



# FARRINGDON COMMUNITY SPORTS COLLEGE & Bede Sixth Form Academy

EXCELLENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

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CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS:  
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HEADTEACHER: MR D. C. THORNTON B.A (HONS)

CITY OF SUNDERLAND  
CIVIC CENTRE, SR2 7DN  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND  
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TELEPHONE 0191 5531000



6<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Dr Helen Paterson  
Director of Children's Services  
Children's Services Leadership Team  
Room 4.37  
Civic Centre  
Sunderland

Dear Dr Paterson

The Governing Body of Farringdon Community Sports College unanimously oppose the proposal to raise the upper age limit at Houghton Kepier Sports College to provide sixth form education.

It is the view of Farringdon Governors that opening a sixth form provision at HKSC would not be appropriate in the context of the current post 16 provision in Sunderland. As in a number of schools, Governors at Farringdon agreed some years ago that they would not support new sixth form provision on secondary school sites designated as 11-16 schools. Governors believed then as now, that in the best interests of young people across the city a preferable alternative would be for schools to work in partnership with the City of Sunderland College to provide post 16 education. Governors at Farringdon put aside any consideration of provision on our own school site in favour of the collaborative agreement and partnership working. It was our understanding that this was the accepted arrangement across the city. We are disappointed therefore, that the Governing body at Houghton Kepier Sports College have decided to break from that agreement and pursue an independent sixth form.

The Governing body at Farringdon regard this proposal as a threat to the current status quo and a disregard for the existing post 16 arrangements and framework in the city. We fear that the HKSC proposal, were it to go ahead, could have a detrimental effect for some young people in our city. Schools may be forced to consider their own position regarding sixth form provision on their school site. We feel this could result in some schools offering a sixth form and others not. This would create 'winners' and 'losers' across the city. The overall effect would be that some schools and some young people would be disadvantaged. This would be a most unwelcome development.

We have a particular concern regarding the opening of three new academies in the city. While we accept that all current academy Headteachers, their Governing bodies and sponsors are committed to the existing post 16 arrangements we fear that they may be forced to reconsider their position in the future. We believe that the development of post 16 provision on school sites will change the educational landscape within Sunderland to such an extent that the Academies may well follow suit. That would be detrimental to partnership working across the city and would negate the heavy investment in time and resources which resulted in the 'Sunderland Model'.





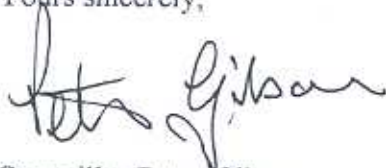
Governors believe that the current sixth forms offer a wide range of courses and provide high quality education for our students together with equality of opportunity for all in Sunderland. Through the joint Governance arrangements and Associate Principal roles given to our Headteachers, we feel that we are able to influence the strategic development of post 16 development and ensure high quality outcomes for students. It is our belief, that the sixth forms currently operating are successful and worthy of our continued support. We have every confidence that the newly established Headways sixth form would provide the same benefits for students at Houghton Kepier.

Governors are concerned that the proposal details a very similar model of provision to that which already exists within the joint sixth forms. We believe that many of the courses planned for delivery at Houghton Kepier would not be viable unless additional students were recruited from other schools. The effect would be to threaten the viability of existing provision across the city. Governors believe that partnership working offers the best opportunity to provide a sustainable and viable range of courses for all students.

Governors suggest that Houghton Kepier Sports College reconsider their plans for post 16 provision and look again at the benefits a joint sixth form arrangement for their students. We understand that there is an acceptance by COSC to locate the new Headways sixth form in the coalfields area. Governors believe that this would provide a suitable platform on which to build a sustainable and integrated post 16 partnership which would benefit all young people in the area and indeed across Sunderland.

We ask that the Governors at HKSC consider again their proposals and as an alternative join one of the collaborative sixth forms already established.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gibson', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Peter Gibson

On behalf of the Governing Body at Farringdon Community Sports College.