

file - New Build

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RW/KT

Ray Watson

814395

E-mail: [raymond.watson@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:raymond.watson@dudley.gov.uk)

11 October 2005

Titi Windapo  
DfES  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear Titi

**Application for funding to expand as a successful and popular secondary school - Hillcrest School and Community College.**

Dudley is establishing an over-arching planning framework under the heading "Learning for the Future", to bring together a number of local issues and national priorities into a coherent, effective and manageable change programme.

Within this framework is a secondary school review process that has the full support of Dudley Secondary Schools. Although the strategy has not yet been published the first phase of specific school proposals is anticipated during this academic year. The Hillcrest School and Community College application is consistent with this strategy and it is fully supported by Dudley.

Dudley has witnessed a rapid decline in birth rates over the last 10 years and is expected to stabilise at a much lower level. Consultation on primary school provision across the current pattern of 82 primary schools is underway. The fall in pupil numbers is beginning to impact on secondary schools and over the next few years Dudley will have fewer secondary schools and all within DfES expectations of optimum size of school. Hillcrest will play an important role in future provision and successful expansion in capacity will be heavily dependent on achieving sufficient capital investment. On behalf of Dudley I would urge you to support Hillcrest's application.

Yours sincerely

**Ray Watson**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Resources and Planning Division**

department for

## education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
Westminster  
London SW1P 3BT

tel: 0870 0012345  
fax: 020 7925 6000  
info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk  
www.dfes.gov.uk

Dame Maureen Brennan DBE  
Hillcrest School and Community College  
Simms lane  
Netherton  
West Midlands  
DY2 0PB

Direct line: 020 7925 6746  
Local fax: 020 7925 6717

25 January 2006

*Dear Dame Maureen*

### **Application for funding under the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools programme – Hillcrest School and Community College**

I refer to your application for funding under the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools programme.

In addition to Dudley Council's support of the expansion project, the Department is prepared to provide the incentive funding of £400,000 (as the school does not include 6<sup>th</sup> form provision). From previous correspondence, I understand the school is only seeking the incentive funding as the balancing amounts will be derived from other sources. According to the cost plan dated 11 November 2005, the school has assessed the overall cost of the project to be £1,494,488, of which the Department will provide £400,000. Any costs exceeding £1,494,488 would need to be met by the school.

Our funding will only be made available where the Schools Organisation Committee (SOC) or Adjudicator approves the expansion proposals. Our indication that funding would be made available is not intended to influence or prejudice the SOC's or Adjudicator's decision.

I understand that you published statutory notices to expand your school on 20 January. I expect the SOC will be meeting at a later date to make a decision on your expansion proposals. If the SOC or Adjudicator approves the proposals before 31 March 2006, we could deliver some of the funding in 2006-07 and the balance of the money in 2007-08 and 2008-09, depending on the project plan.

The proposed admission arrangements operated by Hillcrest School are commonly used criteria and comply with the guidance set out in our Schools Admissions Code of Practice. However the school may want to consider the following in respect of the first criteria. The schools first priority for admission is children with a statement of special educational needs (SEN), with looked after children as the second criteria. However, as stated children naming a particular school will automatically be admitted regardless of the oversubscription criterion, it is perhaps unnecessary to use this as the first criteria and the school may want to consider making looked after children first priority.

Whilst it is too late to change your determined arrangements for 2006 entry we would wish to seek assurances that this issue relating to admissions arrangement would be addressed in

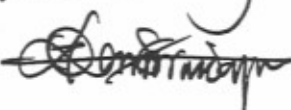


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setting your 2007 arrangements, giving priority to looked after children.

I would be grateful if you could keep me informed of progress made on the school's proposals to the SOC. In particular, it would be helpful if you could inform me as soon as possible about the date set for the SOC meeting and their decision on the expansion proposals. In considering the proposals, the SOC (or Adjudicator) must be satisfied that funding is available for the project and you may wish to provide a copy of this letter as evidence of the Department's financial commitment.

I look forward to receiving details of your progress in due course. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further enquires.

*Yours sincerely*  


Titi Windapo  
**Schools Capital Division**

cc. Mr Raymond Watson Assistant Director Resources and Planning Division

Ms Jane Porter Assistant Director for Schools Effectiveness