

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:52
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Questions for the Scrutiny Committee 15th January 2014

Please find attached the questions that I wish to be put before the Scrutiny Committee on 15th January, covering the call-in of the decision to change the school transport policy.

- Can the committee clarify whether the members of the Cabinet were made aware of the miscommunication of the Worcestershire Transport policy prior to the vote? On page 78 of the agenda for the the Cabinet meeting section G states 'A response from Worcestershire LA confirming our proposals are as part of their own back in 2011'. However, on reading this policy it states in Section 3 (a) (ii) page 3 that Worcestershire provide free transport provided to those children of compulsory school age and attending the nearest, **designated** or re-designated school for the home address. Further definition of a **designated** school, within the same document, in Section 5, page 8 is that every address in Worcestershire is within a school catchment area and that school is then the designated school for that area. This definition remains in all of their subsequent transport policies, including the future one for 2014/2015.
- In the agenda for the Cabinet meeting for the Transport Policy Vote, 19th December, section 10.8 recognises that cost savings cannot be proven in a robust manner by the Officer's analysis, given this has the Committee considered that:
 - From Cradley and Mathon, current students in Y10-Y13 and other eligible students would still have to be bused into JMHS. However other students would need to be bused to Dyson Perrins in Worcestershire. Thus there would be two buses paid for by the Council not one. Therefore has the cost of additional multiple buses from villages going to different counties been factored into the cost analysis?
 - Have the officers involved conducted wider consultation with transport providers and Secondary Schools to identify further alternatives?
- Can the committee explain what is meant by 'catchment' in terms of educational places and how this is reflected in the policy?
- Has an assessment been made of the financial impact of exporting primary students from top 10 performing schools in Herefordshire to out of county, to both KS2 Level 4 attainment and the sustainability of affected primary and secondary schools.
- Why did Yr 6 Secondary School application forms received this year make no mention of the transport consultation or the fact that Herefordshire received confirmation from four out of five adjoining Local Authorities (Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire) that they would not allow changes to parental preferences in the current Admissions Transfer Round (year 7 from September 2014) received after the official closing date of 31st October 2013 as a result of Herefordshire changing their transport policy with effect from September 2014?
- Has the sustainability and environmental impact of additional buses and cars being used for school transport been modelled, additionally how does this vote align with the Herefordshire Sustainable Transport Strategy?
- Has the financial impact of the predicted loss of students been modelled for each of the affected schools, year on year, so that we are sure that the schools are financially robust to the loss?

- Has a People Impact Assessment/Equality Impact Assessment been conducted as part of this policy change, if so did it consider the impact upon families around the Herefordshire border?
- With academies free to design and teach their own curriculum rather than following the national curriculum, students moving school after Year 7,8,9 would face particular disadvantages. They could have missed out considerable chunks of learning or forced to study the same topics twice. What account has been taken of educational disadvantage to Herefordshire children in these calculations?
- The change would encourage more parents to drive their children into school rather than catching buses thus decreasing cost effectiveness of bus services and preventing the alleged savings from taking place. What account has been taken of this?

Regards

