

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR

General Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 15 January 2014

9.00 am

Council Chamber - Brockington

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Pages

3 - 232

Officers' response to public questions

86 submissions were received and these are reproduced, in redacted form, in this supplement to the Committee's agenda. A number of these submissions either simply wished to make the Committee aware of the views of the correspondent or raised questions which do not relate to the reasons for call in. Of those questions which do relate to the reasons for call in, given the number of questions raised and the time available, responses have been provided to identified themes within the questions raised. Where questions require detailed individual responses relating to the circumstances of that individual or school, responses will be provided direct to the correspondent in due course.

Theme	Response
<p><i>Reason for call-in: It is not clear that the cost modelling has taken the full cost impact of the decision into account across all areas of the council's operation, and therefore assurance is sought that the total anticipated net financial effect is achievable, realistic and proportionate.</i></p> <p>On what basis has the cost modelling been carried out? Does it take account of: potential loss of pupil grants; impact on costs of providing additional buses or if nearest school does not have capacity; additional resources required to support SEN pupils at nearest school?</p>	<p>The implications for the change to the home school transport policy were considered across a range of aspects and in detail. In particular the impact on families, schools and the wider transport network was examined, including the potential negative impact if numbers of children were not educated in Herefordshire schools. The potential savings to the Councils home to school transport budget and the contribution to the wider Council budget were also considered.</p> <p>The cost modelling for savings that might be realised through introducing the nearest school only policy was set out in paragraphs 10.8 and 10.9 of the report. It is very difficult to predict what parents might choose to do on the introduction of the policy change as transport is not the sole determinant of where parents choose to send their children. Analysis of the data about riders can show the number affected i.e. how many pupils would not necessarily be entitled under the new policy. At the outset it was identified that there were 850 riders.</p> <p>A number of possible scenarios in the cost modelling were considered, dependent on parental decisions and options introduced by community groups and schools. If all parents/carers of the children who are currently being transported, but were not entitled under the new policy, decided to pay the increased cost of transport the council would receive an increase in revenue, and therefore make a saving in the Council's home to school transport budget, of £680,000 (850 riders X £800 contribution). £800 is the average cost of transport for a pupil</p>

Theme	Response
	<p>for a year without on costs. Alternatively, if every parent/carer, affected by the policy change, decided to send their child to the nearest school, some would not be entitled as the nearer school would be closer than the statutory distance (2 or 3 miles depending on age) along a safe walking route, others would be transported on contracts that would be cheaper, as the overall mileage would be less. It was considered that the full effect of either scenario would be unlikely.</p> <p>The assumptions underpinning the potential savings to the Councils home to school transport budget of £250,000 were that 60% (500) of those affected transfer to their nearest school at no extra cost (still entitled but on a different route and at no extra cost over and above that when they were being transported to their catchment school), 20% (175) pay for a seat on their existing route and 175 make their own arrangements (car share or public bus) or use other transport arrangements provided by their catchment school. The 60% assumption reflects the pattern of parental choice of schools as 43% of parents don't send their child the catchment school.</p> <p>If there is not sufficient space at the nearest school for the 60% seeking a transfer then it has been assumed that free transport would then be provided to the next nearest school with space (at no extra cost over and above the cost when they were being transported to their catchment school).</p> <p>As a result of the consultation changes to the original proposal were made which also altered the savings projections. The consultation identified some aspects where some children from Herefordshire might be disadvantaged by their parents/carers feeling they would have to attend a Welsh school or have the GCSE courses they have started disrupted. The estimated ongoing cost of not applying a nearest school in Wales policy is estimated to be circa £60,000 a year. The full year cost of delaying implementation for those who will be in Y10 11 in September 2014 will be £188,000. The approach to Y10 and Y11 and nearest school in Wales is reflective of due consideration being given to the views of schools and families as</p>

Theme	Response
	<p>expressed through the consultation.</p> <p>The model also considered potential impact of a change in the pattern of schools parents choose compared to the current catchment arrangements. While the reasons for parents/carers sending their children to different schools are many and varied, schools and the Local Authority are mindful of the numbers on roll as they play a large part in determining their overall budget. Already, some 43% of Herefordshire parents do not send their children to their catchment school. Some schools already co-ordinate and organise transport for children who are not in their catchment area.</p> <p>A further factor is that there are a significant number of surplus places across schools in Herefordshire; schools therefore are already in competition with each other for pupils. Herefordshire schools attract children not only from other schools within Herefordshire but from neighbouring Local Authority areas Circa 300 out of county pupils currently attend Herefordshire secondary school and 180 Herefordshire pupils live nearer to another English Local Authority school too. The picture is already mixed and varied which suggests it is factors outside of a change to transport policy which will determine the viability or otherwise of schools. Schools may want to extend and develop the incentive for parents to attend by offering transport as some already do. The annual cost of a particular contract can be less than the overall average the LA uses.</p> <p>Schools close to other Local Authority borders attract significant numbers of children from neighbouring local authority areas. While the neighbouring Local Authority transport policies vary parents are choosing to send their children to Herefordshire schools, highlighting the choice and competition policy preferred by the Government. It is both realistic and proportionate to believe the changes to the transport policy will not be the determining factors in the success or failure of schools to attract pupils and therefore remain sustainable.</p> <p>The council's wider responsibilities and aspirations to provide a cost effective and efficient transport service for the residents is also linked to the development of an integrated transport</p>

Theme	Response
	<p>service. Children do use service buses and the integration of contracts should bring about not only cost savings but also efficiencies for contractors.</p> <p>The changes to the policy will result in the Council having to undertake fewer journeys and those that we do will be shorter. This will reduce the environmental impact.</p> <p>Modelling also considered where a school could not accommodate all children whose parents wanted them to go to their nearest school.. In line with the existing policy in these circumstances pupils would be transported to their next nearest school. This may not be the school that is currently described as the catchment</p> <p>If a child with Special Educational Needs transfers school as a consequence of a parent/carer feeling they should move schools as a result of the home to school transport policy changes then the detail and focus of their support will transfer with them.</p> <p>As with any modelling, the assumptions made could be different in reality. One of the expressed wishes of the Council is to work with schools, local communities and transport providers to retain stability in the school system. .</p>
<p><i>Reason for call-in: It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process.</i></p> <p>Concern that Cabinet based its decision on inaccurate information regarding schemes in place in Worcestershire.</p>	<p><i>During the consultation Herefordshire asked neighbouring local authorities for their views. Worcestershire's response advised that they had introduced similar policies in 2011. Further discussion with officers in Worcestershire confirms they have implemented the post 16 SEN contributions. A number of Local Authorities, including NE Somerset, Powys and Birmingham Y and Z have changed their school transport policy to nearest school only and some others including Oxfordshire and East Sussex are considering or consulting on similar changes.</i></p>

Theme	Response
<p>Concern to understand what weight was given to consultation responses in terms of decision-making and with reference to informing the equalities impact assessment.</p>	<p>The decision was taken in light of a range of factors, including information regarding a number of other Local Authorities.</p> <p>There was a very good response to the proposals and the Council does consider all responses very carefully as part of the decision making process. Some changes have been made as a result of the consultation, and some other issues raised are very much at the heart of the implementation of the policy. For example, working with local contractors and communities to see what can be done regarding prices, another is the exploration of how to spread costs for families.</p> <p>A two stage consultation was undertaken and following a testing of initial ideas a detailed consultation was embarked upon. The consultation and feedback is set out in the report paragraphs 16.1 and the response summary in appendix 3. Proposals were amended in light of consultation responses for example nearest English school, phased introduction for KS4 pupils, full cost recovery by way of parental contributions over 3 years and not 2 and Post 16 SEN contributions to start from September 2014 rather than April 2014.</p> <p>The equalities impact assessment attached to the report recognised that the introduction of a contribution to transport costs for post 16 SEN students may have a detrimental impact on a group with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equalities Act. Careful consideration was given to what mitigation would be in place if it was introduced. The cabinet members were satisfied there was mitigation including in the form of bursary grants available to families directly or via further education establishments. The impact on a parent of a child being in receipt of different grants is highly individual. The consultation very helpfully raised specific risks which the cabinet considered and which we will monitor and review to ensure there are no unintended impacts.</p>
<p>Did the consultation undertaken meet required standards of consultation; were all relevant bodies including bus operators and</p>	<p>. Following initial discussion there was a well-publicised formal consultation period of 6 weeks where respondents were able to present views that could affect the decision. Groups affected were engaged with through public meetings or meetings with officers and the lead member.</p>

Theme	Response
neighbouring authorities consulted?	The proposed changes were discussed with bus operators and neighbouring authorities
<i>Reason for call-in: No reasons have been given for dismissing the approaches taken in other authorities, e.g. Durham provision of 'nearest school in-county' option to parents.</i>	
What account has been taken of 'best practice' elsewhere?	The Local Authority looked at what other councils have done. Many councils are experiencing financial challenges and some are committing to reducing their costs to the minimum statutory level based on financial necessity or policy priorities. Durham provides assistance with transport, once distance criteria have been met, to the nearest school within Durham and the nearest school in a neighbouring authority. Other authorities have made changes to both the nearest school and post 16 SEN charging. E.g. Bath and NE Somerset. Alternative options were set out in the report and considered by Cabinet.
<i>Reason for call-in: Post-16 SEN proposals go against the Council's first principle of protecting the vulnerable</i>	
Have the impacts on families with a disabled child been fully explored?	The impact on families with children with a disability was explored fully through the equalities impact assessment attached to the report and which informed the decision taken by Cabinet. Central government have made available the 16-19 Bursary Fund for disabled and low income families seeking assistance with the costs associated with participation e.g. transport
<i>Reason for call-in: The decision has a disproportionate effect on families with more than one child if a sibling is forced to attend school out of county where holidays may not be taken at similar times</i>	
Have the impacts on families with children having different school holiday's been taken into account?	Every attempt is made by adjoining local authorities and schools to operate common school term dates because the problem highlighted already exists when primary aged children from families attend in one county and older siblings attend secondary schools in another. Academies already set their own term dates and in Herefordshire work constructively together with the Local Authority and other schools to minimise impact on families. From 2015 all schools will have the responsibility for setting term dates and the local authority is encouraging ongoing cooperation within and across borders.

