



Department for Education

Vicky Beer CBE
Regional Schools Commissioner
Lancashire & West Yorkshire
Department for Education
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Richard Hancock
Director of Children's Services
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall
King Street
Dukinfield
SK16 4LA

Thursday 2 May 2019

Dear Richard

Thank you for the constructive approach you and your officers are taking towards finding a resolution to the PFI concerns in Tameside.

As you are aware Christine Wendel in my office has been in regular contact with Tim Bowman and has updated me. I was happy to hear about the collaborative work we are doing.

I note that following independent legal advice you still have some reservations around the Council's financial and legal risks in progressing the academisation of PFI schools.

I previously wrote to you to provide assurances that the Department provides an indemnity to local authorities (LA). The indemnity provided in the Principal Agreement underwrites the risk if the academy trust causes the LA to bear costs under the PFI contract. I can further advise that the Department has honoured previous requests from LAs to meet breaches though I should emphasise such breaches are extremely low in number.

I understand that you will be seeking advice from Cabinet in June on whether we can progress PFI schools' requests to convert. I am very mindful that Arundale and Pinfold Primary Schools submitted applications to join Victorious Academy Trust in 2012 and it would be especially helpful to get Cabinet agreement for us to work together to advance these requests. I know you are aware of the schools' interest in academisation and your officers have a good working relationship with the trust. It would be an ideal opportunity to work with you and your officers to get these off the ground as our first PFI projects. I hope that we can continue to work together closely

on the details as these projects progress and I suggest a proposed opening date of 1 January, 2020.

If there is any further support I can provide please do let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V. Beer', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Vicky Beer CBE

Regional Schools Commissioner, Lancashire and West Yorkshire