

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 11:59
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Transport

Dear Mr. Baugh,

I would appreciate it if you would please pass on the following to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 15th January.

I have been a Governor at Lady Hawkins" School for over 4 years and both my children go there.

I'm not sure if the Council realises the pressures including financial which schools, particularly small high schools like LHS, have to face on a day in day out basis. The goalposts are continuously changing and schools have to change and adapt and think up new ways of providing a broad curriculum all the time.

In addition LHS endeavours to be a community school and is a vital component of the town - I am also on the Town Council and we work closely with the school and they with us for the mutual benefit of us all. "Community" includes family and it is also clear that pupils often do better at school if they have siblings there.

What Herefordshire Council has agreed to will sever those family links, in many cases forcing younger siblings to attend a different school (particularly in the poorer families where sibling support plays an even more important role) as well as to decrease the pupils attending LHS by up to 30. In a small school this could be disastrous as it may tip us over the edge, making us no longer viable when we have already had to cope with falling rolls due to reduced birth rates at secondary school age and Wigmore creaming off pupils from Pembridge, one of our feeder primary schools.

Maybe shutting the school is the intention of the Council? Perhaps it would prudent for the relevant members to visit the school before they make such an important decision to see the vibrant, caring community that they may be putting at risk? And it is even reported that the Council are not absolutely sure that this whole exercise will save money?! For example, although the intention is to reduce the number of buses, for at least the first 2 years there will be even more buses required as the older pupils are allowed to stay on at their current schools yet younger pupils will have to be bused in opposite directions to different schools! Even after that it is not clear that there will be a reduced need for buses. Has it really been carefully thought out and priced up? Does the Council have any idea what the intentions are of the families which will be affected? It could well lead simply to a huge increase in cars on the road!

I realise that the process will in theory be reviewed at some future date but that will not be before families are split up, the education of many children is messed around and schools, their staff and the communities they serve are put at risk.

My question therefore to the Committee, once this email has been seen by them all, is - do they feel the introduction of this "cost-cutting" exercise is really worth it?

Thank you,
Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