Theme	Response
<p><i>Reason for call in: Families unable to afford this additional cost have not been given the notice they need to amend their school choices for Sept 2014 intake in the light of this decision.</i></p>	<p>The 2014 Herefordshire secondary school admission booklet made reference to the fact that the Local Authority was consulting on changes to the home to school transport policy and advised that changes could be approved after the deadline for applications. The issue of year 6 transfer also featured in the consultation information on the proposed policy changes. The process by which parents make changes to their preferred secondary school is set out on our website and in the information to parents, who also have access to appeal mechanisms should they feel it necessary.</p>
<p><i>Reason for call-in: The total effects of the decision in exporting the county's young people to schools in other counties, in not demonstrating adherence to the principles of our transport plan, in not evidencing alignment with our Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for schools*, and in not demonstrating that net savings at council level exist when loss of pupil grants are taken into account, raise concerns that aspects of this decision fall outside of the council's current Budget Monitoring and Policy Framework</i></p>	<p>Current school transport patterns are made up of parent activity, the Council's school transport provision, the public transport network, and transport provided by individual schools. Cabinet was aware of these factors in making its decision, and that any decision could alter the balance. For this reason the expectation as laid out in the report is that the integrated transport unit will work closely with parents, communities, schools and transport providers to maintain the most sustainable response.</p> <p>The move to defining eligibility for free school transport in terms of the nearest school rather than catchment should reduce some transport impacts and enable economies of scale in provided transport thus reducing costs and assisting with the Council's overall need to make significant savings.</p> <p>This is consistent with the Council's Local Transport Plan which seeks to reduce travel demand where possible. The Local Transport Plan, which forms part of the Council's Policy</p>
<p>What account has been taken of environmental and congestion impacts of this change in transport policy?</p>	<p>Current school transport patterns are made up of parent activity, the Council's school transport provision, the public transport network, and transport provided by individual schools. Cabinet was aware of these factors in making its decision, and that any decision could alter the balance. For this reason the expectation as laid out in the report is that the integrated transport unit will work closely with parents, communities, schools and transport providers to maintain the most sustainable response.</p> <p>The move to defining eligibility for free school transport in terms of the nearest school rather than catchment should reduce some transport impacts and enable economies of scale in provided transport thus reducing costs and assisting with the Council's overall need to make significant savings.</p> <p>This is consistent with the Council's Local Transport Plan which seeks to reduce travel demand where possible. The Local Transport Plan, which forms part of the Council's Policy</p>

Theme	Response
	<p>Framework, also identifies the coordinated review of all passenger transport services. This review is progressing and is identifying opportunities to integrate school transport services with the public bus network. This work is being informed by the proposed changes to the schools transport policy and meetings with schools to identify the best options for integration.</p>

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 January 2014 22:04
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Charging policy post 16 sen

Dear Mr Baugh

I am contacting you regarding the above decision.

I understand the scrutiny committee is sitting on 15.1.14

I would appreciate the following comments being made:

Re 16+ SEN transport charges.

Why was the comments made/prepared by Herefordshire Carers Support largely ignored in the report that went to the cabinet. ?

Why has there not been a representative co-opted onto the committee from a special school.? All other options of school have been represented?

The children affected have little choice as to which school/college to attend. The council has centralized the provision of SEN education therefore these children have to travel. This is not a parental choice. These families are being discriminated against.

The children affected are unable to use public transport. Many have physical needs that mean they cannot use public transport. Many are vulnerable and would be unable to make their way to/from home/school safely if they used public transport. Many have sensory issues and may panic if they heard a siren, or those with a learning disability may panic if a problem occurred, ie a bus was late/or bad weather meant a service did not run. etc. Many cannot use a mobile phone so are isolated and vulnerable if anything untoward happened.

The children affected are unable to find part time work so are unable to help their family toward these additional costs.

Parents of the children with additional needs have often had to give up or reduce their work to care for their family. They cannot afford the extra costs. This places a great strain upon the family who may already be struggling to cope. These families often have parents who have separated or are under great strain. The siblings are affected too, with less money available. This decision affects the whole family.

Additional costs are already being experienced by these families as these children need additional equipment - ie Crelling harness that costs more than £100, additional clothes, additional medical appointments.

School/college gives them a chance to learn new skills, (So ensuring they become the most independent they can be) , as well as socializing. The children affected are often socially isolated.

I ask that this decision is reviewed and these children and their families are not discriminated against any further.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2014 16:26
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: withdrawal of free secondary school transport

Dear Cllr Baugh,

I am very unhappy about the Council's decision to withdraw free school transport from September 2014. It is unjust that shortfalls in the Council's budget should be passed on to families in Herefordshire who choose to use the state school system. For the poorest families this decision will affect which school children attend, based not on educational preference but upon income. I am quite horrified that the Council should feel that saving money by denying choice of school to the most hard-pressed families is an acceptable way to trim its budgets. Once again we observe the greatest burden of cuts - the 'hard realities' which we hear about from the Chancellor - falling upon those least able to bear them - those who are the most disadvantaged in our society. This is a most disreputable decision and I hope that the Council will reverse it forthwith.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2014 19:46
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Herefordshire Schools Transport - questions regarding proposed policy change

Dear Mr Baugh

My son attends John Masefield High School, and we live in a village affected by the proposed changes. I fully support the objections raised by the submission made by the school; in addition I would like to raise the following questions regarding the proposed changes:

1. It is my understanding that there is no plan to change the catchment areas for the school in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire or Worcestershire. This will mean that pupils who have to attend schools outside their county because there is no transport to their school in catchment, will have the lowest priority when assessed for admission to schools in neighbouring catchment areas.

These Herefordshire children will effectively be condemned to attending the least popular schools in neighbouring counties (as these will be the schools with spare places after the children within the catchment area have been placed). This seems very unfair, and effectively creates a situation of discrimination against children living in Herefordshire villages, which could impair their education and hence limit their future opportunities. How will Herefordshire Council ensure that our children do not suffer discrimination under the catchment system due to their change in policy?

2. If Herefordshire children have to attend out of county schools as proposed there may not be sufficient school places available for some pupils in neighbouring catchments, or the only school with available places may be further away than their current Herefordshire school. Are there plans for Herefordshire Council to negotiate an agreement with neighbouring counties to provide additional school places for our children, within a reasonable distance?

I would be very grateful if you would raise these issues at the planned meeting of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15th January.

Thank you in anticipation

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2014 20:11
To: Harvey, Liz (Cllr); Millar, Jeremy (Cllr); Seldon, Alan (Cllr)
Cc: Baugh, Ben; Kenyon, Jim (Cllr)
Subject: School transport

Dear Cllrs Harvey, Millar and Seldon

I would be grateful if you could challenge the decision made by Herefordshire Council to change the post-16 transport policy. I am the mum of a boy aged 13 with learning disabilities, dyspraxia and autism, and this decision will directly affect my family. I would like to know....

Has the council properly considered the budgetary implications, looking at the loss of grant income for children with SEN? Children who are assessed as needing banded funding at level 3 bring £1350 and at level 4 £5500 on top of the £6000 allocated to each pupil at secondary school.

Has the Council looked at good practice in other similar local authorities?

Has the Council considered the Disability Equality Duty? Disabled people's needs should be fully taken into account before decisions are made, and this requirement is anticipatory. Families of disabled children already have lower than average incomes and are less likely to be able to afford transport costs. Parents are less likely to both be in work because of the difficulties in finding appropriate child care. Families are more likely to break down because of the stress of looking after a disabled child, and hence have less income. I think this inequality should be taken into account by Herefordshire Council.

I think this decision will adversely affect many families with disabled children in the county. A lot of our children are unable to access public transport, are unable to walk far due to physical disability and/or poor awareness of their own safety. We live in a rural county where our choices are limited anyway and this decision limits us even further.

When the budget cuts were announced I thought the Council were protecting our most vulnerable citizens. Who are these, if not our children and young people with disabilities?

Best wishes

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the person who wrote the letter.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2014 22:00
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Bus provision from Colwall
Attachments: School Bus representations to HCC.doc

Dear Mr Baugh

Please find attached a letter regarding the current proposals for the withdrawal of free home to school transport from Colwall to John Masefield High School that is being reconsidered next week by the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There are a number of questions I would like you to put to the committee as I believe they are making huge mistake and will actually be increasing costs instead of saving them, as well as upsetting a lot of people.


There is a lot of anger and disbelief in this bizarre scheme, which is ill thought-out by people who obviously have no involvement in the community here or any understanding of the care and dedication of the John Masefield staff who have worked hard with the local catchment schools to prepare kids for high school only to have it all taken away in having to move their kids to an out of county school.

I await the responses to my questions, and please contact me if there are any queries on the questions.

regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



7th January 2014

Dear Mr Baugh

RE: Withdrawal of Free home to School transport

I would like to make our views known on the withdrawal of free home to school transport and ask a number of questions relevant to it, to which I would like a response.

Living in the middle of Colwall we appear to be 4.3 miles from The Chase in Malvern but 5.0 miles from John Masefield High School in Ledbury. However when looking at journey time, it is quicker and easier to get into Ledbury because of the need to go up and down the high Malverns to get over to The Chase

Both our children previously attended the local primary school in the village and now both are high school age they are at John Masefield High School in Ledbury. The school have put a lot of effort in to developing relationships with local primary schools with the aim of getting the confidence of young children, a job I believe they have done well. This now seems to be put at risk when only wealthy parents can afford to send their children there, even though it is our catchment school. Both our children thoroughly enjoy school at John Masefield High school and are doing well there, so we would not wish to move them. However, neither do we wish to have an annual cost of £720 each child to pay for the bus.

The questions I would like to be answered are:-

1. Why when we took the council recommendation to send our children to attend the local catchment school are we now being penalised by being forced to change school or pay a large sum of money to pay for a bus to Ledbury?
2. How are hard working families sending their children to the catchment school supposed to find £720 per child (£1440 per annum in our case but £2160 in some friend's cases) at a time when incomes are static?
3. If this goes forward and you will now be providing a bus to take our children to Malvern, surely you will have to be providing 2 busses instead of 1 from Colwall (as we are close to the mileage split) and so I would like to know how this will save the council money?
4. I understand The Chase is full and so suspect we will not be able to get our child into the school and so the council may well end up having to pay for a bus further afield to Dyson Perrins for example. This is probably further than JMHS and so once again will cost more money – where is the saving in this scenario?

5. Empirical evidence has shown that children forced to move school mid way through their high school often suffer, what counselling and support will the council provide if required?
6. If the Worcestershire schools are full what other options will Herefordshire County Council provide for our Herefordshire children? – and where will the saving be?
7. I believe Herefordshire council developed a great partnership with parents and children through their “yes we can” plan so how does this proposal fit in with these plans that will force them to change school, away from many of their friends, spend much more time travelling to and from school, and be at the mercy of Worcestershire council where we (as a resident of a Herefordshire constituency) have little influence on them?
8. The government’s stated policy is to give parents choice of school wherever possible, and as we have chosen our catchment school, how does this policy stand with the councillors political masters?
9. I simply cannot see how these proposals will save money as at best there will be the same number of busses, but in reality may well result in additional busses being provided so will actually increase costs. How much cost will be saved and how realistic are they?

There is a lot of resistance and anger in the village to these proposals, which are unlikely to give any benefit. I therefore hope the council will see sense and reverse the decision when it is reviewed at the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee next week.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area, consisting of three stacked horizontal bars.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 08 January 2014 04:46
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Catchment/nearest school bus charges.

A decision that I like many others feel has been taken in haste looking at very short term cost savings. Indeed, when you start to think of the bigger picture you will realise that this is actually going to cost you far more than you are spending now. Having read the points raised by Mr Evans, Head of JMHS, I will be waiting with baited breath for the responses to each point raised.

