

department for

# education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

AGENDA ITEM 6

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Your ref: E 1/1/180 RP  
Our ref: 2002/0062422DIRECT

24 October 2002

Dear Mr Popat

Thank you for your letter of 2 October to Holly Turner about provision of information for School Organisation Committee members. Holly has moved to a different post so has asked me to reply.

As you rightly say, governing bodies proposing to change the category of their school are required to send certain information to the School Organisation Committee with a copy of the published proposals. How the committee deals with this information is up to them, as long as members have the information they need to make a decision while having regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

During our recent review of local decision-making we interviewed a number of School Organisation Committee representatives, and learnt that different committees have different ways of handling information. Some committees do send copies of all information and objections to all members, others summarise the information while informing members where they can view all the information if they so wish.

If your committee wish to move to a system of routinely receiving a summary rather than the full package of information then they can choose to do this, as long as the committee are satisfied that they will have enough information to reach a valid decision, and as long as the full information is available for members to view should they request it. You should, however, treat each case on its individual merits and you may wish to seek independent legal advice.

Yours sincerely



Joanne Harker  
School Organisation Unit

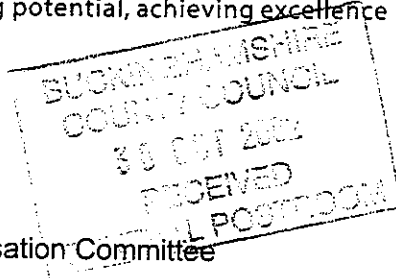


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Our ref: 2002/0063119TO

28 October 2002

Dear Mr Popat

Thank you for your letter of 27 September to Margaret Hodge enclosing correspondence from Mr J A Loarridge, Chairman of the Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee about post 16 school organisation. I am replying as a member of the sixth form funding team.

Where a sixth form has been identified as inadequate, clearly the school and the LEA will need to carefully look at options for improvement. The school and the LEA should collaborate in formulating an action plan in association with the LSC and OfSTED. The plan is monitored, usually every term by OfSTED and the school has two years to turn things round which should be sufficient time to show significant improvement.

Coming to your point, where a sixth form has two consecutive adverse reports from OfSTED, the local LSC does not have the option of closing the sixth form, rather it has powers to publish proposals to close the sixth form. These proposals are broadly in line those that apply under Part II and schedule 6 to the School and Framework Act 1998.

The presumption that the local LSC's wishes will prevail over other members of the SOC is mistaken. The Department's statutory guidance outlines the criteria which the SOC must take into account and ultimately it will be for the SOC to decide on closure, referring to the School Adjudicator if necessary. At all times the quality of sixth forms and serving the best interests of the pupils concerned will be the primary influences on any decisions that are taken.

Yours Sincerely

Tony Jeffery

