Ms Jo Butler,

Cotham Lawn Road,  
Cotham,  
Bristol,  
BS6 6DT,

11th December 2018

Dear Ms Butler,

**Re:  Appeal to re-think planned perimeter fencing at Stoke Lodge Playing Fields**

I write on behalf of my fellow signatories to urge the school to reconsider this move.

As you may be aware, on Saturday 8th December hundreds of local residents and their action group “We Love Stoke Lodge” (WLSL) held a demonstration at Stoke Lodge to show the strength of feeling felt over the prospect of losing open access to this last piece of green space in this part of the City.  There is also horror at the visual impact of two metre fencing enclosing the grounds of this beloved local area.

The history and importance of this site to people have been explored and examined in great detail as a result of the previously unsuccessful Town and Village Green application.  Suffice to say this land has been enjoyed for generations and no-one can be in any doubt the value placed on it by those who live in North Bristol. This includes some of the most socially deprived communities in Bristol - Sea Mills, Lawrence Weston, Southmead and Henbury.

From my point of view, I find it very sad that some sort of accommodation between Cotham School and the public has not yet been found over this vexed issue.  I believe it is in the interests of all parties that this dispute is brought to an amicable conclusion. Unfortunately, recourse to law usually only ends up entrenching or hardening opposing positions.

Rather than damaging the reputation of Cotham School further in the eyes of many – particularly current users of this shared open public space - I make the plea for a more empathic approach be taken instead.  Let there be more ‘learning to walk a mile in someone else’s shoes’ as opposed to winner-takes-all antagonism.’  Just because the school believes it is permitted to erect this fencing, a belief that is currently under dispute, does not mean it should do so.  The harm this will do to community relations is incalculable.  Is this really a price worth paying?

I ask that you pause to reflect and defer implementing this fencing strategy.  May I suggest that a meeting is held in the New Year between representatives of the school, WLSL, and elected representatives from North Bristol. Please let me have some dates and times which would work for the school.

Yours sincerely

Mark Weston

Prospective MP for Bristol North West

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| Cllr John Goulandris | Cllr Peter Abraham |
| Cllr Geoff Gollop | Cllr Liz Radford |
| Cllr Steve Smith | Cllr Matthew Melias |
| Cllr Chris Window | Cllr Claire Hiscott |

Mr Mike Jackson,

Bristol City Council,

City Hall, PO Box 3176,

Bristol BS3 9FS

11th December 2018

Dear Mike,

**Re:  Stoke Lodge - withdrawal of permitted development rights for 1.5km 2 metre fence**

We the undersigned formally request that BCC as LPA withdraws any permitted development rights at Stoke Lodge. This will allow any development at this Council owned site to be by way of the usual planning application process, which will ensure decisions are made in a transparent and open manner following extensive public consultation.

You are probably aware of the background here but in brief, Cotham School are proposing the erection of a 2 metre fence of 1.5 kilometres, which will have the effect of excluding the public from free access to the grounds of Stoke Lodge.

As you may have seen in local media reports, on Saturday 8th December hundreds of local residents and their action group “We Love Stoke Lodge” held a demonstration at Stoke Lodge to show the strength of feeling felt over the prospect of losing open access to this last piece of green space in this part of the City.  The meeting was also attended by many elected representatives of North Bristol.

There is genuine horror at the visual impact of the proposed 1.5 kilometres long, 2 metre high, fencing enclosing this traditional open space. This is what the school is proposing under what it believes are its permitted development rights.

The history and importance of this site to people have been explored and examined in great detail as a result of the previously unsuccessful Town and Village Green application.  Suffice to say this land has been enjoyed for generations and no-one can be in any doubt the value placed on it by those who live in North Bristol. This includes some of the most socially deprived communities in Bristol - Sea Mills, Lawrence Weston, Southmead and Henbury.

Ward members, Cllrs Abraham and Goulandris met with Zoe Wilcox and Gary Collins on Friday 7th December. At the meeting the planners confirmed that they had changed their minds and now believed, that in their view, Cotham School could use permitted development rights to build a fence at a height of 2 metres for whatever length required.