To charge £3.75 per child per school day is a sum plucked from where?
Will everyone pay the same fee regardless of journey time?
Surely it would be far better to find a cheaper national supplier?
Could you not have set route which is free & parents responsibility to get child to bus stop nearest to them. (at least they could set up rotas between selves).
I do disagree with use of private taxis that seem to pick up certain pupils at a cost to the council.
Please clearly define "catchment" and difference to nearest, because surely the build was to serve the area built in.
We have a primary school in our village where approx one fifth of children are bussed in from Ledbury, because Ledbury primary school is full. Will all the nearest schools have the capacity, facilities & staff already in place for September.
I do hope this issue can be resolved in a sensible manner, using the experience and ideas of experts.
Personally I have no children of the age that will be affected.
A concerned adult of reasonable intellect.

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPad

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 January 2014 08:47
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Re: Changes to home to school transport policy

Dear Mr Baugh

As a teacher at John Masefield High School, I would like to express my concern over the changes to Herefordshire's home to school transport policy.

While I understand that there *may* be some minimal financial gain from this change of policy for the county (though that in itself is disputable), there seems to be no calculation or appreciation of the impact this will have on the families who expect their children to attend John Masefield.

In particular, I'm concerned that the new policy will force parents to make decisions that will be detrimental to both family life and the interests of their children purely for financial reasons. At present the majority of the families in our catchment area who choose to send their children to John Masefield make their decision unreservedly for all of their children. Under your new policy, parents are likely to be forced for financial reasons to send their children to different schools. This would certainly be the case for families who have children in current KS3 and KS4 classes. In my experience, there is much to be gained from the current provision and much to be lost through the changes being driven through. I can cite many examples of how older siblings help younger brothers and sisters to settle into high school, but one specific example occurred at a recent parents' consultation interview when a Y10 student accompanying her Y7 brother and mother stepped in to reassure her brother, one of our more vulnerable students, when he became upset over an issue raised. She very quickly drew on her own knowledge and familiarity with the school's interventions and support, offering him far more effective first hand reassurance than either I or his mother could have given. Separating families will put an end to this sort of support.


Aside from the emotional well-being of our young people, there are other consequences of families being forced to send their children to different schools. Some of these are financial such as not being able to hand down school uniform and others are practical such as trying to juggle two school calendars which may result in choices having to be made in terms of which school event they support when dates clash or coping with their children being on holidays at different times.

I would also like to raise the important issue of continuity for our students. For all children a move to high school is a big step and one that can be stressful. I can see no advantage in moving any child who has already settled into our school. But even more potentially damaging is the effect on our more vulnerable students. As a parent myself of a SEN child, I am fully aware of the need for these children in particular to have stability in order that they make the right level of progress. Furthermore, one of the big advantages of our school for our more vulnerable students is its size. I know my own son would not have coped in a much larger school, the size of one of the Malvern schools some of our children may have to attend as a result of your changes.

As a long serving member of staff at the school, I appreciate the advantage of the long term relationship the school has with many of its families. A large number of our parents are ex-students of the school, parents who understand the ways of our school and can therefore be more effective in supporting both the school and their children.

I would like these concerns to be considered in any appeal over the authority's decision. I write to voice some of the issues our families will be facing if this plan is implemented.

Yours sincerely



John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
Registered in England and Wales. Company Number:07631985
An exempt charitable trust

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] January 2014 09:35
Subject: Baugh, Ben
Attachments: Attached: letter about the proposed changes to school transport in Hereford
Proposed changes to transport.docx

Dear Mr Baugh,

I attached a letter about the planned changes to school transport in Hereford.

Thank you for you time.

[REDACTED]
John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
Registered in England and Wales. Company Number:07631985
An exempt charitable trust

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Dear Sir,

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Yours,



Proud teacher of Herefordian secondary school students

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]@jmonline.org.uk>
Sent: 08 January 2014 09:54
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to school transport

Dear Sir,

I am writing about the plan to change the existing transport arrangements for schoolchildren in Herefordshire. As a member of staff at John Masefield High School in Ledbury, Herefordshire, I am greatly concerned for the well-being of the students who currently attend and how the proposed changes will adversely affect them. I believe that the suggested plan is divisive and lacking in financial sense.

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]@jmonline.org.uk>
Sent: 08 January 2014 10:13
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Prodposed changes to transport
Attachments: Proposed changes to transport.docx

Please find my enclosed letter regarding the short sighted and needless changes to the school transport system in Herefordshire.

regards

[REDACTED]
John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
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Yours,



Proud teacher of Herefordian secondary school students

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]@jmonline.org.uk>
Sent: 08 January 2014 10:55
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Proposed Transport Cuts
Attachments: Proposed changes to transport.docx

Dear Sir

I have attached my letter of concern regarding the proposed transport cuts.

Think about the children already happy and settled in their crucial secondary years. It is vital they and any other children who wish to attend a school if their choice be allowed to.

[REDACTED]
John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
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Yours,



Dyslexia Specialist at a Secondary School in Herefordshire.

Baugh, Ben

From: Baugh, Ben
Sent: 09 January 2014 11:16
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: FW: Meeting of scrutiny committee and call-in of the decision regarding school transport

From: [REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@aylestone.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@aylestone.hereford.sch.uk)
Sent: 08 January 2014 13:39
To: Dean, Gemma
Cc: Senior Leader Group
Subject: Meeting of scrutiny committee and call-in of the decision regarding school transport

Dear Gemma,

Please ensure that the appropriate body receives the information below regarding the call-in of the decision regarding school transport and the forthcoming scrutiny meeting. Best wishes Sue Woodrow Head teacher Aylestone Business and Enterprise College.

On behalf of the Governing Body of Aylestone Business and Enterprise College, please note the following –

The Governing Body of ABEC fully endorse the stance taken by Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers as outlined in the letter from the Chair of that group Dean Williams. In addition we endorse, support and share the position and concerns of the head teacher at John Masefield High School as so clearly and accurately outlined by the head teacher Andy Evans in his recent newsletter to parents and in his letter to scrutiny.

Sue Woodrow

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]@jmonline.org.uk>
Sent: 08 January 2014 14:40
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: Leadership Team
Subject: RE: General O&S Committee - Wed 15-Jan-14
Attachments: JMHS submission to Scrutiny Committee re Education Transport January 2014.docx

Dear Ben

Please find attached the JMHS submission for the General O&S Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday 15 January 2014.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt.

kind regards

Wendy

Wendy Bradbeer
 School Business Manager
 John Masefield High School
 Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF

[REDACTED]

From: Baugh, Ben [bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 07 January 2014 16:34
To: Wendy Bradbeer
Subject: General O&S Committee - Wed 15-Jan-14

Dear Wendy,

As discussed, the link to the agenda is as follows:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=809&MId=5046&Ver=4>

With the 'reasons for call-in' given at page 8/9 of the 'Agenda reports pack'.

Kind regards, Ben

Ben Baugh
 Governance Services
 Herefordshire Council
bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk

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JOHN MASEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

**SUBMISSION TO THE GENERAL OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF THE
CABINET DECISION
ON CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS
AND POST-16
TRANSPORT POLICY**

**MEETING TO BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2014**

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
Registered in England and Wales Company Number: 07631985 An exempt charitable trust

01531 631012

www.jmonline.org.uk

admin@jmonline.org.uk

Dear Members

Please find below questions John Masefield High School wishes to raise in relation to the call-in of the Cabinet decision on changes to the Herefordshire Schools and Post 16 Transport Policy. We have restricted our questions to the grounds for the call in.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Evans
Headteacher

1) It is not clear that the cost modelling has taken the full cost impact of the decision into account across all areas of the council's operation, and therefore assurance is sought that the total anticipated net financial effort is achievable, realistic and proportionate.

- a) 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. How would this save money?
- b) Our understanding is that part of Colwall is nearest to The Chase School in Malvern and part is closer to JMHS. Again the Council will therefore have to pay for two buses instead of one. How would this save money? Furthermore if the Chase School was full (and Worcestershire has already indicated that they will not be making any changes to their admissions criteria) a third bus may be required to transport students from the village to yet another school.
- c) We are aware that some financial modelling and research has been done; however the Council's own report states that *the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely*. We would question why such a major decision purportedly based on the need to save money, will actually achieve the required result when the cost of additional buses is taken into account.
- d) Has the requirement for extra buses been discussed with bus providers and reassurance obtained that they can meet the extra demand whilst ensuring that children arrive at different schools on time?
- e) When determining the nearest school, has any account been taken of physical obstacles such as the Malvern Hills or the River Wye?

2) It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process.

- a) We have calculated that the long term effects of the change would move approximately 250 secondary aged children from Herefordshire Schools into Worcestershire or Gloucestershire schools costing almost a million pounds per year. Even if the alleged savings were achieved in full, four times this amount will disappear from schools' budgets. How is this justified and what attempts have been made to consider a more coherent and holistic view of funding? Has Jo Davidson, the Director for People's Services, clearly communicated the considerable damage this would cause to Herefordshire schools to all councillors?
- b) 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?

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre

Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
Registered in England and Wales Company Number: 07631985 An exempt charitable trust

01531 631012

www.jmonline.org.uk

admin@jmonline.org.uk

- c) There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this?
- d) The Ledbury Cluster of schools have worked extremely hard to create an effective transition programme with younger students enjoying many visits and activities in JMHS, close liaison between heads, governors, teachers and support staff to help with continuity of education, which is crucial to a good start at high school. The proposed transport changes will lead to the abandonment of traditional catchment areas and makes this work much harder. Is this what the Council wishes to achieve? Furthermore, has account been taken of young people making less progress and being unhappier as a result of this?
- e) This policy would force middle income parents who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. Herefordshire Council have spent considerable sums of money on creating a Children and Young People's Partnership whose vision - the 'Yes, We can' plan - sets out their aims for children living in Herefordshire and promotes collaboration with different organisations to make things better for children. We would question whether the 'Yes We Can' team have been consulted for their views on the proposed changes to school transport? And if not, why not? One of our parents has ironically suggested that the plan should be re-named 'Yes You Can if you can afford it in Herefordshire' which is a less snappy title but perhaps rather more accurate.
- f) A key part of the coalition government's philosophy on education is based on parents being able to choose a good school for their children. The decision to transport to nearest school is inequitable in that it only provides choice for the better off who can afford the bus fares. How do Councillors square this with the political views the parties they represent espouse about education?

3) No reasons have been given for dismissing the approaches taken in other authorities.

