

Jo Gibson (NUT School Representative), Cowes High School,  
Crossfield Avenue, Cowes, PO31 8HB



Mr Alex Moffatt  
School reorganisation project manager  
Isle of Wight Council  
County Hall  
PO30 1UD

16<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Dear Mr Moffatt

Following on from our public meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July this is our written response to the proposals for Cowes High School. We are of the understanding that the comments raised below will be considered by the Isle of Wight LEA before making any decisions upon the successful bidder of Cowes High School.

Comments about The Academies Enterprise Trust (to get Cowes High School only)

- ❖ The presentation given was very focused on two main areas of teaching and matters of financial accounting
- ❖ This bid rejects the Pathfinder aims that current staff at the school has worked hard to set-up.
- ❖ This bid doesn't fulfil the original competition requirements for a Pathfinder school; under the aims of this Government initiative there is recognition that at least one school on the Island should be investigating and establishing new educational strategies. The AET bid very clearly rejects the possibility of this as an educational model and therefore appear to be in contradiction to the terms of the request for bids.
- ❖ The Academy Enterprise Trust has never worked within the rural setting that we have on the Island
- ❖ Cowes High School is not in the "failing school" category, so we question the suitability of an academy.
- ❖ There is an issue about the possibility that staff could have to re-sign new contracts under the academy which would not meet assurances about terms and conditions.
- ❖ There is some concern about the amount of observations and scrutiny of staff if we became an academy and whether this would replace existing monitoring and accountability

Comments about The Academies Enterprise Trust (to get all schools in their bid)

- ❖ We question the level of support we could get as teachers in an academy, as services could be streamlined across all sites on the Island
- ❖ This is a very hierarchical structure and there are serious implications of education on the island if this should fail.

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- ❖ Having all high school provision as an Academy limits choice and therefore opportunities for young people especially with level three students. If there is no sixth form within the schools then good relationships that are vital to achievement at this level could be lost. This could have an impact on the students of not continuing to study level three courses on this island and could limit their choice at level three.

Comments about the Cowes Pathfinder Partnership

- ❖ Although the presentation of this bid was poor the actual substance was good.
- ❖ In the original competition document there was an implication of a preference for the Pathfinder model as this fulfils the Governments initiative. We have been working towards this as a school for three years and this work will continue under the pathfinder bid
- ❖ The people who are involved in this bid are in the current Cowes community so have full knowledge of our school and its needs.

We would request a written response to our comments at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely

LJ KEENAN

cc.

Mr George Brown, Councillor for Cowes North  
Mr Paul Fuller, Councillor for Cowes West and Gurnard  
Mr Roger Mazillius, Councillor for Cowes South and Northwood  
Mrs Lora Peacey – Wilcox, Councillor for Cowes Medina  
Ms Margaret Webster, Councillor for East Cowes