In recognition of the above concerns and of the public interest in ensuring that the school's fence proposal is subject to appropriate public scrutiny (which would be the case if a planning application had to be submitted) we now formally request the LPA to exercise its power under Regulation 4 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 to issue a direction removing permitted development rights in this instance, and to ensure that development does not begin while this request is under consideration.

The LPA has power to do this if it is satisfied that it is expedient that the development should not be carried out unless planning permission is granted for it on an application. I submit that because of the highly contentious nature of the proposal and the substantial damage which will be caused to the amenity of a Council-owned Grade II listed heritage asset, it is essential that the LPA exercise its discretion in issueing a direction in this instance.

This is a matter of crucial importance to many people in North Bristol. I urge you to intervene.

Yours sincerely

Mark Weston

Prospective MP for Bristol North West

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| Cllr Chris Window | Cllr Claire Hiscott |

Mayor Marvin Rees,

Bristol City Council,

City Hall, PO Box 3176,

Bristol BS3 9FS

11th December 2018

Dear Marvin,

**Re:  Stoke Lodge - withdrawal of permitted development rights for 1.5km 2 metre fence**

As you may have seen in local media reports, on Saturday 8th December hundreds of local residents and their action group “We Love Stoke Lodge” held a demonstration at Stoke Lodge to show the strength of feeling felt over the prospect of losing open access to this last piece of green space in this part of the City.  The meeting was also attended by Darren Jones MP. I’m sure Darren can provide an independent briefing for you.

One of the key messages from those attending the demonstration was a desire to see elected representatives taking back control of what appear to be Council Officer delegated decisions. Hence my letter to you.

There is genuine horror at the visual impact of the proposed 1.5 kilometres long, 2 metre high, fencing enclosing this traditional open space. This is what the school is proposing under what it believes are its permitted development rights.

The history and importance of this site to people have been explored and examined in great detail as a result of the previously unsuccessful Town and Village Green application.  Suffice to say this land has been enjoyed for generations and no-one can be in any doubt the value placed on it by those who live in North Bristol. This includes some of the most socially deprived communities in Bristol - Sea Mills, Lawrence Weston, Southmead and Henbury.

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Mark Weston

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Rt. Hon. Damien Hinds MP

Secretary of State for Education.

Department for Education,

Ministerial and Public Communications Division,

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

11th December 2018

Dear Mr Hinds,

**Re: Erection of fencing by Cotham School (Bristol) around the Stoke Lodge Open Space**

We are writing to you today as elected representatives of North Bristol on behalf of many worried local residents concerning the behaviour and proposals of Cotham School.

On Saturday 8th December hundreds of local residents and their action group “We Love Stoke Lodge” held a demonstration at Stoke Lodge to show the strength of feeling felt over the prospect of losing open access to this last piece of green space in this part of the City.  The meeting was very well attended.

There is genuine horror at the visual impact of the proposed 1.5 kilometres long, 2 metre high, fencing enclosing this traditional open space. This is what the school is proposing under what it believes are its permitted development rights.

The history and importance of this site to people have been explored and examined in great detail as a result of the previously unsuccessful Town and Village Green application.  Suffice to say this land has been enjoyed for generations and no-one can be in any doubt the value placed on it by those who live in North Bristol. This includes some of the most socially deprived communities in Bristol - Sea Mills, Lawrence Weston, Southmead and Henbury.

The reason that we are writing to you in your capacity as Secretary of State for Education is that this enclosure is being made possible because of a grant of £690k accessed from the ESFA fund. We believe that the Education Department will need to seriously consider whether it is worth public money being spent on an activity that will in all likelihood result in legal challenge. A challenge that if successful would require the fencing to be removed.

To date the school has already spend circa £150k of taxpayer money on fighting the community to fence off this much loved open space. To our mind this is the very definition of a waste of time and money.

I would therefore suggest that this grant be paused as the legal situation is dealt with to avoid such a risk to the taxpayer.

Yours sincerely

Mark Weston

Prospective MP for Bristol North West

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