- a) We would ask the Council to consider more realistic approaches taken by other **local** authorities. Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire all operate a nearest or catchment policy. We note that other counties have adopted different schemes but consider that adjoining counties' policies should be given more weight as they have a direct influence on parental choice within Herefordshire. It is already clear from our September 2014 admissions data that some parents have already made the decision to accept free transport to Worcestershire schools from Herefordshire Council.
- b) We have carefully read Appendix 2 submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 19 December 2013 and consider that one statement is particularly misleading and that this could have affected the way Members voted; on page 78, item G) it states "*a response from Worcestershire LA confirming our proposals are as per their own back in 2011*". We contacted Stephen Wheatley, Policy and Performance Manager at Worcestershire Council and he confirmed that Worcestershire did consider adopting a statutory minimum policy but after consultation and thorough research found that it was unworkable as it significantly affected catchment boundaries and the additional costs incurred would cancel out any potential savings. Of course, Worcestershire have middle schools to consider which Herefordshire do not but, nevertheless, it is misleading to say that Herefordshire's proposals would align them with Worcestershire. It would be more accurate to say that the post-16 SEN provision is similar. We consider this point to be significant because:
 - o It shows an important piece of information provided to Members was misleading.
 - o It shows that other authorities realised that the decision that Herefordshire has made is not cost effective, appropriate or rational.

4) SEN proposals go against the Council's first principle of protecting the vulnerable.

- a) Is any account being taken of students with SEN at School Action or School Action Plus for whom moving school will create discontinuity of support and damage their progress and learning? This is equally true of pre and post-16 SEN students.

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- b) We have excellent provision for post-16 SEN education in Herefordshire and JMHS would not be able to provide the facilities or standards for these students that are currently in operation at Barrs Court School and Westfield School. Has the Council considered the cost implications of post-16 SEN students attending their nearest school and the extra resources that may be required to accommodate their particular needs?

5) The decision has a disproportionate effect on families with more than one child.

- a) If a parent was desperate to keep their children at their current secondary school and had two or three children in Y7-Y9, could they be given any financial help? If so how could this be achieved in a way that is equitable and fair to all parents?
- b) Has due consideration been given to the prospect of splitting children in the same family and forcing them to attend separate schools? Costs to parents could include extra child care provision to meet the different term dates, the inability to pass on school uniform to siblings, the inability to take family holidays at certain times of the year and the sheer impossibility of having two or three children attending schools in adjacent counties.

6) Families unable to support this additional cost have not been given the notice they need to amend their school choice for the September 2014 intake.

- a) We are disappointed that Herefordshire did not make their intentions clear to parents of current Year 6 students before requiring them to make their preferred choice of secondary school. It is further noted that our adjoining authorities (Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire) would not permit any changes to parental preferences after the official closing date of 31 October 2013. This severely disadvantages residents of Herefordshire and their children. We would ask if due consideration was given to the implementation date of the proposed changes?

7) The total effects of the decision in exporting the County's young people to schools in other counties, in not demonstrating adherence to the principles of our transport plan, in not evidencing alignment with the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for Schools, and in not demonstrating the net savings at council level exist when loss of pupil grants are taken into account, raise concerns that aspects of this decision fall outside of the council's current Budget Monitoring and Policy Framework.

- a. 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?
- b. Education Transport made significant changes to JMHS bus routes and contractors in August 2013. The negotiations were lengthy and involved several changes to routes etc. Does the Council consider it best value to re-negotiate these contracts and routes less than six months later? Secondly, would the proposed changes affect the contractual arrangements currently in place and if so would there be a financial impact?
- c. Increased traffic into the JMHS site would create safety issues on the site. Has an impact assessment based on the Safer Routes to Schools programme been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed changes?
- d. Increased volume of traffic would also cause greater congestion, increased road repairs and environmental damage. Has an impact assessment on the environment been carried out?

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admin@jmonline.org.uk

- e. Has an impact assessment on equality of opportunity especially for vulnerable young people been conducted?
- f. It has been suggested that high schools could be devolved funding to arrange their own transport. We consider that this may be unlawful as local authorities cannot delegate the budget for home to school transport. Could we ask what clarification has been sought on this suggestion?

We firmly believe that the Cabinet decision to withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport policy eligibility based upon nearest and catchment school and replace eligibility based on nearest suitable school with places is incorrect and flawed as it:

- Fails to take account of Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's Partnership vision to ensure children have the best education and opportunities within Herefordshire.
- Has not been subjected to full and proper consultation with all organisations who work with children in Herefordshire to ensure they are healthy, happy and safe.
- Fails to consider equality, diversity and respect for human rights but relies totally on a hard to project financial saving.

We accept the need for the Council to make savings and understand their desire to provide only the statutory minimum service it is required to do, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. We do feel, however, that the Council has failed to take into account the ripple effect of this decision and consider that there are sufficient good reasons based on the Council's holistic approach to children within Herefordshire, to overturn this decision, and to maintain the nearest or catchment school policy adopted by Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Shropshire.

Finally, we wish to reiterate that we understand that financial savings to have to be made and Members are placed in a very difficult position but we believe that the wider implications cannot be ignored and we would urge the Council to work with us to consider alternative ways of seeking cost savings and ensuring that Herefordshire children are educated in Herefordshire.

Andrew Evans
Headteacher

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
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Baugh, Ben

From: Baugh, Ben
Sent: 09 January 2014 11:11
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: FW: Scrutiny Committee meeting 15.1.14
Attachments: HASH letter to Scrutiny 080114.docx

From: [REDACTED]@weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk]
Sent: 08 January 2014 15:48
To: Dean, Gemma
Subject: Scrutiny Committee meeting 15.1.14

Gemma,

I would be grateful if you could forward this letter to the relevant members of the Scrutiny Committee looking at the school transport issue next Wednesday. This is on behalf of HASH (Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers).

Thank you.

Dean Williams



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HEREFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY HEADTEACHERS

Weobley High School
Burton Wood
Weobley
HEREFORD
HR4 8ST

8th January 2014

Dear Cllr Seldon,

I am writing as Chair of Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers in which I represent the headteachers and principals of every secondary school and college in the county. At our December meeting, we discussed the transport issue and I have full permission to write on behalf of all members to express our dissatisfaction and disappointment at the decision. Members have been in touch over the past few days and we are aware of questions you will be receiving and fully endorse these as well as posing two of our own.

It is incredible to me that this decision was taken in the face of such opposition, not just from your constituents but from the professionals who lead your schools and educate your children. Indeed, the response to the consultation seems to have had little influence over the outcome. We are fully aware that cost-savings need to be made however we are also the people who will be dealing with the irreversible fallout from this decision and the huge financial and human impact on the education system which will certainly eclipse the 'possible' savings to the transport budget. These savings are now even less significant since certain mitigating factors were introduced as part of the decision.

We now understand that other neighbouring authorities have indeed decided NOT to take this decision having been through the process. This is the opposite of the information we have been furnished with previously and I believe this changes the whole picture and calls into question the validity of the decision and the information provided. Make no mistake; this is significant! The impact of Herefordshire being an anomaly in the region would mean that we could 'leak' children to neighbouring authorities such as Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Shropshire who have decided to continue with designated schools through catchment areas. The argument that we are currently a net importer would not stand as we would struggle to maintain this in the face of an uneven landscape. Neighbouring authorities would continue to offer free transport to their families in the borders to their schools and we would not; not to our own schools anyway. I believe that the only neighbouring authority to have adopted the nearest school model is Powys; as a Welsh authority, this would not affect Herefordshire.

We would like to put two questions to the committee:

1. Do you believe that the diminishing 'possible' savings brought about by the decision warrant the enormous disruption and significant financial and human cost to the education system?

2. In the light of the decision being reached based on inaccurate information provided about the situation in neighbouring authorities and the now potential irreversible impact of being unique in 'burning our bridges', do you agree that this decision should now be reconsidered and possibly reversed?

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. A small white rectangular box is visible within the redaction, containing the text 'weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk'.

weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 January 2014 21:53
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

We are contacting you to express our concern over the changes to secondary school transport. Our daughter is currently attending 'John Masefield High School' in year 8. We wanted her to attend her catchment school and up until now she has travelled on a school bus along with the other children in our village of Colwall. We struggle to understand how making her change school to 'The Chase' in Malvern Worcestershire can possibly save Herefordshire money. Herefordshire will still have to provide transport and probably to more than one secondary school! Our daughter is happy, settled and doing well at John Masefield and it seems extremely unfair to change the rules and force her to change school at this point, especially as we do not believe that it can possibly save ANY money at all.

Yours Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

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 ben 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]



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 12:13
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Additional Questions for School Transport Meeting

Dear Ben

Further to my mail 2 days ago I have two specific questions that I would like to understand:-

1. If our nearest school, The Chase, is full, which I understand it to be in year 7, and the next nearest school is further than John Masefield, would our child qualify to remain at John Masefield with free transport.
2. If she is able to get a place at The Chase, my understanding is that you would be obliged to provide free transport. If this is the case will the cost of that be lower than the current bus that goes to John Masefield?

Could you advise if members of the public are allowed into the meeting next Wednesday and if so where it is held and what time and myself or my wife will try to get there if we can juggle work commitments.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 14:13
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Post 16 SEN Transport Call-in
Attachments: [REDACTED].pdf
Importance: High

Hi Ben,

Call-in - Cabinet Decision relating to School Transport charging - Post 16 SEN Transport in particular.

Please see attached the formal response and key questions from Barrs Court Special School.

Please confirm receipt and also that this letter will be made available to all councillors.

A signed hard copy is in the post.

Many thanks.

[REDACTED]
Headteacher
Barrs Court School
[REDACTED]



9th January 2014

Dear Councillors,

Post 16 SEN Transport Charge

As Headteacher of Barrs Court Special School I would like to offer my support to the 'call-in' in order to scrutinise the Cabinet decision to support the Transport proposals made on the 19th December 2013. I attended the meeting and found the debate held by councillors prior to the decision offered clear insight into the key issues, risks and implications of such a decision which have not been thoroughly addressed in the process to date. It came as a great disappointment that the Cabinet supported the proposals despite the questions and arguments raised.

Consultation:

The process of consultation has not been robust and the report does not reflect the feedback provided. Parents have commented that they cannot see any reference to their comments reflected in the paper. They also reported to the LA that, during the consultation period, the web-site would not work and they could not send their feedback through the system set up.

Question 1:

Why does the consultation analysis not fully represent the views and comments fed back by the very parents this will impact upon?

Proposals:

It was claimed that the £720 travel charge to be levied on parents and carers of young people with the most complex needs for whom outstanding provision is provided through two central special schools, Barrs Court in Hereford and Westfield in Leominster, could be found through the use of grants and additional payments received either directly by the families or facilitated through their placement schools. The purpose of such grants is to help the vast majority of those families in meeting basic living costs and ensuring that the needs of their disabled young person are met. To then state that such grants can be used does not take into account the impact of such a financial reduction and no work has been undertaken to assess the facts and possible repercussions relating to this. In many cases the parents of the students attending BCSS – 59 of the 106 students identified in the paper – are unable to work due to the demands of caring for their young person. The complexity of care and medical requirements often limit their working opportunities in what is already a very challenging employment market. One parent has already stated that they will require additional funding from the social care services to ensure safe escorting and transport to BCSS as

they have other children and only one parent is able to sustain low paid employment. Another has pointed out that the long-term implications and costs for such families 'will be immense and hard to find even paid monthly' and the year on year costs add up.

