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Latest move on Clifden School site

The Secretary of State for Education has granted permission to allow the Diocese of Westminster to propose the establishment of a voluntary aided Catholic Secondary School in Richmond upon Thames.

Council officers will now meet with the Diocese to discuss next steps and establish the Diocese's timetable for publishing a statutory proposal to establish the school. The Diocese's consultation will be done in two phases, and last a minimum of 10 weeks.

The Council will launch its own consultation later this month on the establishment of a new Catholic secondary and the use of the Clifden Road site that the Council purchased last summer. .

Cllr Paul Hodgins, Richmond Council Cabinet Member for Schools, said: "One of the very top priorities for this Council is our programme, working in partnership with our schools, to create further capacity, quality, and choice across our secondary system. This programme includes working with schools on standards, facilitating sixth forms, commissioned services, and capacity planning. It also includes continuing the Council's longstanding support for a Catholic secondary in the borough.

"There has been much debate over the past few months about the prospect of a new Catholic secondary, and rightly so. Few issues are as important to our borough as education. We made a commitment to support the introduction of a Catholic school. We also made a commitment to be a consulting council, and to listen to the views of residents, in this case on the use of the Clifden Road site for the introduction of a Catholic school, or otherwise. We will honour both commitments.

We will launch our consultation this month, with more details to follow soon. Once both the Council's consultation and the Diocese's consultation are complete, all results will come back to the Council's cabinet, and we will make a decision based on all factors." **Ends**

Notes to editors

Members of the public requiring more information should call the Council's contact centre for more information by phoning 08456 122660.