

KIDMORE END PARISH COUNCIL

R F Penfold MBE
Clerk of the Council

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26 March 2015

Dear Mr Lauener

THE HEIGHTS FREE SCHOOL, CAVERSHAM, READING – SITE SELECTION

The Council has adopted the following motion concerning the site selection process for the Heights Free School, Caversham:

"The Kidmore End Parish Council notes that

- (i) the Government's Education Funding Agency (EFA) has asked Reading Borough Council (RBC) to carry out a public consultation, ending on May 1 2015, to help it [the EFA] to identify a permanent location for the Heights Free School;
- (ii) preceding any notice being given to Kidmore End Parish Council, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) or South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), the EFA has included land at Farthingworth Green (described as Dysons Farm, land at the junction of Shepherds Lane, Tokers Green Lane and Kidmore Road) as one of five possible locations. Farthingworth Green is the only site outside the boundary of Reading Borough Council (and thus the school's educational catchment area) and is located within South Oxfordshire;
- (iii) the views of representatives of nine "campaign groups" are set out in an Information Pack prepared by the EFA and published in the week beginning March 23rd 2015;

Continued over

Mr P Lauener
Chief Executive
Education Funding Agency
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Please note new e-mail address above

- (iii) in particular the views of the Save Farthingworh Green campaign group succinctly define the reasons why the selection of that site would be seriously detrimental to and destroy the urban and rural balance currently safeguarded at the boundary between Reading Borough and South Oxfordshire, would involve protracted and uncertain negotiations between Reading Borough Council and local government within South Oxfordshire, including OCC (education and transport) and SODC (planning, the policies of which are directly and fundamentally opposed to this form of development, the consequences of which could only be a massive increase in residential development) and would appear to be unwelcome to the parents of children living within the Caversham Heights Free School catchment area;
- (iv) the inclusion of the site has been expressly criticised as unsuitable and inappropriate by Mr John Howell MP, Sonning Common Parish Council and the Emmer Green Residents' Association and the Campaign to Protect Rural England is opposed to this site.

AND RESOLVES THAT

- 1 the EFA should remove the Farthingworth Green site forthwith from its list of potential permanent sites, as the combination of detriments is so great, when considered in isolation and even more when considered in comparison with other sites within the Heights Free School catchment area, as to outweigh any possible benefits; and in taking such a decision;
- 2 the EFA has all the facts before it and does not need to consider the views of the 67,000 residents contacted by RBC in order to conclude that the inclusion of the site was flawed by a lack of proper consultation with Oxfordshire local government, including Kidmore End Parish Council, and could never be a timely and practical solution to the needs of the children in the Heights Free School catchment area;
- 3 if, contrary to 1 above, the EFA continues to include the Farthingworth Green site after the consultation closes on May 1, it should eliminate it and consider only the four sites within the RBC catchment area; and
- 4 this Resolution should be sent to the EFA, as decision maker, and Reading Borough Council."

Would you please be so kind as to acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Clerk of the Council