The Cabinet did charge the LA officers to ensure support in finding funds to help with transport costs – and also confirmed that there would always be some families for which such costs would be met. I have tried to contact the LA officer who presented the paper to get more information on this and to arrange for meetings with the parents affected – but as yet have received no response.

Question2.1:

Is there evidence of a robust analysis of the impact of this decision and the potential for costs to be shifted to other council services?

Question 2.2:

Has the cost of administering the complex system set in place to collect payments been identified and deducted from the potential savings outlined – and how will non-payment be enforced?

Question2.3:

How will the LA implement support for the identification of grants and what will the criteria be for those families that the council will continue to support and how will this eligibility then be equitable for the remainder?

The council has invested in the development of outstanding provision to support the most vulnerable within our community and yet has now approved a measure that will have significant negative impact upon those families. The council is also piloting Post19 provision for the most severely disabled adults aged 19-25 enabling them to remain within their local community – and these young adults are transported through the same services as provided for the Post 16 students attending Barrs Court.

Question 3:

The impact of this decision is disproportionate on the parents and carers of our most vulnerable young people. There are only minimal 'potential savings' outlined with no guarantee yet the financial impact on our most vulnerable identified as being of priority in the 'Yes We Can' plan is significant. Has there been a robust modelling of this and the repercussions – ie the cost of parents opting for their local school or more likely residential provision as they cannot afford to send their young person to the special school provision identified by the LA in their statement of need as the best provision to meet their needs?

In reality these families do not have the same options available to them as other families so to base this decision on an equality footing does not stand up to scrutiny. They cannot send their young person to their local school and in the vast majority of cases they cannot make use of varied transport options or take advantage of the cheapest due to their complex needs and inability to travel safely with such providers.

Process:

At the Cabinet meeting on the 19th December 2013 the debate focused on the two key areas of proposals in the document presented: the transport to mainstream providers and the Post16 SEN costs. Despite there being two distinct elements to the proposals there was not separation of the two issues when voting took place.

Question 4:

Why was there no opportunity to vote on the two key proposals separately? There should have been one vote on the mainstream proposal and one on the Post16 SEN proposal to ensure clarity and detailed consideration of the impact of each.

We recognise the difficult financial landscape that we are operating within and the challenge the council faces in meeting financial targets – but the targeting of these families as a means to this end will cause tremendous hardship to those concerned and there is no robust evidence to state this will achieve the potential vague savings suggested.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy Roberts.
Head teacher.
BCSS.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 16:04
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to school transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

Regarding the changes to school transport I would like to raise a few concerns, as I live on the boundary between 2 schools (Lady Hawkins and Weobley). I am not sure which is closest to me at the moment but there would only be a very small fraction of a mile between the two schools.

My eldest son currently attends the catchment school of Lady Hawkins and will be going into Yr10 in September. I have another son who will be starting this school in September this year as a Yr7. Obviously, I do not want to split them so if Weobley is going to be closer then I will have to move the one who would be due to start his GCSE's then. This I would like to avoid but I could not afford the transport costs for the younger son. Is it not possible to phase the system in? Personally, transport costs for my children would be the roughly the same whichever school was chosen, although one on a bus to Kington and one on a bus to Weobley would incur increased costs (perhaps in these cases a school choice could be made by parents).

I would also like to point out that there have been strong links between the cluster schools over the years which have made it a lot easier for the children to acclimatise to their new school.

I look forward to awaiting the outcome and hopefully some response to my concerns raised.

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 18:28
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: changes to schools transport policy 2014

Dear Mr Baugh,

What a dilemma you have caused me. I have spent the last 3 years looking into which school my son will attend in September 2014. After open days and induction days we decided on LHS Kington, which was also our catchment school. This was our choice due to numerous factors, some as listed below; transportation, even though he'd still have a 1/2 mile walk to the bus.

attending and enjoying induction days
where his school friends are going
where his sisters attended
familiar setting from primary school cluster events.

Having looked at the new policy, I still can not see how this would work. We are situated in a 'grey' area. Where one bus may be dropped another would be instilled. Saving what? Currently the bus to LHS collects children from a number of the surrounding villages/hamlets. Some of the children on this bus would be entitled to transport to LHS while their neighbours would not. Where is the cut off for the questionable villages such as Almeley? On a post code to postcode search my address is aprox 0.50 mile further to LHS than it is to Weobley, although, it is a shorter return from LHS due to the one way road system! I do not have a problem that my son goes to either of these school but its a mockery of our attending open days, induction days and then choosing the school of choice by Nov 2013, when you can then just change the rules and boundaries beyond that date at the expense of us that do care and try to do the best for our children.

Who decides which school my son goes to? His family, You, the school, a bus company?

Please be aware that there are flaws in the said new policy that need addressing. I urge you to consider the above factors and readdress this issue. I understand that Powys considered similar proposals but then re addressed their situation before going ahead. Why was that?

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 19:42
To: scrutiny; Baugh, Ben
Subject: Question for meeting 15th Jan in relation to item 5 on agenda.

With there being several references by Hereford Council in regard to similar proposals by Worcester Council, it is interesting to note on their website that they still offer free transport to either designated or nearest school. I can only assume by designated they mean catchment?



Statutory school age children and pre-statutory school age children who are admitted to mainstream schools in accordance with the current County Council Admission Policy are entitled to free travel, provided that they:

- Live in Worcestershire
- Are 4 years old at September 1
- Are attending either the **designated** or nearest school for their home address
- Live beyond the statutory walking distance from the school

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 20:21
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: SCHOOL TRANSPORT

I am writing regarding the proposed changes to school transport.
I have the following points to make about the proposals:-

1) My daughter currently goes to Lady Hawkins school & is in year 7.

This is our catchment school but Weobley school is very slightly closer.

She is feeling quite unsettled by our regular conversations about school transport as she has only just started at Lady Hawkins & hears us talking about possibly moving her to Weobley & it is making her very unhappy. This is not a good start to secondary school. There is much evidence that children who move secondary schools after they have started do less well.

We feel that it is unfair to make us pay for transport for a child that we have already placed at a school in our catchment area (which is the school that YOU recommend we send our child to)

2) Our nearest neighbour and others who live nearby take their children to Weobley school by car.

Under the new proposals they would be entitled to free school transport which would mean that 2 buses would then run past my house instead of one. How can this save money? The council's own report states that "the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely." I forecast that it will not save money but will actually cost more. Also, can the bus providers cope with extra demand for buses? This almost seems a ludicrous question to be asking when the proposals are about saving money!!!

Does this also mean that the bus providers will be paid for running two half empty buses instead of one full bus?

3) The change would encourage more parents to drive their children to school. So, not only would there be very little contribution from parents towards the buses, there would actually be more buses to run & pay for. There is also congestion, safety of the children & increased road repairs from increased traffic to consider.

4) We are now faced with a decision. Do we move our daughter from Lady Hawkins to Weobley? Or do we keep her at Lady Hawkins & send her sister to Weobley in 2 years time which means they'll both be at separate schools.
What a decision to have to make.

We hope you will take the above statements into consideration & please look again at the financial & environmental implications to the council & parents of your proposals.

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 20:38
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Transport

i have two sons one of which will be going into year 10 it has taken him nearly 3 years to settle into high school he may get a place on the school transport bus but you cannot guarantee this will happen,my younger son will be starting high school this September,i cannot afford to pay for my children to travel to school i may as well give up work as it wont be worth me working,my point and questions to you is how will this benefit my family? why do this now? how come nothing was mentioned when i had to make a choice as to which school to send my younger son to?feeling very let down upset and feel for my two sons and other familys that this will have a big impact to their lives.

Many Regards,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 20:39
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Withdrawal of Free Bus Service to JMHS

Dear Mr. Baugh,

As a parent of a child that will be affected by the council's recent decision to withdraw free transport to John Masefield High School from Cradley village I am writing to ask you to consider the following points and answer some questions that remain unanswered.

Firstly, I am the mother of a child who joined Year 7 at John Masefield High School in September 2013. Having submitted comments to the council during the consultation process I was suprised not to receive any direct notification from the council regarding the decision that was made and would ask that you reply to this e-mail to acknowledge receipt.

My immediate reaction on receiving the information last Monday that my child will no longer be eligible for free transport to school was to ask myself why the council finds itself in this position? While I fully realise that Herfordshire Council is under pressure to save money and make cuts in many areas I have yet to see any proof that taking this action will offer a solution. Having done a little of my own analysis I have so far been unable to justify the council's decision when taking into account that there would still need to be a bus provided to transport children to school in a neighbouring county. I would therefore like to ask to see the detailed cost analysis upon which your decision was based.

Secondly, I would like to ask what alternative solutions were considered before arriving at this decision? I believe that Herefordshire is not alone in having to find ways of saving money and that Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire have all found alternative ways to implement cost effective, appropriate and rational repsonses to similar issues regarding school transport. Could you please explain in detail why Herefordshire has chosen to ignore the approaches taken by other authorities?

In addition to this, we are a single income family and I earn £300.00 over the amount that would entitle me to any tax credit support. As is the case for many families in the present economic climate I struggle to keep my family fed, clothed and warm and in the event that I should be asked to pay an extra £720.00 a year to transport my child to school I would be faced with a very difficult situation. In order to pay for my child's school uniform prior to her start at John Masefield last September I had to borrow money to meet the costs and am still repaying that debt. I would like to know if the council will be able to pay for a new uniform should my child be forced into changing schools?

In conclusion, I would also ask you to consider the impact that moving schools will have on, not only my child, but the community as a whole. Our village has a strong connection with John Masefield and we have spent the last seven years building relationships between the school and our children through a number of transition days, sports days, dance and drama days. Are we to believe that the time and effort of the teachers, parents and, most importantly, the children involved over all these years was all for nothing? Also, children in Year 7 will have been fully immersed in the curricuum of John Masefield High School and any transition to another school could have serious implications on their progress. Could you please explain and show me detailed evidence of what measures the council intends to implement in order to ensure that my child's learning is not affected?

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns and I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience,

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 20:50
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Herefordshire School Transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

I would like to submit the following questions to The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 15 January.

- I took the time, along with many other people to submit my opinions during the consultation period and would like to know what the outcome of that process was?
- How much will be saved by introducing this change and how will the money be saved?
- What alternatives have been explored and rejected and why?
- Is it acceptable that those that can afford it can choose which school to send their children to whilst those that can't afford it do not have the choice?

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:20
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: changes to school transport policy

Dear Mr Baugh

I am interested to know how you worked out the possible financial savings by changing the school transport policy.

Is it based on

1. the majority of children leaving their Herefordshire school
2. the majority of parents paying the extortionate fees for transport
3. the majority of parents driving their own children to school
4. a combination of all the above? If so, in what proportion of each?

I would also like to know the coach company's opinion on whether there are any other ways to save money.

