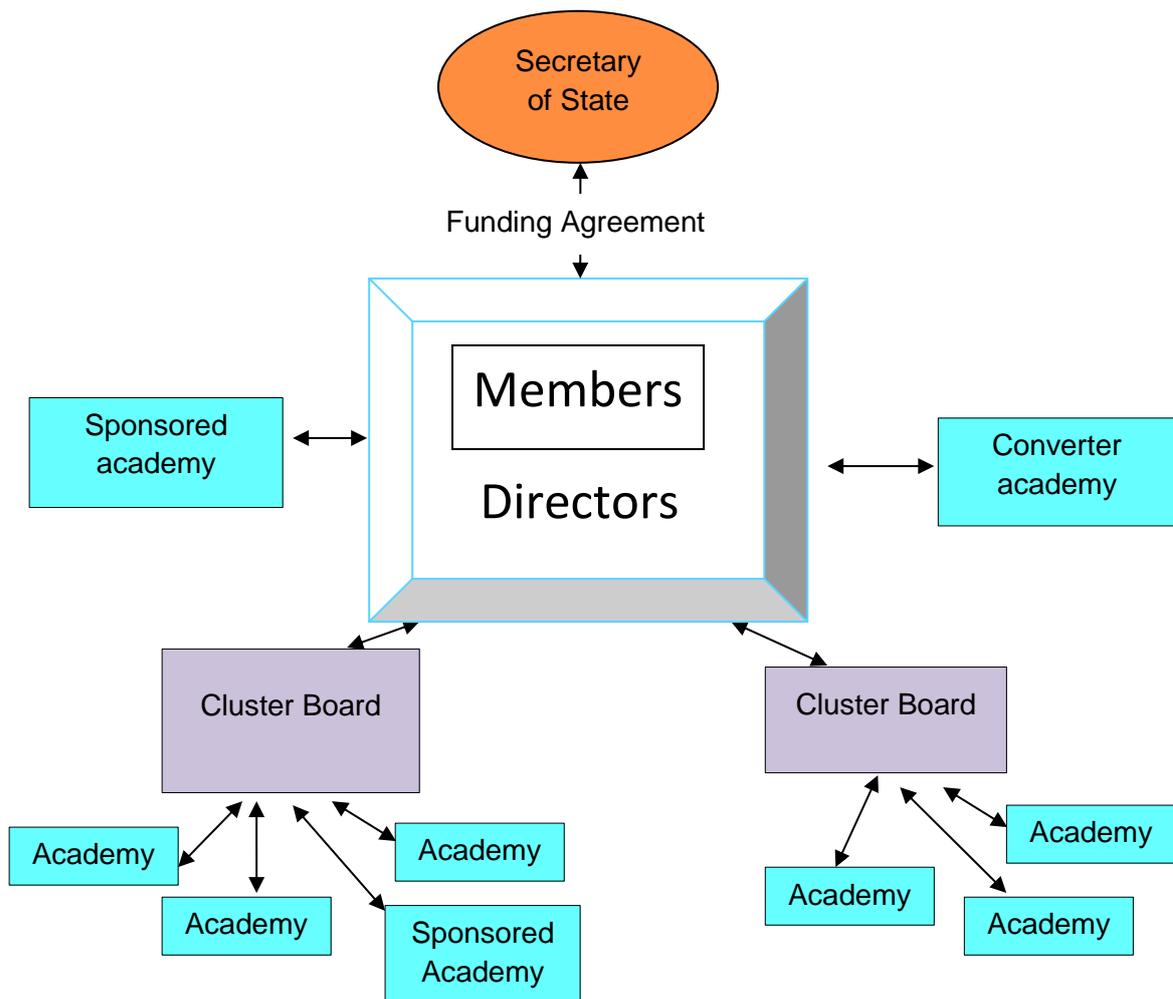




Trust Cluster Model for Devolved Responsibility Discussion Document

It is envisaged that as the Trust grows the natural synergy and geography of the County will mean a cluster approach to the organisation and arrangement of academies within the Trust will start to emerge. The model below is a representation of how this approach might work.



Key Features of Cluster Boards

Cluster Boards would be a means of devolving responsibility and therefore operate within the practices and procedures of the Trust.

Cluster Boards could be made up of the heads and chairs of the academies within the cluster plus ex officio representation by one Trust director and a nominated member of Trust staff. A headteacher from a good or outstanding school within the cluster would be appointed as a lead headteacher by the Trust directors. (to provide focussed leadership within collaborative partnership and clear lines of communication). Cluster leads to attend Board meetings in non voting capacity.

Core services will continue to be delivered at Trust level, but exploration of the possibility of operating and supporting functions being based at cluster level for example a named finance officer, shared clerk for all the governing bodies, administration support for the cluster will be undertaken. It is anticipated that if this happens then the administration will be organised centrally and delivered locally. There will be a Trust “style” and a uniformity in operating practices with the administrators having a point of reference within the Trust and a sense of belonging to something wider than the cluster.

Additional services could be agreed at cluster level such as shared SENCo etc. Cost would be shared by academies within that cluster.

Local Governing Bodies (LGB's) will continue but clusters could in the long term have 1 LGB if all academies within the cluster agree.

Scheme of Delegation agreed with Trust for each academy, including cluster involvement in elements determined through a Scheme of Delegation with each cluster.

School improvement including monitoring / inter-school teacher deployment could be determined at cluster level. Reporting and monitoring to Trust Board undertaken at cluster level.

Trust has agreed triggers for intervention with individual academies but works through cluster boards where appropriate. Clusters could take responsibility for schools coming under the ‘sponsored category’. The Trust will have MoU's with teaching school, CASL etc but first discussion would be with local ‘supporting schools’ in the cluster.

Other points to consider

Management / admin implications – capacity in schools

How will this work if the academies are very different or at very different places in their development?

Do we have an understanding of the optimum size for the clusters and what about moving academies between clusters i.e. how is the growth of the Trust managed?

Summary of benefits of this model (as opposed to working as single academies within the Trust)

- Greater devolution of responsibility
- Responsibility for achievement in their cluster
- Accountability to each other within the family of schools rather than each directly to the Secretary of State
- Opportunities to share innovation
- Easier to facilitate sharing staffing and resources
- Additional opportunity for local clusters to influence the strategic direction of the Trust
- Reduce geographic isolation
- Continued financial benefits of Trust wide procurement, whilst facilitating cluster procurement of identified services/ resources
- Does not have the bureaucracy and cost of umbrella models
- Strengthens links between schools within the Trust family sharing common ethos and objectives