

Consortium Trust

Our commitment to our Communities

Consortium's fundamental aim is to maintain and enhance the position of schools at the heart of our communities across East Anglia.

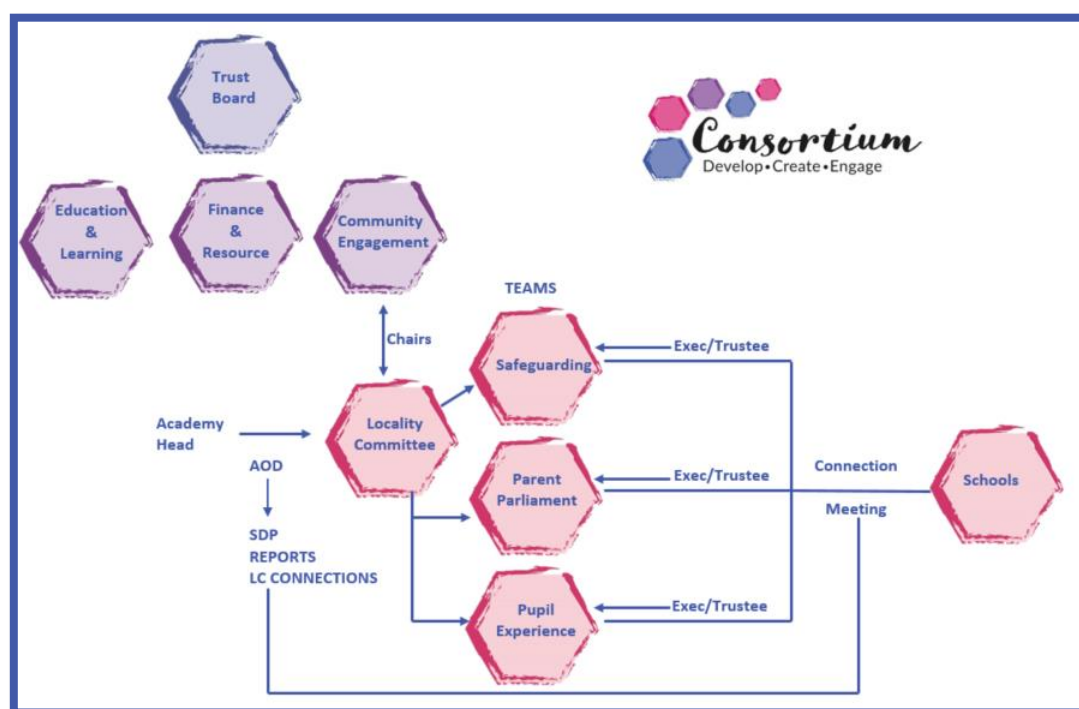
We have a passion for, and recognise that, for our smaller schools and settings to remain vibrant and viable, closer integration and collaborative working is necessary to ensure that our curriculum is exciting, provision is full and the outcomes for pupils are exceptional.

Whatever the size, schools in rural locations face particular challenges, however, it is our belief and experience; that such schools can provide an excellent standard of education and that the key to achieving this is collaborative working, school-to-school support and delegated decision-making, creating an environment that enables exceptional education and opportunities to be offered.

Consortium is conscious that to achieve this, our communities, our staff and our pupils all need to have a voice in our Trust governance structure and development strategies. This is achieved through developing and maintaining long-lasting relationships where we facilitate communication, we listen and we respond.

Our Locality Committees are just one aspect of our commitment to our Communities and they are vitally important in linking our Trust Board, our Executive Team members, our Schools and our Communities.

The following diagram illustrates how our Locality Committees fit into our overall governance structure.





There is acknowledgement that the governance accountability sits with the Trust Board, but in order for strong, evidence based decisions to be made; the views of communities must be considered, and this is the fundamental role of our Locality Committees – being the eyes, ears and voice of our Communities. To strengthen this position as ‘sub committees’ of the Trust Board, the Trust Board have established a Community Engagement Committee chaired by the Chair of Trustees. This new Committee will meet termly and form a clear two way communication link between the Locality Committees and the Trustees. Where specific themes are to be discussed, the Executive and Trustee links may be invited to contribute.

Each year, in the summer term, we ask our Locality Committees to carry out a Community Audit that appraises the school leadership and the Trust Board of any changes in the school vicinity.

In the autumn term, we ask our Locality Committees to join us in a Governance strategic session that allows the Trust Board and Executive to share the Trust priorities for the forthcoming year, and for the Locality Committee members to meet with their Academy Head and learn about the priorities for their school(s).

In the spring term, Locality Committees meet to share their learning from Connection meetings and see how schools are progressing to meet their priorities.

Each Locality Committee will need to identify representatives to join our cross Trust Teams – Safeguarding, Pupil Experience, and Parent Parliament; they will also need to identify a Chair for their meetings.

The cross Trust team meets in the second half of each term and involves the nominated Trustee and Executive member. Each Team meeting has a focus that will drive forward a discussion, training for the LC representative, and a theme for a school connection meeting.

A Connection meeting is not formal monitoring, but it is an opportunity for the LC member to connect with the school, meet with staff, discuss the theme and any issues, concerns or resources that are needed to ensure that we are providing the best possible opportunities for our young people. It is an expectation that the Locality Committee member will talk to children and get their opinions and thoughts on a topic as well as reflect on the school environment. It is expected that each Connection meeting will generate a report that will be reviewed and considered by the Locality Committee at their termly meeting.

After each termly Locality Committee meeting, there will be a meeting of the Community Engagement Committee where a representative of each Locality Committee will bring a summary of those Connection meetings.

Through this, the voice of the school communities has a direct line of communication into the Trust Board and Executive; and the Trust Board has the opportunity to share their development work and progress with the Locality Committees.

The Locality Committees are not the only way in which our schools will engage with our communities. Building strong relationships through the curriculum, external agencies, and facilities within the area is the role of our school leaders; as is parental engagement and day to day relationships.



Locality Committee meetings are supported by the Office Managers, who will take notes of the discussion that takes place and any actions that arise from the discussion. These are not verbatim or formal minutes, but a timely record of the content of the meeting. It is anticipated that Locality Committee meetings will be no longer than an hour, and be during the school day.

The Community Engagement Committee will be supported by the Governance Professional and will be minuted in line with other Trust Board meetings.

It is not expected that the Academy Head prepares a 'Headteacher style report' for their Locality Committee, but they must be prepared to outline what is going well and what are their identified areas of improvement and development in general terms in relation to their School Improvement Plan, but the focus of a Locality Committee meeting should be on the reports from Connection meetings and how this supports the SDP.

The structure and purpose of Locality Committees and their timetable of meetings ensures that they dovetail into the Executive accountability structures and Trust Board responsibilities, without duplication. Our governance structure is reliant on volunteers, and it is our commitment that their volunteer time, should be focused, purposeful and impactful; supported by training and guidance.

Effective governance is proactive governance – meetings, whilst important tools to share information, should be kept focused and concise – Effective Locality Committees are the eyes, ears and voice of our communities and as such should be active, listening, learning and supporting our schools to be the best they can be.