Please remember that at the end of the day, these are children's lives who will be affected by your decisions.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:27
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to Herefordshire school transport policy

Dear Mr Baugh

I am writing to express my concerns about your change in school transport policy with regard to Lady Hawkins School. I have a son in year 8 which I believe if this new policy goes ahead it will mean I am required to pay transport costs.

My concerns are as follows:

- Why introduce for years 7 and 8 when we are already committed to a school, surely this should be introduced when parents make an informed decision about secondary schools in year 6
- My son is already settled at Lady Hawkins, but I would find it very difficult to afford to pay for his transport as I am already having to pay a considerable amount for my elder son's transport to Hartpury College
- I would seriously consider moving my younger son to Weobley as this school is closer, but didn't do this in year 6 as there was no transport to Weobley, my son would also be very unsettled by the move
- Surely this is not cost effective as it would then mean transport would have to then be put on for the odd child living in my area of Broxwood to take children to Weobley, this would mean two buses running instead of one obviously this impacts on sustainability and will cost more money and more pollution
- I understand that the Council have to make efficiencies, but I don't think the impact on families and children has been taken into account on this occasion.

I hope you will take into consideration our concerns, many thanks.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:33
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Scrutiny Committee questions for 15th January

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 @014/2015.
- 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:
 1. Has the cost of additional multiple buses from villages going to different counties been factored into the cost analysis?
 2. 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 policy change 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?
- How will this policy change increase parental choice for school selection?

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:36
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Submission to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Regarding the call-in of the Cabinet decision on Herefordshire Schools Transport Policy.

I am pleased that there is to be a review of the above matter. I could go on at some length about the way in which this policy has been implemented, notably after we had accepted the recommended school for our son who starts in John Masefield next September.

However, as the basis on which this decision appears to have been made is becoming clearer, I think the main question I want to see answered is **how does this policy actually make economic sense and save money for the Council Tax Payers of Herefordshire?** Looking at it very simply, there may be a small reduction in the cost of bussing pupils from Cradley to their closest school. However, this must be insignificant (even if it was £720 per pupil), when set against the c.£4,000 capitation grant that will be lost by the Herefordshire schools that will see some of their best pupils exported to adjoining counties. This will impact on overheads, leading to the need to reduce costs further, incurring restructuring costs.

What consideration has been given to the "Yes We Can" initiative? My son has been looking forward to going to John Masefield, where he has been encouraged to build relationships, through sport and other activities. Whichever school he goes to, it will split the youngsters in our community.

Finally, what about the carbon and road congestion implications from increased car use for school trips? How does the decision align with sustainability and environmental policies?

Please apply some common sense and look at the overall picture for Herefordshire.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:40
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: General Overview and Scrutiny Committee re School Transport 15 January

Mr Baugh,

As a parent of a child attending John Masefield High School from Cradley I wish the following questions to be considered by the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning the provision of school transport.

1. A consultation process took place prior to a decision being made. Were the details of this consultation process utilised in the decision making process. The details of this consultation have not been put into the public domain and I would ask for a full break down to be made available for public view rather than having to rely on a Freedom of Information application.
2. At the time of writing, the Herefordshire website informs readers that "following the consultation process a decision will be made in December" There is no mention that a decision was made on 19 December and that members of the public, parents, children or prospective parents and children have an opportunity to make comments at the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Why?
3. What form of cost analysis has been undertaken to approve the notion that £250,000 would be saved by removing the provision by the Local Authority of Transport to our excellent Schools. I am aware that our bus provider has not even been consulted. By changing the goal posts and saying that our children from Cradley will now receive transport to their nearest school means that herefordshire would still have to fund buses to Worcestershire saving maybe 2 miles on the route. However this would be over The Malvern Hills and I would imagine would use far more fuel. Not only would these children have to be transported out of County but children in years 10 and 11 would still be transported to John Masefield. In other words two buses rather than the current one. I understand that the same would be replicated in Colwall and other villages and towns across the County.
4. What consideration has been given to the most important people who will be affected by this cut, the children. In the case of my daughter, she has just settled into secondary school, which she loves. She has made new friends and has settled into her studies. To force her to move to another school would be detrimental to her both educationally and undoubtedly psychologically as well. If we were a wealthy family maybe we could incur the cost of transporting her. This therefore goes against the governments philosophy of being able to choose a good school for your children. It is also tantamount to discriminating against those being less well off being able to choose a school for their children as they would have to opt for where the transport went.
5. What provisions will be given to children who have Special Educational needs and require transportation.
6. Herefordshire has spent a vast amount of money on the children and Young Persons "Yes we can" plan. Multi agency working to make things better for children in Herefordshire. Have this team been part of the consultation process?
7. As part of the consultation process, what other authorities/ organisations have been consulted with to share best practice and best value.
8. Current parents of children in year 6 were not informed of this proposed change and have therefore made their preferences for secondary education based on inaccurate data. If the changes go ahead how will they rectify their choices.
9. Do Herefordshire Council appreciate that by forcing children to be educated outside of County they will be discouraging younger families from locating to the area, forcing families to leave or move closer to towns and therefore leave the rural villages. This must be discrimination!

10. What thought has been given to Green Issues. More cars transporting children to school. Greater congestion in towns. Increased environmental damage and road repairs.

I would encourage this committee to overturn a decision which I feel may have been made in haste rather than taking into account the full facts. I would appreciate an update as to the progress of this decision making process. Hopefully the local electorate and media will be kept fully apprised of this matter.

Please pass all my questions to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and I look forward to reading the responses in the minutes.

Many thanks,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name.

Sent from my iPad

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:40
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Re: School Transport Questions

Questions to be put to the scrutiny committee

1) There are inaccuracies in information given in the consultation period and at the recent cabinet meeting. It has been said on numerous occasions, including in the cabinet meeting that the proposal is already working successfully in Worcestershire. This is not true and therefore should not have been used. How do the council defend using inaccurate information to form their arguments?

2) A reason it has been called to scrutiny is to 'be clear about what the council wants to happen and how it will be achieved'. This has not been fully researched. The long term financial implications for Herefordshire have not been investigated.

a) people buy houses in small rural villages such as ours (Brimfield and Little Hereford) as the catchment primary school and high school are both very successful. People will be far less likely to buy in these areas when they will now be served by a bus to a secondary school which has entered special measures (Tenbury High School). How can the council justify our children going to a school in special measures, a failing school when they should be going to outstanding Wigmore?

B) In this area alone it is not clear how money saving will be achieved. As the council did not seem interested in looking at specific areas we have done so ourselves. Currently two 52 seat full buses serve our area, one going to Orleton Primary School and one to Wigmore High School. As we are on the counties borders and a quite 'spread out' village depending where your child lives on this bus route you will now go to at least seven different schools with the 'nearest' school in operation (Orleton primary, Bishop Hooper Primary, Burford Primary, Tenbury High School, Ludlow High School, Earl Mortimer and Wigmore High School). How on earth is this money saving?

C) Our children, like many others will have to go to schools in at least two counties, one primary, one high (three if our nearest small Primary school doesn't have room for all of our three children). In light of all the 'fining' for term time holidays, are Herefordshire council going to foot the bill for this when we have to take children out when their holidays differ? It is already difficult enough for rural farming families to have holidays in school holidays.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:44
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: QUESTIONS FOR THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RE SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY CHANGES

Dear Mr Baugh,

For the attention of the "General Overview and Scrutiny Committee"

RE: CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

I am writing in response to the decision made by Herefordshire Council regarding the school transport policy.

I would like the following questions to be raised at next week's meeting:

1. (a)

What evidence is there of a detailed cost benefit analysis which shows actual figures that the council have based their decision on. The council's report states that "the actual financial savings are hard to predict precisely". How can a major decision which will have such a MAJOR IMPACT on the residents of Herefordshire not show an analysis of the savings?

(b) In many schools on the county's border there will be a need to put on extra buses to transport children in YR 10/11 to their existing school and additional buses to transport the remaining children to their nearest school in a different county.

How much will this save if extra buses are to be used? Have the bus companies been consulted on the proposed changes and IF they have been consulted where are the financial facts showing any possible savings or indeed extra costs involved in extra buses?

Will the bus companies have the resources to transport all the pupils to their correct school all on time? Have they proved to the council that this is actually achievable?

The difference in transporting pupils to their nearest school instead of their catchment school is in many cases less than 1 or 2 miles difference and in some instances 0.2miles. Surely there is no real saving compared with having to provide 2 buses for several border villages.

IS THE TOTAL ANTICIPATED NET FINANCIAL EFFORT ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC AND PROPORTIONATE?

2. Have the members of the council been given the full facts about the significant and negative effect of the changes highlighted in the public consultations, and have the results of the consultation been given due consideration in the decision making process.

(a) The cost of losing approximately 200-300 secondary aged children into Gloucestershire or Worcestershire could run into nearly a million pounds each year. Can Herefordshire afford to lose this? Has the significant loss of funding to those schools affected by these changes actually been explained by the Director for People Services to the members of the council? This could lead to schools (rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted) having to close due to the loss of pupils as parents are unable to pay the bus fares and move their children to schools in the next County.

(b) What account has been taken of educational disadvantage to Herefordshire children in these calculations?

(c). There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this?

(d). The Ledbury Cluster of schools have worked extremely hard to create an effective transition programme with younger students enjoying many visits and activities in JMHS, close liaison between heads, governors, teachers and support staff to help with continuity of education, which is crucial to a good start at high school. The proposed transport changes will lead to the abandonment of traditional catchment areas and makes this work much harder. Is this what the Council wishes to achieve? Furthermore, has account been taken of young people making less progress and being unhappier as a result of this? Will Herefordshire become a poorer performing county because of these changes?

(e) This policy would force middle income parents who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. Herefordshire Council have spent considerable sums of money on creating a Children and Young People's Partnership whose vision - the 'Yes, We can' plan - sets out their aims for children living in Herefordshire and promotes collaboration with different organisations to make things better for children. We would question whether the 'Yes We Can' team have been consulted for their views on the proposed changes to school transport? And if not, why not? Money spent on signs "HEREfordshire Here we can" should be renamed 'Yes You Can if you can afford it.

3. The government's policy is to give parents choice in choosing a good school for their children. This policy has taken this away for most parents unless they earn a high income and can afford to pay for the bus pass. How can this be equitable and fair for those parents living in rural villages?

I feel that the council have not based their decision on the all the facts and have not fully explored the implications of the changes proposed. The council should reexamine all the evidence from all the affected organisations and look at alternative ways of making the necessary savings.

I look forward to receiving your responses.



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:46
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to Herefordshire Schools Transport Policy

Dear Mr Baugh

I would like answers to the following questions to be taken into account at The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15/1/14.

Has the council calculated exactly how much would be saved if every family affected by the changes, accepted the new policy and sent their children to the nearest school? This would mean the council would provide free transport for all and have to put on extra buses to schools outside the county in addition to the current transport in place.

