

My ref: PAB/LJ

28 May 2010

Mr Jim Astill  
32 Harvester Way  
Crowland  
Peterborough  
PE6 0DA

County Offices  
Lincoln  
LN1 1YS  
Tel: 01522 552169  
Fax: 01522 552072

Dear Mr Astill

### **CLOSURE OF ST GUTHLAC'S SECONDARY SCHOOL, CROWLAND**

Thank you for your letter dated 18 May 2010. ...

Firstly, let me be clear at this stage, this is a proposal and we have to go through consultation and a representation period before a final decision is made. Secondly, we can only launch a consultation when we have a proposal that we feel may be feasible. Clearly, there is never a good time to launch a proposal and I know the impact of closing small rural Secondary schools - my local Secondary school closes this summer. However, it is only when Ministers agree to our proposals that we can then put them in the public arena.

You are right to point out the potential risks to any proposals from spending cuts, and we will have to wait to see if BSF is cut. Equally, we are unsure about any Academy proposals where decisions have been made by the previous Government.

Over the last few years there have been very demanding Government targets for schools, high level accountability by Ofsted, and a major focus on schools at risk of being below floor targets. In 2007 St Guthlacs was inspected, and it was satisfactory. The aspiration was that its federation would be able to improve the performance. Results have improved, but the Governing Body and the Local Authority do not feel numbers and performance can be sustained in the longer term. Furthermore, the range of choice which parents and children expect cannot be maintained. When this is coupled with the inability to recruit high quality staff, it is difficult to see a long-term sustainable future.

The Governing Body of the two schools voted unanimously for the proposal, and the reason I believe they did this is that they have spent three years struggling to find a way to make the school work. The County Council would not issue a press release about the Primary school moving to the Secondary school site if that is not what is planned and it combines with our plans to sustain and improve the community facilities in Crowland.

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I am, of course, aware of the public feeling in Crowland and I am also aware of our responsibility to provide high quality Secondary education for all children in Lincolnshire. Clearly, we will be holding public consultation in Crowland and in Holbeach regarding these proposals, and following such meetings we will need to make a decision on the best way forward.

In the meantime, you can rest assured we will do everything we can to ensure continuity of learning for the children in Crowland.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Mrs Patricia Bradwell**  
**Executive Councillor for Children's Services**

cc Cllr P Przyszlak