (DfE / Members)	March/April
Implement new structure	28 April 2025