

DeHavilland Alert

London Borough Press Release

[Richmond upon Thames Borough Council - NEWS - Secretary of State for Education confirms Council decision on Catholic Schools is lawful](#)

Wed, 3 October 2012

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Richmond Council is urging the **British Humanist Association** and Jeremy Rodell to end their legal campaign against two new Catholic schools in the borough following a request from the Secretary of State for Education to intervene in the judicial review proceedings.

In May the Council's Cabinet agreed that the Clifden Site should be used for a five-form Catholic secondary school and a one form Catholic primary school and approved proposals for two new voluntary aided schools published by the Diocese of Westminster under section 11(1A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The Council's decisions followed a consultation where sixty seven per cent of parents and residents who responded agreed that the site should be used to establish the Catholic Secondary School and fifty seven percent were in favour of the primary school.

Since this decision was made, the Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign (RISC), led by resident Jeremy Rodell, with support from the **British Humanist Association** (BHA), have campaigned to have the decision overturned and have been granted permission by the High Court for a Judicial Review Hearing. They claim that the Council failed to comply with new legislation which requires a local authority to invite proposals for an academy if it thinks a new school is needed. The Council has said that it did consider its obligations under the new legislation properly and that its decisions were lawful.

The Secretary of State has now applied to take part in the proceedings as an interested party. He has stated that his view is that under the new legislation when a local authority is considering a proposal made under s.11(1A), such as the proposals for new schools in Richmond made by the Diocese of Westminster, the local authority is not under a duty to invite proposals for an academy before lawfully being able to approve the proposal.

Cllr Lord True, Leader of the Council, said:

"The **British Humanist Association** and Mr Rodell have based their whole attempt to overthrow a local, democratically-made decision on the basis of one point of legislation.

"Throughout this whole process we have taken legal advice and been advised by our own legal advisers that the decision to approve the two sets of proposals for the establishment of schools is fully within the law. I am pleased that the Department for Education has confirmed its earlier advice that the Council was entitled to approve the proposals.

"Every day this legal campaign continues, the Borough will incur legal costs which may not be fully recovered from the claimants. It is also causing a great deal of uncertainty for a large number of parents across the borough who have already started applying for places for their children at either of the schools, schools which many of them have asked for, for years.

“It is high time Mr Rodell showed some appreciation of the worries of those parents. In the light of this development, he should now tell his national leaders in the BHA to stop using Richmond children as playthings in their ideological campaign to stop church schools. Every penny spent on lawyers is money lost to the education of all young people in the borough . The government's intervention has made clear it has had - and still does have - no intention whatsoever of stopping the creation of new faith schools. Mr Rodell and the BHA should respect the outcome of local democratic debate and send their lawyers home.”

Ends

Notes to editors

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

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