# Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

## Member of Parliament for Fareham and Waterlooville
### HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Mr Richard Vaughan, Strategic Manager**
**Children's Services Department**
**EII Court North, Winchester**
**Hampshire SO23 8UG**

**3rd February 2025**

Dear Richard,

**Re: Consultation on the Relocation of The Henry Cort Community College**

The proposal by Hampshire County Council (HCC) to relocate The Henry Cort Community College from its established site in Fareham to a new location in North Whiteley raises significant concerns.

Henry Cort has long been a cornerstone of education in the Fareham community, providing quality education and fostering a sense of local identity. Relocating the school would not only disrupt this legacy but also dismantle the strong community ties that have been built over the years.

The Fareham area is experiencing a growing demand for school places; maintaining Henry Cort at its current location is essential to accommodate this increasing population. The school's presence ensures that educational facilities are accessible to local families, thereby supporting the community's growth and cohesion.

Relocation would impose considerable inconvenience on families. Forcing students to commute to North Whiteley daily would not only increase travel time and costs but also disrupt students' routines, affecting their academic performance and well-being. This move could disproportionately impact families without the means to manage longer commutes, further exacerbating educational inequalities.

It is also important to note that a significant majority of the community opposes this relocation. A recent consultation concluded that 72% of respondents favoured keeping Henry Cort at its current site with a reduced catchment area.

The relocation of Henry Cort threatens to erode a valuable educational institution, fails to account for the growing demand for school places in Fareham, and imposes undue hardship on local families. It is imperative that HCC reconsider this proposal in light of these significant concerns and the overwhelming opposition.

**I object to Hampshire County Council's proposal. First and foremost, Henry Cort must not be closed.**

In the event that HCC ignores the local community's shared opposition towards closing Henry Cort, I call on HCC to repurpose Henry Cort as a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school.

In my time as an MP for over a decade, I have worked hard to support families with securing an educational placement for their SEND children. However, in recent years, this has become increasingly unsustainable. There are a rising number of children without an educational placement due to waiting times, tribunal cases (which are at a record level), and the lack of available SEND places.

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According to HCC's own report (19 January 2024), '*the latest data continues to show a significant increase in pupils with Education Health & Care Plans (ECHP)*' with figures confirming a **340% increase** since 2015. Furthermore, HCC states, '*The increase in the SEND school population has put a significant pressure on existing special schools and resourced provision necessitating the need for expansions of existing provision and new schools.*'

Currently serving around 900 pupils, Henry Cort could comfortably support 3-400 SEND places. The school is in a good, open, but quiet area, which would be an ideal setting for young people and their sensory needs.

There could also be advantages to bringing support branches such as CAMHS, local charities, and Fareham/Gosport SEN services closer together under one roof, and, if based in the school, it could form a central hub to support the other schools in the area, with some also now having smaller SEND hubs.

I would like to know what HCC's plans are for SEND investment. Additionally, as you admit that increased provision is a necessity, I request that HCC explore this opportunity in detail and measure the potential benefits this could bring to SEND within Hampshire.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP**

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