



**Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis MP**  
**Member of Parliament for Great Yarmouth**

**Office of Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis MP**  
**20 Church Plain**  
**Great Yarmouth**  
**Norfolk**  
**NR30 1NE**

Dr Wendy Thomson  
Chief Executive  
Norfolk County Council  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich  
NR1 2DH

5<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Wendy,

I am writing formally in response to the current consultation on the future of the Alderman Swindell School, in Great Yarmouth.

I know we both share the aim of ensuring that Great Yarmouth, and indeed the whole of Norfolk, has access to the very best possible educational provision. In this I am sure that we are joined by the entire local community.

I appreciate that the Council is seeking to ensure that children within this part of Great Yarmouth have access to the very best possible facilities, and that you feel that this proposal is the best way to ensure this.

However, I know that we are also both acutely aware about the strength of local feeling on this issue. During both this and earlier informal consultation, local parents and members of the wider community have raised several issues and concerns about this plan. It is important that these legitimate concerns and questions are properly considered, respected and answered before a final decision is made.

Whilst this consultation focused on the issue of the closure of Alderman Swindell and the corresponding "lift and shift" to North Denes site, I am also sure that the council can appreciate that the lack of clarity on the future plans for the Alderman Swindell site is adding to the concerns of local people.

This being said, the concerns of local people are principally focused on any potential educational impact on the children who currently attend both schools.

The council should ensure that it is using the most up to date and relevant educational data when providing the information to the decision makers. In addition, this data, where possible, should also be made public so that local residents can understand the basis of any decision and can be assured that it will provide the best education and opportunities for their children.

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Should this proposal proceed, after a rigorous examination of the educational outcomes in the North Yarmouth area, it is essential that any disruption to the pupils of both schools is kept to a minimum. Therefore, decision-makers should properly consider the viability of retaining both sites until any newly built facility is available for pupils to move into. This would also allow for an alternative use for the Alderman Swindell site to be properly determined, consulted on and, if necessary, progress through the necessary planning permission process, before usage of the site ceases.

Closing a school, especially one with a long history of service to the community, such as Alderman Swindell, should never be taken lightly, and I am sure that it will not be. It should only been taken after the decision-makers have properly reassured themselves that this is the best way to secure improved educational outcomes in the North Yarmouth area. I would encourage the Council to closely consider the concerns raised by the consultation, and to take any necessary steps to ensure that whatever the outcome of the consultation, the decision is based on evidence and any concerns are adequately addressed so that the local community is confident the correct decision has been made.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis MP

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