

I wish to express in the strongest possible terms my objections to the planned "pre-departure accommodation" facility in Pease Pottage. Not only does the proposed facility completely fail to fulfil the Coalition's pledge to end "the detention of children for immigration purposes", the whole planning application and the process so far followed by the Home Office is fatally flawed.

Firstly, in seeking to expedite the project in order to meet the Coalition's self-imposed deadline of 11 May 2001 for the ending of the detention of children in immigration facilities, it has been subject to none of the EU Procurement procedures necessary, with no restricted pre-qualification questionnaires issued or open tendering documents released. When officials were questioned as to why at a recent UKBA stakeholders meeting they claimed there was not enough time to do so. This clearly breached EU Procurement Directives.

Secondly, the planning application for a Change of Use itself is flawed. The current occupant of the site is residential school for children with behavioural and learning difficulties. Under the planning regulations this is classified as Class C2 [Residential institutions - Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres]. The Home Office is arguing that "pre-departure accommodation" falls into this category, rather than the normal Class C2A [C2A Secure Residential Institution - Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks] classification applied to all other immigration detention facilities.

Yet, all adults accommodated in this facility, with its 2.5m high security fences, CCTV and electronically-operated gates, will be held under a secure status; they will arrive and leave in secure transport and they will not be allowed to leave the facility whilst there. Additionally, their children will only be allowed to leave the facility subject to a risk assessment and under suitable adult supervision. All will continue to be held under the provisions of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009, exactly the same provisions currently used to hold families and children for immigration purposes, exactly the same form of 'administrative detention' as was introduced in the Immigration Act 1971.

This clearly falls into Class C2A and as such the application should be rejected. Additionally, the provision of "pre-departure accommodation" in no way fulfils the Coalition's pledge to end "the detention of children for immigration purposes" and the very fact that a residential school for children with behavioural and learning difficulties, a much needed community resource, is being closed in order to accommodate this new species of detention centre only adds insult to injury, both to the current child residents and to the potential future residents, none of whom have committed any crime yet will be deprived of their liberty here in Pease Pottage.

I therefore urge you to do all you can to voice opposition to this plan.

Yours

[your name and address]

## West Sussex District Central Area Planning Committee

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