During the consultation process, the council website quoted an annual charge of £660. Since the policy has been agreed by council that figure has risen to £720 per year, an increase of 8%. Can you explain how that figure was reached and what mechanisms will be used to calculate future annual increases? The Office of National Statistics show that Herefordshire average weekly incomes went up from £385.10 in 2011 to £415.00 in 2013, an average increase of 3.6% per year. It is clear that increases of this magnitude are unsustainable for the future.

Why has the council not published full details of the consultation and what feedback was received as a result?

Thank you in anticipation

[REDACTED]

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



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:53
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: General Overview and Scrutiny Meeting of School transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

As a resident who has a child affected by the proposed changes to school transport, I would like to express my deepest concern about Council's decision to transport children to the nearest school as opposed to the designated school. While I fully understand that savings need to be made, I feel strongly that Council has not considered the wider implications on their own resources.

With regard to Scrutiny meeting concerning school transport, please find below questions I would like ask.

The original consultation process did not appear to be widespread or far reaching.

Can assurance be given, that every opportunity, using more than one means of communication, has been taken to fully consult with all stakeholders, including parents/carers and transport providers, before this decision was made?

Can it be clarified, how council has taken the views of the consultation into consideration, to make an informed decision?

It is not clear whether the council has considered any other proposals that would maximise benefits and minimise impact.

Is it clearly demonstrate that consideration has been given to models from neighbouring counties who have gone through similar processes?

Can the cost per child presented, (£720) be justified given that it is disproportionate to the costs in other counties?

The cost savings are not clear.

Have Council presented clear financial models or analyses, which demonstrate the impact savings from this single budget will have on the budgets in other areas?

Has council given due consideration to the impact on Herefordshire school budgets and on the future economic viability of Herefordshire County?

How will Council members be held to account without viable forecasting evidence?

Can council clarify the additional cost of more buses that be needed to address different year groups going to different schools.

Long term, wide spread implications do not seem to have been considered.

At a further cost to council, how will widespread policies change to reflect this single change, as it leaves much confusion?

Have council considered the long term negative economic impact on Herefordshire communities where the designated school is not the nearest school?

Is council satisfied that future generations educated out of County may not return to Herefordshire?

I do have other concerns and issues but given the timescale for responses, I would like the above to be addressed in the first instance.

Thank you.
 [REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:55
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

As a resident who has a child affected by the proposed changes to school transport, I would like to express my deepest concern about Council's decision to transport children to the nearest school as opposed to the designated school. While I fully understand that savings need to be made, I feel strongly that Council has not considered the wider implications on their own resources.

With regard to Scrutiny meeting concerning school transport, please find below questions I would like ask.

The original consultation process did not appear to be widespread or far reaching.

Can assurance be given, that every opportunity, using more than one means of communication, has been taken to fully consult with all stakeholders, including parents/carers and transport providers, before this decision was made?

Can it be clarified, how council has taken the views of the consultation into consideration, to make an informed decision?

It is not clear whether the council has considered any other proposals that would maximise benefits and minimise impact.

Is it clearly demonstrate that consideration has been given to models from neighbouring counties who have gone through similar processes?

Can the cost per child presented, (£720) be justified given that it is disproportionate to the costs in other counties?

The cost savings are not clear.

Have Council presented clear financial models or analyses, which demonstrate the impact savings from this single budget will have on the budgets in other areas?

Has council given due consideration to the impact on Herefordshire school budgets and on the future economic viability of Herefordshire County?

How will Council members be held to account without viable forecasting evidence?

Can council clarify the additional cost of more buses that be needed to address different year groups going to different schools.

Long term, wide spread implications do not seem to have been considered.

At a further cost to council, how will widespread policies change to reflect this single change, as it leaves much confusion?

Have council considered the long term negative economic impact on Herefordshire communities where the designated school is not the nearest school?

Is council satisfied that future generations educated out of County may not return to Herefordshire?

I do have other concerns and issues but given the timescale for responses, I would like the above to be addressed in the first instance.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:57
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: General Overview and Scrutiny Meeting for School Transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

I have been given your details with regard to Scrutiny meeting concerning school transport, please find below questions I would like ask.

Can assurance be given, that every opportunity, using more than one means of communication, has been taken to fully consult with all stakeholders, including parents/carers and transport providers, before this decision was made?

Can it be clarified, how council has taken the views of the consultation into consideration, to make an informed decision?

Is it clearly demonstrate that consideration has been given to models from neighbouring counties who have gone through similar processes?

Can the cost per child presented, (£720) be justified given that it is disproportionate to the costs in other counties?

Have Council presented clear financial models or analyses, which demonstrate the impact savings from this single budget will have on the budgets in other areas?

Has council given due consideration to the impact on Herefordshire school budgets and on the future economic viability of Herefordshire County?

How will Council members be held to account without viable forecasting evidence?

Can council clarify the additional cost of more buses that be needed to address different year groups going to different schools.

At a further cost to council, how will widespread policies change to reflect this single change, as it leaves much confusion?

Have council considered the long term negative economic impact on Herefordshire communities where the designated school is not the nearest school?

Is council satisfied that future generations educated out of County may not return to Herefordshire?

Thank you.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 21:58
To: Baugh, Ben

Dear Mr Baugh,

As a resident who has a child affected by the proposed changes to school transport, I would like to express my deepest concern about Council's decision to transport children to the nearest school as opposed to the designated school. While I fully understand that savings need to be made, I feel strongly that Council has not considered the wider implications on their own resources.

With regard to Scrutiny meeting concerning school transport, please find below questions I would like ask.

The original consultation process did not appear to be widespread or far reaching.

Can assurance be given, that every opportunity, using more than one means of communication, has been taken to fully consult with all stakeholders, including parents/carers and transport providers, before this decision was made?

Can it be clarified, how council has taken the views of the consultation into consideration, to make an informed decision?

It is not clear whether the council has considered any other proposals that would maximise benefits and minimise impact.

Is it clearly demonstrate that consideration has been given to models from neighbouring counties who have gone through similar processes?

Can the cost per child presented, (£720) be justified given that it is disproportionate to the costs in other counties?

The cost savings are not clear.

Have Council presented clear financial models or analyses, which demonstrate the impact savings from this single budget will have on the budgets in other areas?

Has council given due consideration to the impact on Herefordshire school budgets and on the future economic viability of Herefordshire County?

How will Council members be held to account without viable forecasting evidence?

Can council clarify the additional cost of more buses that be needed to address different year groups going to different schools.

Long term, wide spread implications do not seem to have been considered.

At a further cost to council, how will widespread policies change to reflect this single change, as it leaves much confusion?

Have council considered the long term negative economic impact on Herefordshire communities where the designated school is not the nearest school?

Is council satisfied that future generations educated out of County may not return to Herefordshire?

I do have other concerns and issues but given the timescale for responses, I would like the above to be addressed in the first instance.

Thank you.

Sent from Samsung Galaxy Note

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 22:00
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: General overview and scrutiny committee school transport Herefordshire

Mr Baugh,

As a parent of a child attending John Masefield High School from Cradley I wish the following questions to be considered by the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning the provision of school transport.

1. A consultation process took place prior to a decision being made. Were the details of this consultation process utilised in the decision making process. The details of this consultation have not been put into the public domain and I would ask for a full break down to be made available for public view rather than having to rely on a Freedom of Information application.
2. At the time of writing, the Herefordshire website informs readers that "following the consultation process a decision will be made in December" There is no mention that a decision was made on 19 December and that members of the public, parents, children or prospective parents and children have an opportunity to make comments at the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Why?
3. What form of cost analysis has been undertaken to approve the notion that £250,000 would be saved by removing the provision by the Local Authority of Transport to our excellent Schools. I am aware that our bus provider has not even been consulted. By changing the goal posts and saying that our children from Cradley will now receive transport to their nearest school means that herefordshire would still have to fund buses to Worcestershire saving maybe 2 miles on the route. However this would be over The Malvern Hills and I would imagine would use far more fuel. Not only would these children have to be transported out of County but children in years 10 and 11 would still be transported to John Masefield. In other words two buses rather than the current one. I understand that the same would be replicated in Colwall and other villages and towns across the County.
4. What consideration has been given to the most important people who will be affected by this cut, the children. In the case of my daughter, she has just settled into secondary school, which she loves. She has made new friends and has settled into her studies. To force her to move to another school would be detrimental to her both educationally and undoubtedly psychologically as well. If we were a wealthy family maybe we could incur the cost of transporting her. This therefore goes against the governments philosophy of being able to choose a good school for your children. It is also tantamount to discriminating against those being less well off being able to choose a school for their children as they would have to opt for where the transport went.
5. What provisions will be given to children who gave Special Educational needs and require transportation.
6. Herefordshire has spent a vast amount of money on the children and Young Persons "Yes we can" plan. Multi agency working to make things better for children in Herefordshire.

Have this team been part of the consultation process?

7. As part of the consultation process, what other authorities/ organisations have been consulted with to share best practice and best value.

8. Current parents of children in year 6 were not informed of this proposed change and have therefore made their preferences for secondary education based on inaccurate data. If the changes go ahead how will they rectify their choices.

9. Do Herefordshire Council appreciate that by forcing children to be educated outside of County they will be discouraging younger families from locating to the area, forcing families to leave or move closer to towns and therefore leave the rural villages. This must be discrimination!

10. What thought has been given to Green Issues. More cars transporting children to school. Greater congestion in towns. Increased environmental damage and road repairs.

I would encourage this committee to overturn a decision which I feel may have been made in haste rather than taking into account the full facts. I would appreciate an update as to the progress of this decision making process. Hopefully the local electorate and media will be kept fully apprised of this matter.

Please pass all my questions to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and I look forward to reading the responses in the minutes.

Kind Regards



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 22:01
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Cuts to school transport

Dear Mr Baugh,

As a resident who has a child affected by the proposed changes to school transport, I would like to express my deepest concern about Council's decision to transport children to the nearest school as opposed to the designated school. While I fully understand that savings need to be made, I feel strongly that Council has not considered the wider implications on their own resources.

With regard to Scrutiny meeting concerning school transport, please find below questions I would like ask.

The original consultation process did not appear to be widespread or far reaching.

Can assurance be given, that every opportunity, using more than one means of communication, has been taken to fully consult with all stakeholders, including parents/carers and transport providers, before this decision was made?

Can it be clarified, how council has taken the views of the consultation into consideration, to make an informed decision?

It is not clear whether the council has considered any other proposals that would maximise benefits and minimise impact.

Is it clearly demonstrate that consideration has been given to models from neighbouring counties who have gone through similar processes?

Can the cost per child presented, (£720) be justified given that it is disproportionate to the costs in other counties?

The cost savings are not clear.

Have Council presented clear financial models or analyses, which demonstrate the impact savings from this single budget will have on the budgets in other areas?

Has council given due consideration to the impact on Herefordshire school budgets and on the future economic viability of Herefordshire County?

How will Council members be held to account without viable forecasting evidence?

Can council clarify the additional cost of more buses that be needed to address different year groups going to different schools.

Long term, wide spread implications do not seem to have been considered.

