

## Questions re: Herefordshire School Transport Decision

For Scrutiny Meeting on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014

- In some areas of the county the vast majority of children live closer to a school outside of the county in which they live. The 'designated/catchment' school may be the one in Herefordshire and yet Herefordshire Council will only provide transport to the nearest school. If this is in another county, the admission criteria for that county high school will not rank children out of their 'catchment' very highly making it less likely for them to secure a place. However, they would still rank reasonably high for their catchment school in Herefordshire. They may secure a place at their catchment school only to find they will not be funded for transport. If the out of county school can not allocate them a place our local authority will still need to provide transport to the Herefordshire high school. How will this save money?
- We understand that children whose parents are entitled to Free School Meals or who are in receipt of Maximum Working Tax Credit have 'extended/additional rights' and can therefore receive free transport to any one of up to three nearest high schools within 2-6 miles of their home address. BUT, what happens if those families no longer meet the criteria to receive this funding? Will they have to suddenly find £720 per child for transport if the school is not their nearest?
- Herefordshire Council did not make their intentions clear to parents of current year 6 pupils before requiring them to make their preferred choice of secondary school. Our adjoining authorities would not permit any changes to parental preference after the official closing date of 31 October 2013. Was due consideration given to the implementation date of the proposed changes?
- **Other authorities have chosen to use 'a nearest or catchment' policy or 'nearest school in county' policy (Gloucester/Durham). Have these options been considered? If they were, and then discounted, why?**