

## Scrutiny Request

Entry ID: 638532

Submitted On: 27/01/2017

Submitted From: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review/>

Submitted By:

**Name:** Paul Counihan

### **Tell us what topic you'd like reviewed:**

Please review the context, meeting, and factors that led to the agreement for a decision to recommend Aldryngton School for expansion above other options available. At what point, and based on what criteria, was Aldryngton chosen, above ALL other options available, using data and assumptions independently validated by an against the recommendation and advice of the ERMC architects? There is a serious issue of transparency in this case.

### **Tell us the reasons for your suggestion (areas to tell us about include how it links to our vision and priorities and what benefit there would be to residents):**

The decision to select Aldryngton was not made fairly, some info was withheld - Please also refer to FOI 8022 as to where/how the decision was made - The proposal is already out of date, as was initiated in 2015 or earlier - The proposal is estimated at £5m. WBC have spent less than that in the past building new schools, why not build a new school where the demand is? - WBC predicts a surplus of places from 2018 onwards across Earley (WBC's Primary School Planning Strategy 2016-2018). Why not use this & indicative app numbers for 2017? - How does this fit with long term strategy? Maiden Erleigh plans to admit an additional 180 pupils from 2020, is this factored in? New Tesco wasn't factored into the plans from a traffic volume perspective

### **Tell us any specific aspects of the topic you'd like the focus to be on or any supporting evidence you have (areas to tell us about include the facts, specific organisation or documents you want the review to refer to and suggestions for potential witnesses):**

When asked how a decision was reached to recommend Aldryngton given the lack of sufficient space, based on FOI 8022, it was disclosed that no minutes were taken and records had been wiped. - The Public Reports Pack 28-Jan-16 (presented to the Exec) failed to include the recommendation not to proceed with Aldryngton. A clear concealment of relevant information and a blatant obstacle of transparency

### **Tell us what you'd like the outcome of the review to be and why you think that outcome is possible:**

I want courage from a leader to admit that mistakes have been made in this process from the start, to withdraw the current proposal, and start again, based on up to date data (currently not used), valid assumptions (mistakes exist in current assumptions), and a

transparent decision making body based on facts and figures validated by an independent statistician (the cost of which would significantly less than a wasted £5m spend), delivering the best outcome for the residents of Wokingham & Earley

**Do you want to come to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to make a statement in support of your request:**

No.

**Who are you:**

A resident of the Wokingham Borough Council area.

**Date of your request:** 27/01/2017

Entry ID: 638594

Submitted On: 27/01/2017

Submitted From: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review/>

Submitted By:

**Name:** Paul M Counihan

**Tell us what topic you'd like reviewed:**

Conflict of Interest: The proposed appointment responsible to make the decision on Aldryngton Expansion as Head of People Services, Judith Ramsden

**Tell us the reasons for your suggestion (areas to tell us about include how it links to our vision and priorities and what benefit there would be to residents):**

Judith Ramsden was Director of Children's Services until Nov-2016. Whilst Director of Children's Services, Judith was part of the team that developed and pushed forward a proposal to expand Aldryngton. This is a clear conflict of interest. The decision should be made by an objective and independent panel. A £5m proposal has to be watertight, this is not.

**Tell us any specific aspects of the topic you'd like the focus to be on or any supporting evidence you have (areas to tell us about include the facts, specific organisation or documents you want the review to refer to and suggestions for potential witnesses):**

The proposal is tainted with allegations of foul play, concealment of information, lack of transparency, and errors (that could have been corrected) in projection assumptions that led to an understated surplus of school places in 2018 and beyond. This proposal for decision making raises very serious concerns of conflict of interest and questions on the

overall process since 2015 in terms of fairness and trust in WBC. This proposal has raised a lot of controversy and needs fresh scrutiny.

**Tell us what you'd like the outcome of the review to be and why you think that outcome is possible:**

The outcome should be the appointment of a completely independent panel and a withdrawal of the current proposal until all issues of breach of policy & processes and foul play are resolved. The level of controversy this proposal has generated merits a fresh look at how any decision making has been conducted and should be conducted. This would be relatively straightforward to achieve.

**Do you want to come to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to make a statement in support of your request:** No.

**Who are you:** A resident of the Wokingham Borough Council area.

**Date of your request:** 27/01/2017

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