

Mr Ian Bailey
Deputy Director
The Children and Young People's Service
Haringey Council
48 Station Road
London N22 7TY

4 December 2006

To revise the date for planning permission for modification to the expansion site set as part of the conditional approval of expansion proposal for Coleridge School, Haringey
Case reference: STP/000190

Dear Mr Bailey

You wrote to me on behalf of Haringey Council requesting a change in relation to the above case.

In the following paragraphs, I am setting out my consideration of your request, and of a small number of individual submissions I have received.

Background

In March 2006, I approved the proposal published by Haringey Council ("the Council") to expand Coleridge School from a two-form entry to a four-form entry school. At the time of my decision, planning was not at an advanced stage, and I wished to indicate the importance of securing the necessary permissions at the earliest possible stage, to ensure timely process towards the revised implementation date. I therefore made my approval of the proposal for 1 September 2007 conditional on the receipt of the planning permission by 31 January 2007.

Jurisdiction

I have had regard to Paragraph 5(2)(b) of Schedule 6 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This specifically provides that where a conditional approval has been given under paragraph 3(3), the adjudicator may specify a later date than the one originally set, if a request for such a change is made by the body that published the proposal. I am satisfied that in this case the request from Haringey Council falls within my jurisdiction.

Request

You wrote to me on 8 November 2006 to request that I set a later date – 30 March 2007 – for the conditional approval to be met. Your letter stated that since the determination there has been an intensive period of planning and designing to ensure the buildings meet the needs and specifications of the Council, the school, the pupils and the local community. This has involved further consultation over the design of the expanded school. As a result of a fully inclusive design consultation and the summer holiday period, there has been a delay in submitting the planning application. You subsequently notified me that the planning application for the Coleridge school was submitted to Haringey planning department on 13th November 2006.

Consideration

When I approved the expansion proposal in March 2006, I signalled the importance of securing planning permission in good time for an orderly implementation. I was keen to emphasise that, without this, the quality of the expansion of the school might be jeopardised. I am therefore concerned to learn that the process of securing planning permission has indeed been a slow one. I have received a small number of parental representations which took the view that the delay to securing planning commission was symptomatic of more general weaknesses in the Council's processes, and making a number of other points suggesting that there were now even stronger reasons for me to turn the proposal down, including the fact that the school's governors were said now to be no longer unanimous on the proposal. I have read these but have no jurisdiction to revisit the decision. I believe that the Council needs to deal carefully and sensitively with the local feelings and concerns. I note a parent's concern that evidence for the demand for places is less strong than it was. I believe, however, that because of its popularity and oversubscription, coupled with local and demographic factors, the school should still be able to attract the sought-for numbers.

Securing planning permission has, as I expected, not proved easy. However, if consent to the planning application is given by the newly stated date, in my judgement the timetable should still be manageable for an orderly implementation. I am therefore prepared to agree to the requested extension to the deadline, although I am very clear that any further delay would render the start date of 1 September 2007 impracticable.

Decision

Under the powers conferred on me by Schedule 6 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I hereby approve the request from Haringey Council to set

a revised date of 30 March 2007 for the receipt of planning permission for modifications to the expansion site, set as part of the conditional approval of the proposal to expand Coleridge School. This replaces the date previously set of 31 January 2007.

I add, for the sake of clarity, that there is no proposal to change the modified implementation date of 1 September 2007, which will still be subject to the receipt of planning permission by the new date.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David W Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end.

David W Taylor
Adjudicator