

Retained Education Functions Lead,
Neighbourhoods,
Civic Centre,
Burdon Road,
Sunderland SR2 7DN

22/03/2021

Dear Mr Rowan

I object to Sunderland City Council's proposal to close the 'Outstanding' Ofsted rated Nursery School in Hetton-le-Hole because:

1. Sunderland City Council has failed to comply with the Department of Education Guidance of November 2019 of giving the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school. The decision-makers are expected to adopt a presumption against the closure of maintained nursery schools.
2. Sunderland City Council has permitted and encouraged unfair competition by allowing numerous private nurseries to undercut state schools.
3. Sunderland City Council has been derelict in its duties by not actively involving and discussing with the Nursery, its governors, residents, families and Hetton Town Council possible ways to overcome the difficulties of falling roll numbers.
4. Sunderland City Council has not provided any Covid-19 relief funds to the Nursery despite having received many millions from central government.
5. Sunderland City Council has failed to provide additional funding for this Nursery and other maintained nurseries to clear any outstanding deficits despite having an underspend of over £4 million.
6. The budget forecast produced by Sunderland City Council to 'justify' the closure is inaccurate and forecast additional pupils will eliminate the projected deficit.
7. Sunderland City Council deliberately distorted facts relating to the uplift given to the Nursery as the reason for at least one other nursery school going into deficit.
8. Sunderland City Council will be putting the Health and Safety of young and vulnerable children from the Nursery at risk by transferring them to temporary demountable classrooms /asbestos ridden reconfigured building for a period of up to 3 years.
9. Sunderland City Council's Cabinet took the decision to move forward to a statutory consultation 5 days before the pre consultation closed and this did not permit all responses to be considered.

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Signature

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Address