

Each school in the TPLT group has a Community Council, which includes representatives of parents, staff and the community (or for Church schools, the foundation). The role of the Community Council is to act as a 'critical friend' to school leaders, providing a local community perspective on the activities of the school to ensure that its educational objectives are achieved.

About TPLT

TPLT is a charitable trust which includes Castle Batch, St Anne's, Berrow, West Huntspill, East Huntspill and Pawlett primary schools, and Priory, Worle and King Alfred secondary schools. By working together as a family of schools, we can share resources and expertise to achieve more than any one school could on its own.

The Trust is accountable to the UK government, with whose agreement we are funded by the taxpayer to run schools for local children. However, we have a responsibility that is much broader than this – to all those with a stake in our schools, including parents, staff, the wider community, and of course most importantly children and young people themselves.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the 'accountable body' for TPLT. Trustees have four core functions:

1. ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance.
4. upholding the Christian distinctiveness of the church schools within the trust.

The current trustees are listed on the [TPLT website](#), along with further detail of our governance arrangements.

Trust and School Leaders

The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer for the trust, and is the lead professional for the trust and all schools. The Chief Executive is directly accountable to the Board of Trustees.

The Headteacher is the lead professional in the school, and is accountable to the Chief Executive through the Directors of Primary/Secondary Schools. Collectively, the Headteacher and school leaders comprise the School Leadership Team, who provide leadership on school-wide issues and work closely with trust leaders to ensure schools achieve their strategic aims.

Community Councils

The local tier of governance for each TPLT school is undertaken by a Community Council. A strong link to the local community is fundamental to the Trust's approach to school improvement. Through their representation of different stakeholder groups, community councillors have a strong understanding of the school and its community.

The council helps to provide a community, and in particular a parental perspective, on our schools which helps trust and school leaders to ensure that each school is rooted in its local community.

Community councils meet six times a year, to discuss topics chosen by the council that are important to the school and where a community perspective will help to improve the educational experience for children, for example:

- Educational issues such as the curriculum and assessment
- Inclusion issues such as personal development, transition and careers
- Ethos issues such as uniform and enrichment
- Operational issues such as transport and communication
- Resource issues such as facilities and technology
- Strategic issues such as admissions
- Community issues such as community lettings and parental engagement
- For Church Schools, Christian Distinctiveness

As well as attending formal termly meetings, councillors are also invited to join planned sessions during the school day to develop their understanding of the school, for example by visiting classrooms and meeting groups of pupils.

In addition, some community councillors may volunteer to participate in independent panel hearings, for example relating to parental complaints and pupil exclusions, for which additional training is provided.

The role of a community councillor is different to that of a governor in a maintained school, as within a trust, many governance responsibilities (such as the approval of policies, monitoring of budgets, and scrutiny of outcomes) rest with trustees and trust leaders. This enables community councils to focus in more depth on providing a genuine community perspective that will help to shape and improve the educational experience of children at school.

Composition

Each school's community council includes between 8 and 10 councillors, depending on the school's characteristics (see Terms of Reference below). Councillors have a four year term of office, which can be renewed.

One of the councillors is appointed by TPLT to act as Chair for each year. The Community council chairs feedback to trust leaders and trustees through formal termly meetings.

Training and development

Induction and training is provided for councillors both by the school and trust. Councillors will be required to complete safeguarding checks before assuming their roles.

All those who are interested in joining a community council are strongly encouraged to discuss the role with the Chair of the community council in order to fully understand the role and responsibilities, as well as the support that is provided for councillors.

Acting in the public interest

Along with all staff and volunteers, councillors uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) which should guide our actions at all times:

1. Selflessness. Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. Integrity. Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. Objectivity. Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. Accountability. Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness. Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty. Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. Leadership. Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Terms of Reference: Community Councils

1	Overall Purpose
1.1	<p>Community Councils provide a parental and broader community perspective that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helps the trust stay rooted in our responsibility to our local communities (as distinct from our accountability to central government through the CEO & Trustees) ● Provides a community, and in particular a parental perspective, on our schools which trust and school leaders may otherwise not fully consider ● Provides a group of trusted people who with training can provide independent judgement in legal processes (eg complaints, staffing & exclusion hearings)
1.2	<p>To deliver this, the Community Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide advice to the Trustees about the quality of education of the school in its widest sense ● Hold an overview of the effectiveness of the school at a local level on behalf of the Board ● Help to ensure that safeguarding and inclusion are effective ● Monitor that the academic and well-being needs of learners are being met effectively through the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum which, through the use of personalised, developmental support helps to maximise each learner's success and enjoyment ● Engage with the school and local community to ensure that their views are represented in the school's planning and development ● Help to ensure that the Trust and school's values permeate the school ● Help to make sure that the celebration of staff, pupils and parents/carers is a priority ● Work with staff, pupils and parents to make sure that the school effectively communicates to all stakeholders, so that everyone feels part of school life and has the opportunity to access information and events ● Make sure that the pupils can benefit from local opportunities by finding ways to keep the school at the heart of the community and acting as a key link between the two ● Act as an independent local point of contact for staff, pupils and parents to express their concerns ● Participate in panels as required in accordance with TPLT policies ● Help to review the effectiveness of the Trust
1.3	<p>For Church Schools, the Community Council is responsible for upholding the Christian distinctiveness of the school through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring the school lives up to its Church foundation and enables pupils and adults to flourish. ● Supporting the development of partnership between the school and the Church parish.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that training and guidance is provided to Councillors, in conjunction with the Diocese. • Support the Headteacher in SIAMS inspections.
2	Composition
2.1a	<p>The composition of the Community Council will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 parents (elected) • 1 staff (elected) • 1 Headteacher (appointed) • 2 community councillors (appointed by TPLT from a pool consisting experienced community leaders, trust leaders, school leaders & trustees to balance skills of elected councillors)
2.1b	<p>For formerly VC Church Schools, the composition of the Community Council will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 parents (elected) • 1 staff (elected) • 1 Headteacher (appointed) • 2 foundation councillors (appointed by the Diocese of Bath & Wells)
2.1c	<p>For formerly VA Church Schools, the composition of the Community Council will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 parents (elected) • 1 staff (elected) • 1 Headteacher (appointed) • 5 foundation councillors (appointed by the Diocese of Bath & Wells)
2.2	<p>Each academic year the Board of Trustees will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint the Chair of the Community Council • Satisfy itself that the Community Council has the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience
2.3	<p>All Community Councillors are expected to complete appropriate TPLT training. Foundation Councillors will also be expected to complete appropriate Diocesan training.</p>
3	Frequency
3.1	Each Community Council will normally meet 6 times a year
4	Quorum
4.1	The quorum shall be one half of Councillors
5	Core Functions
5.1	<p>Topics for discussion will be selected by agreement of the Head and Chair from areas below that are pertinent to the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the school is fulfilling the school's vision & values

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational issues ● Inclusion issues ● Ethos issues ● Operational issues ● Resource issues ● Strategic issues ● Community issues ● For Church Schools, Christian Distinctiveness
6	Review
6.1	These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and approved by the board of trustees in advance of the start of each academic year.