

Consultation Document

AspirePlus Educational Trust - consultation on proposed transfer of Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School to Stamford Park Trust.

Proposals

The Trust Board of AspirePlus Educational Trust proposes to transfer Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School (both academies) to Stamford Park Trust and Stamford Park Trust proposes to accept the transfer of the two academies. Following transfer, Stamford Park Trust would comprise Ashton Sixth Form College, Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School.

This consultation document is published by the Trust Boards of both AspirePlus Educational Trust and Stamford Park Trust to seek views on the following:

1. AspirePlus Educational Trust's proposal to transfer Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School and all of its property, rights and liabilities to Stamford Park Trust such that each academy's educational provision will continue under Stamford Park Trust; and
2. Stamford Park Trust's proposal to accept the transfer of Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School (and all other right property, rights and liabilities of AspirePlus Educational Trust) and to enter into academy arrangements with the Secretary of State for Education regarding the funding and operation of Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School as academies of Stamford Park Trust.

Background to the proposals

Stamford Park Trust was set up on the 1st February 2019 as a Multi Academy Trust with Ashton Sixth Form College, a 16-19 Academy, as its sole academy.

AspirePlus Educational Trust was established as a Multi Academy Trust in May 2017. Both Rayner Stephens High School and Longdendale High School became academies in the AspirePlus Educational Trust on the 1st July 2017.

Over the course of the last year, it became apparent that the educational vision for AspirePlus Educational Trust, Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School could not be realised without an increase in the capacity and financial resource. The CEO and AspirePlus Educational Trust board began to look for potential alternatives to enable the strong work of their Trust to continue and accelerate improvements in the schools.

Stamford Park Trust was approached as part of this process of due diligence; over a period of time, it became apparent that Stamford Park Trust would be able to address the concerns of AspirePlus Educational Trust regarding its two academies.

Stamford Park Trust's board assessed the proposal and noted that the transfer of the two academies was in line with the strategic aims and objectives of the Stamford Park Trust and would also be likely to support the educational vision and ethos of the Trust. The Board agreed to further explore supporting the transfer of the two schools into the Stamford Park Trust.

In June 2020, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Headteacher Board agreed to the proposed transfer of both Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School to Stamford Park Trust.

Stamford Park Trust has completed an equality impact analysis on the proposals and concluded that there will be no negative impact on those with protected characteristics should the transfer go ahead.

Consultation on the proposals

Given the significance of the proposals for both Trusts, both Trust Boards wish to seek the opinions of their relevant stakeholders on the proposals including: the staff at Ashton Sixth Form College, Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School; current students and parents in all three academies, local Members of Parliament, local education providers at both pre and post 16, the Local Authority, relevant funding agencies such as the ESFA, our Regional School Commissioner and the Secretary of State for Education.

Any comments or representations made about the proposals will be considered by the Boards of both Stamford Park Trust and AspirePlus Educational Trust before any final resolutions are passed to proceed with the proposals. Details of how to provide comments and representation are set out below.

What are the benefits of the proposals?

The Board of Trustees at both Stamford Park Trust and AspirePlus Educational Trust believe that there are many benefits to be gained from the transfer of both Longdendale and Rayner Stephens High Schools to Stamford Park Trust. The Stamford Park Trust's aim is the provision of outstanding educational support, quality improvement and stronger governance to schools and 16-19 academies with the Tameside area.

The benefits to the academies in both Trusts and to the local area are considered to be as follows:

- Allow for the further development of partnership work across the three educational settings, aimed at raising the level of achievement in all member institutions.
- Secure better value for money through the use of joint procurement allowing more funding to be directed to teaching and learning.
- Provide opportunities for the development of shared back office functions, such as Human Resources, Finance, Payroll, IT and, Health and Safety, further improving value for money and creating greater resource for teaching and learning.
- Create opportunities to improve the recruitment, retention and development of talented staff to ensure that students and pupils are taught by the very best.
- Lead to stronger partnerships and collaboration between the academies for the sharing of expertise in teaching and learning, and student support aimed at improving standards and educational outcomes across the partnership.
- Strengthen transition arrangements between the schools and the college between educational phases
- Support better quality information, advice and guidance for all students to ensure the right educational pathway for all students
- Ensures that a Tameside solution for these Tameside academies and students is achievable.

The proposals would not preclude other schools in the local area joining Stamford Park Trust in the future to create a supportive partnership of local education providers.

Are there any disadvantages to the proposals?

Neither Trust board considers there to be any perceived disadvantages to the proposals at this stage.

Would the admission policies change?

There would be no change to admissions policies of Longdendale High School or Rayner Stephens High School as a result of these proposals.

How would the proposals affect staff working at the college and the schools?

If the proposals are accepted and the transfer takes place, all staff currently employed by AspirePlus Educational Trust would automatically transfer to Stamford Park Trust through a TUPE arrangement. All current terms and conditions would remain the same. Any future changes would be subject to consultation with all staff and their professional bodies and associations.

A separate non-statutory consultation will be undertaken with staff and the employees of both Longdendale High School and Rayner Stephens High School and any employees of AspirePlus Educational Trust.

How can you express your views?

We welcome your views and feedback about our proposals. As part of this consultation process, we are particularly keen to hear from interested parties on the following:

1. Do you support the one or both of the proposals?
2. Do you have any additional comments, questions or suggestions for our consideration?

You can find further information on the school website detailed below. You can also respond to the consultation using the following:

- Via the Trust online consultation pages, initially accessed at <https://www.raynerstephens.org.uk>
- By emailing your comments to consultation@rshs.aspireplus.org.uk
- Or by writing to:

Consultation – FAO Thirza Partovnia
Rayner Stephens High School
Yew Tree Lane
Dukinfield

The consultation period begins on 9th July 2020. The closing date will be 18th September 2020.

More information about the academies programme can be found at www.education.gov.uk/academies.

- Both Stamford Park Trust and AspirePlus Educational Trust will prepare a written response at the end of the consultation period which will be available at <https://www.raynerstephens.org.uk>

Thank you, in advance, for your contributions to our consultation.