

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:29
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: Attwood, Carl (Cllr)
Subject: CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

Dear Mr Baugh,

CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

I am a parent of two children who attend John Masefield High School in Ledbury and I am seriously alarmed and somewhat outraged by the changes that have been proposed and accepted by Herefordshire Council in regard to School transport. I understand that the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee are meeting on 15 January and members of the public are free to ask questions and that these must be sent to you by 5pm this afternoon. I would like the following question to be included in the proceedings.

I would like Herefordshire Council to explain to me why as a resident and tax payer of this County I am going to be unfairly disadvantaged when it comes to providing my children's education?

To be clear, This statement refers to the fact that If I lived in any of the neighbouring Counties, I would face the dilemma that my wife and I now face.

If my son and daughter are going to stay at John Masefield I will need to pay approximately £1.8k per year for transport. My daughter is in yr 7 and has had a very successful transition from primary school (Cradley) her "feeder school". At the moment, most of her primary school friends are also at JM and she is happy, settled and doing well (surely what you desire from our school children). To move her would be disruptive to her education and potentially harmful to her emotionally and socially.

My son is 16 and in the first year of his A levels at JM. Despite battling with severe ADHD over most of his school career he has achieved excellent GCSE grades with A's and A*s across the board including maths and sciences. Since being at JM he has made miraculous progress in terms of his behaviour and academic work and has been working as a gifted and talented student on much of the curriculum. This is because he is happy and settled in a great school. The idea of moving him or his sister would seriously challenge this. Again, I suggest this is the kind of result we would all celebrate in our schools, why would we risk undoing all of the good work and investment made to date just to achieve such small savings. By the way we are currently having to pay for my son's transport as he is post 16. Post 16 transport is more expensive than the £720 being asked for under 16's and may not be sustainable for us in the long term (we also have a son at University).

If I can not pay this sum to keep my children at JM, I will have to send them to Dyson Perrins in Malvern. Having looked at Dyson Perrins, I have not been impressed with its standards or reputation and would not choose this school for my children. **The second point to my accusation of unfair treatment is that by pursuing this policy, you remove any element of choice I have as parent for my children's education.** For the past decade the UK has seen an increasing government mantra about parental choice. League tables, online statistics and increasing competition between schools to attract the best students have all led us to believe that parental choice is a key cornerstone of education in the UK. Apparently not in Herefordshire. In essence this policy means that I must send my children to a school not of my choosing, even if its out of county unless I can afford almost £2k per year in transport fees.

To conclude, the changes to transport policy are deeply unfair and in my opinion immoral. They will be seriously damaging to the short and long term lives of our children, local schools, and the prosperity of the County. I also believe these changes specifically target those of us in the rural parts of the County who arguably receive little in return for our Council Tax compared to urban residents. Herefordshire is predominately a rural county, it is beautiful and fruitful and those of us living and working in the countryside make a major contribution to the County's prosperity. Please do not treat us unfairly or deny us the choice that is afforded to everyone else.

Yours Sincerely



Cc Clr C Attwood