

14 November 2007

Dear

As Directors of Stoke on Trent City Learning Centres, hosted by Haywood and Longton High Schools, the secondary reorganisation proposals are causing us grave concern, as both our Host schools are threatened with closure under these proposals. This has been discussed with our CLC Management Board and we have been asked to write to you on behalf of our Board to raise our concerns.

We have read the proposal document and can see that it states that the two CLCs will remain where they are, but we have to ask, as we have not been informed prior to the release of this document into the public domain, or indeed been consulted in any way, have any considerations been made of the implications of this proposal for the CLCs and their staff?

In the case of The Haywood CLC the transfer to a Foundation school was carried out in an open and transparent way, with the Department notified at the outset of the proposal and with the full discussion and approval of the CLC Management Board. This was in line with the City Learning Centres' Stakeholder Agreement, signed by the then Director of Education, Chair of the CLC Partnership Board, Chair of Governors and Head Teacher of the Host school and myself as Director of the CLC. Any further changes are required to be notified and discussed in the same way. We should also point out that paragraph 38) Change of use/intended purpose of the CLC, should be notified to the Department and can lead to the Department reclaiming the assets. The reorganisation proposal should consider the £800,000, taken from the original £2.4 million capital grant for the CLCs, and devolved to eight secondary schools at £100,000 each, as some of those schools are now under threat of closure.

The CLCs have been open for more than five years and during this time we have worked with many schools across the City. However the relationships with our Host schools have brought many extra mutual benefits from the way we work in partnership. On a practical level, the CLCs share a range of services with our respective Host schools, such as financial, HR, site management and security. This ensures an efficient and cost effective operation of the CLCs. From a financial perspective, the CLCs revenue budget has barely increased since we opened and without these shared services we would find it almost impossible to operate in the way we are intended to, as public, community buildings that are open for extended hours and offer a range of services.

Teaching and technical staff are also shared between the CLCs and our Host schools, enabling us to jointly develop a wide range of successful initiatives, such as the extension and support of the Host school's specialist status in Engineering and Performing Arts. We also share in our host school's community plans, parental engagement and student support, which benefits the CLCs in engaging local people into the centres. The Haywood CLC has extended shared services with a Public Library and Learndirect centre hosted at the CLC.

We would like you to consider three potential outcomes and their impact for both the CLCs and their Host schools under the proposals.

1) If the Host schools close and cease to exist in their current locations it will be leaving the new schools that open in or near those communities without all the benefits that we have worked so hard to establish over the last five years. Why would you want to destroy what we currently have and then have to begin all over again?

2) If the CLCs are left without a Host school on site it will have implications for our operation, both financially and in terms of our successful wider community engagement, and leave us isolated and with possible security issues. Has anyone considered what might happen to the site if our Host schools are demolished and the effect that would have on the CLCs?

3) If we could be allowed to continue with our joint visions, with new or newly refurbished schools on the current site, with the CLC's operation secure, with scope for further community and parental involvement, would that not give us the opportunity to take a great thing and help make it excellent?

The lack of any information given to the CLC Directors, staff and CLC Management Board until this week has indicated to us that many, if not all, of the concerns outlined above have not been taken into account when the proposals were drawn up. The Management Board and Directors hope that through this information we have given you a clear indication of the impact of the proposals on both City Learning Centres in Stoke-on-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Sue Kuzubasoglu
The Haywood CLC

Steve Johnson
Longton High CLC

Cc Doug Brown, Sharon Scott, Adrian Williams