Appendix to the Final Determination Report proposing closure of Mileham Primary School
Report for the Director of Children's Services

Background

The representation period for the consultation on a proposal to close Mileham Primary School ended on 10 May. A report was submitted to the Director of Children's Services, which made reference to the nine representations received, and the determination notice was signed on 13 May. The determination was shared with governors on 14 May, and notification was mailed to all parents/carers on 15 May.

Circumstances of Review

The Chair of Governors phoned our School Organisation Adviser on Monday 18th May to ask why the determination report made no reference to a submission by the governors, which he said had been sent on Friday 8th May to the address on the Public Notice. He subsequently emailed to say that the submission had been sent at 15.32, but that he had received neither acknowledgement nor a non-deliverable notice.

ICT Services has not been able to trace the email.

Review Process

The process for review was set out in the document posted on the website on 28 May, and is being applied as follows:

- **The submission from the governors will be considered by the Decision-Maker in order to ascertain whether or not it is appropriate to publish revocation proposals.**
- The Decision-Maker will review the determination in the light of the new evidence submitted by the governors to decide on one of two outcomes:
  a) That her determination should continue to be implemented, or
  b) That the new evidence means that implementation would be inappropriate and therefore a revocation notice will need to be published
- The Decision-Maker will share the outcome of her review with governors by Friday 5th June, and a report will be issued which will explain the reasons behind the resolution. This will appear on the website as an Appendix to the determination notice.

The Governors submission

A formal representation signed by all the Mileham governors, accompanied by a powerpoint presentation are offered for consideration

Summary of the reasons for opposing the proposal included:

- Concerns about the validity of the consultation process,
- The use of data to demonstrate the school's performance
- Addressing the consultation documents to The Occupier
- Dissatisfaction with the timing of the audit conducted by the Local Authority

- Whether sufficient consideration has been given to the presumption against closure of rural schools.
- Perceived misleading statements about the decline in numbers
- The special contribution that the school makes to the education of children with Special Needs.

The presentation suggests that Mileham Primary School should stay open for a further year, to allow an improvement plan led by the school's governors to be implemented. It includes:

- Plans for a research project with UEA to develop Mileham Castle as a Curriculum Project;
- Offering four week placements for children within the cluster with Special Needs to offer them a different approach, linked to apprenticeship opportunities for students looking for a more vocational education post 16;
- Developing partnerships with Google educators, UEA, Homerton College and the Museum Service.
- Applying for grant funding to boost the school budget which is currently balanced for three years
- Using the premises to raise income
- Continuing to build the partnership with Litcham School while maintaining the Mileham site

The Director of Children's Services has considered both submissions and appreciates the time and effort that the governors have put in to the presentation offering an alternative to closure. Whilst impressed by the creative plans for furthering partnerships with outside institutions, she is not convinced that this plan will provide the sustained high quality leadership and rapid development that the children need in the short term. There is not sufficient evidence to indicate how strong leadership will be provided nor how the urgent need for raising achievement will be tackled.

"I do not consider that the new evidence means that implementation would be inappropriate and therefore a revocation notice will not be published"

Signed: S. M Lock Date 4/6/15

Sheila Lock, Interim Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council