

30<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Cllr Natasha Airey  
Democratic Services  
Town Hall  
St Ives Road  
Maidenhead  
SL6 1RF

Dear Cllr Airey,

We are writing to express our disappointment in your lack of commitment to support Lowbrook Academy at the public RBWM Council Meeting on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June whereby the additional capital for the Academy was debated and voted for.

As lead member, and after promoting your paper and answering questions on it, we believe it was unacceptable that you proceeded to announce you would be abstaining from the vote.

It is also important to note that the school did not have the opportunity to have any input into the paper (which was inaccurate); were refused the right to speak freely at the meeting; were unable to correct the inaccuracies during this public meeting; and were marginalised by the Council since the General Election. In short, the process was not democratic and a complaint will be made outlining our concerns to the Monitoring Officer in due course. It was astonishing that the Leader of the Council abstained and even more so that you followed suit after promoting the paper you had sponsored. This is unprecedented and we question the constitutional integrity of this action.

As you know, the vote was increasingly tight with 23 votes 'for' and 23 votes 'against', with the casting vote going to the Mayor. A vote of support by yourself would therefore have made all the difference in facilitating the school to move forward with the expansion.

The Lowbrook Academy expansion was at the request of RBWM and you are the Lead Member for Education; and have been through this entire process. Right from the outset, this project has been underfunded and governed poorly by the RBWM team which you lead. The school's views throughout this process have been marginalised and manipulated. It was clear on Tuesday, via your content and delivery that you did not back this scheme.

Furthermore, this is in total contradiction to the promises made in the Conservative manifesto outlining their plans to invest in and expand good and outstanding schools. For you, as a Conservative member, not to openly support one of the main policies is frankly astounding.

Whilst unsubstantiated, as I'm sure you will claim your own political independence, your husband voting against our expansion did not instil further confidence in your commitment. Our treatment at times during this whole process has been on the verge of being unprofessional, at the very least.

What makes matters worse is that the debate included many examples of mis-information, particularly on the matter of Lowbrook Academy's sense of community. For the record, the Academy has provided practical assistance at the request of RBWM to many other local schools including Woodlands Park, Saint Luke's, Datchet St. Marys, Desborough, Hamilton



and Dedworth Middle. The Executive Principal has mentored over six Headteachers in this Local Authority alone and several externally. He is a regular invited speaker at national conferences and has frequent international visits from Bethel University in USA, the Tanglin Trust Schools in Singapore and New Zealand Woolf-Fisher Scholarships. It would also be wrong to not reiterate that Lowbrook Academy and Mr. Rooney preside over the highly successful co-operation of Holy Trinity School in Cookham.

Misrepresentation of Lowbrook Academy's integrity is intolerable. The Governing Body are publicly requesting that, on the basis of the above points, you take responsibility for this expansion failure and resign your position as Lead Member of Education.

Yours sincerely,



**Ms Dominique Du Pré**  
Chair of Governors



**Mr David Rooney**  
Executive Principal