At a further cost to council, how will widespread policies change to reflect this single change, as it leaves much confusion?

Have council considered the long term negative economic impact on Herefordshire communities where the designated school is not the nearest school?

Is council satisfied that future generations educated out of County may not return to Herefordshire?

I do have other concerns and issues but given the timescale for responses, I would like the above to be addressed in the first instance.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 22:02
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Questions for General Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 15th January 2014

Dear Mr Baugh,

In relation to Agenda Item 4 for next Wednesday's meeting of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee (15th January 2014) I have some questions I would like to submit with regard to School Transport Policy:

- Was the Cost Modelling sufficiently robust? Under these proposals, Colwall will need an extra bus to take pupils to a school in Worcestershire, in addition to the existing service to John Masefield High School. **This will cost the council more money, not less**

- Why was insufficient effort made to consult with those affected, why did you not inform schools at the outset and inform parents at those schools? In East Herefordshire, the vast majority of families knew nothing until three days before the consultation period closed.

- Has the detrimental impact on the council's own Sustainable Transport Policy been properly assessed? Apart from the additional buses needed to enact this policy, many parents will drive their children to school rather than pay for their children to join the bus.

- Have the negative effects of the decision been properly evaluated? Herefordshire Schools will lose funding to neighbouring counties. Rural communities will see less families (younger people) settling or remaining in them. Individual families will be hit with a bill of hundreds or thousands of pounds.

- Why were the transport models adopted by other councils dismissed?

- This policy change appears to have been so badly conceived and enacted, does it increase the chance the running of Herefordshire Council will be taken over by Central Government?

Thank you very much,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: S [REDACTED] com>
Sent: 09 January 2014 22:17
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to Herefordshire Schools Transport - Scrutiny Questions

Dear Mr Baugh -

I contributed to the consultation relating to the above issue.

I have not received an update from the council but would be grateful if the following questions could be passed to the General Overview & Scrutiny Committee due to meet on 15th January:

Can the committee confirm exactly what savings will be made if the proposed change to school transport takes place?
 Is there a possibility that the proposed change - and added complexity of providing transport - will cost more than the current system?

Can the committee confirm that Herefordshire Council has considered the indirect costs associated with making the proposed change ie. Significant reduction of funding to schools/associated teacher redundancy costs/school closure costs?

Can the committee be sure that there are not more logical and effective ways of delivering a cost saving to the area of school transport? e.g. Re-negotiation of transport contracts/Working with schools to stagger the school day

Is the committee confident that a robust and far-reaching consultation process took place given that children across the county may have to change schools i.e.. Was every family affected by the potential change contacted?

If the proposed change takes place and savings are not achieved, is there a possibility the council may reverse its decision and adversely interrupt affected children's education once again?

Is the committee prepared to allow the council to discriminate against families unable to pay for transport to their existing catchment/county schools?

Is the committee prepared to allow the council to interrupt and adversely affect the education - and therefore potential - of vulnerable children including those who have been adopted within Herefordshire?

Many thanks.



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 January 2014 22:25
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Dear Mr Baugh,

Dear Mr Baugh,

As a resident who has a child affected by the proposed changes to school transport, I would like to express my deepest concern about Council's decision to transport children to the nearest school as opposed to the designated school. While I fully understand that savings need to be made, I feel strongly that Council has not considered the wider implications on their own resources.

With regard to Scrutiny meeting concerning school transport, please find below questions I would like ask.

The original consultation process did not appear to be widespread or far reaching.

Can assurance be given, that every opportunity, using more than one means of communication, has been taken to fully consult with all stakeholders, including parents/carers and transport providers, before this decision was made?

Can it be clarified, how council has taken the views of the consultation into consideration, to make an informed decision?

It is not clear whether the council has considered any other proposals that would maximise benefits and minimise impact.

Is it clearly demonstrate that consideration has been given to models from neighbouring counties who have gone through similar processes?

Can the cost per child presented, (£720) be justified given that it is disproportionate to the costs in other counties?

The cost savings are not clear.

Have Council presented clear financial models or analyses, which demonstrate the impact savings from this single budget will have on the budgets in other areas?

Has council given due consideration to the impact on Herefordshire school budgets and on the future economic viability of Herefordshire County?

How will Council members be held to account without viable forecasting evidence?

Can council clarify the additional cost of more buses that be needed to address different year groups going to different schools.

Long term, wide spread implications do not seem to have been considered.

At a further cost to council, how will widespread policies change to reflect this single change, as it leaves much confusion?

Have council considered the long term negative economic impact on Herefordshire communities where the designated school is not the nearest school?

Is council satisfied that future generations educated out of County may not return to Herefordshire?

I do have other concerns and issues but given the timescale for responses, I would like the above to be addressed in the first instance.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 09 January 2014 22:35
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Transport Policy questions for Wednesday's meeting (15 January 2014)

Importance: High

Dear Mr Baugh

We are delighted to hear that the Scrutiny Committee will be taking a further look at the process followed relating to the Schools Transport Policy.

As parents living in Cradley, we were very disappointed to hear that despite great opposition from parents during the consultation period, the proposal was still voted through. We would like to ask the following questions relating to the process, and the subsequent outcome.

1. Is it fair that our children will not be able to attend their catchment school, unless we are able to pay £720 per child per year? For our two children this amounts to £1440 net, or c.£1900 gross earnings. This takes away our freedom of choice, as to which school to send our children to, and undermines the principle of education for all, i.e. if you have enough money you can educate your children where ever you like.
2. Is it fair that the communities of Cradley and Colwall are being penalised for being in a rural area and close to the Worcestershire Boundary?
3. Is it correct that Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Shropshire have not adopted such an extreme Transport Policy as Herefordshire, and therefore are retaining education funding within their counties? Herefordshire Council states that **only** 800 pupils will be affected by this policy change - if 50% of these 800 pupils choose to obtain free transportation out of county, this equates to approximately £1.6 million of educational funding being sent out of county. How can this be logical in an already financially compromised county? Why would Herefordshire decide to move ahead with an extreme policy that other counties, such as Worcestershire, have decided that they won't implement it because of all the problems and issues that have been outlined during consultation.
4. With the above point in mind, when the decision was made to change the Transport Policy, did the council take into account the impact it would have on other financial budgets i.e. schools funding reducing by £1.6 million within the county? It does not seem logical to us that endeavouring to save £250,000 the county may lose up to £1.6 million in educational funding.
5. Where is the logic in having one catchment for the admissions process into school, and a second 'designated catchment' for Transport to school? We feel this will make the admissions process difficult, possibly lengthy and certainly not as straightforward as it currently is, when you apply for admission and transport to your 'catchment' school.
6. What level of discussions has the council had with their service providers, the bus companies? Surely if the council wishes to save £250,000 of their transport budget, it would be logical to discuss it with the bus companies, as the experts. Has it not been considered that an alternative solution arise from these discussions? Again it seems completely illogical not to consult with key stakeholders, who are directly impacted by this change, such as the bus companies.
7. Is it also correct that no clear cost benefit analysis has been completed prior to this decision being made? What savings are confirmed as being expected? If this is correct it would be absolutely unacceptable in any commercial business environment, and as tax payers and Herefordshire residents we are appalled that decisions have been made with out solid financial analysis. Please would the council inform us in clear terms how much money will be saved by this policy change?
8. Please would the council also confirm that this policy change will not detrimentally affect any other budgets within the county? Please see point 3.
9. If a free bus is to be provided for students travelling from Cradley to Dyson Perrins, and parents wishing to continue their child's education at John Masefield make appropriate payment, how does running two buses save costs, and how does this link to a sustainable transport policy?
10. Have to council taken into consideration the impact on rural villages, and their socio-economic structure? If, for example, the policy is retained there is a strong possibility that young families with children will either move out of Cradley or will not be attracted to Cradley because of the lack of transportation to their catchment school of John Masefield. Cradley village school may not become sustainable and may close. With the

closure of the school and the recent closure of the Post Office, Cradley village does not become an attractive location to live in and thus forces down house prices.

11. If it is anticipated that pupils move out of county, education funding in Herefordshire will fall. Have the council considered the potential for Teacher and Staff redundancies across the county? Have they also considered the real possibility that some schools may become unsustainable and may have to close?
12. We have been very disappointed with the whole consultation process from the beginning of September about this fundamental policy change. Did the process that was followed meet legal or best practice requirements? Key stakeholders (most especially parents from villages affected by the proposal) were not contacted directly by the council advising of this consultation. It has only been through word of mouth that we heard about the chance to participate in the consultation.
13. What was the outcome of the consultation process? We have not received any acknowledgement or feedback from our comments. However, we believe that the overwhelming input during consultation was against this proposal. Can the council please explain why the feedback from their constituents appears to have been completely and totally ignored?
14. We understand that savings need to be made, but can the council confirm that they have considered every possible alternative to meet the cost saving target i.e. have they consulted with the bus companies? Have Head Teachers been consulted for their views and ideas? Have other Transport Policies from around the whole country been scrutinised to gather ideas?

To summarise, it appears to us to be completely illogical for this decision to go ahead without any consideration of the possibly huge financial impact it could have across an already struggling county.

We do hope that the involvement of the Scrutiny Committee has positive results, and look forward to receiving feedback on the next steps in this process.

Regards


Cradley residents.

Baugh, Ben

Sent: 09 January 2014 22:45
To: Baugh, Ben; "<bbaugh"@herefordshire.gov.uk
Subject: School Transport

Dear Sir

I would like to submit the following questions to The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 15 January.

1. I took the time, along with many other people to submit my opinions during the consultation period and would like to know what the outcome of that process was?

2. How much will be saved by introducing this change and how will the money be saved?

3. What alternatives have been explored and rejected and why?

4. Is it acceptable that those that can afford it can choose which school to send their children to whilst those that can't afford it do not have the choice?

5. How much money has been spent by Herefordshire Council during the consultation period? and now that the process has been "called in" I assume further costs will be incurred!!!

6. If this goes ahead and you discover in the future that in fact you have not made a saving by changing the transport to nearest school rather than catchment will you then change your policy back, costing more money for consultations etc etc!!

7. Have you even considered the huge impact this is going to have on children's education?

The knock on effect of this change will be huge, schools could become unviable all for the sake of potentially a few miles difference on transporting children to their nearest school rather than their catchment school, roads will become congested if parents drive their children to school, more traffic on roads can only mean more wear and tear on roads, so your road repair bill will surely increase.

Yours Faithfully

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 07:45
To: Dean, Gemma; Baugh, Ben
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Scrutiny Call-in School Transport

Questions from Lady Hawkins' School to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. **It is not clear that the cost modelling has taken the full cost impact of the decision into account across all areas of the council's operation, and therefore assurance is sought that the total anticipated net financial effort is achievable, realistic and proportionate.**
 - a. From Pembridge and Almeley, current students in Y10-Y13 and other eligible students would still have to be bused into LHS. However other students, living nearer to Weobley would need to be bused to Weobley High School. Thus there would be two buses paid for by the Council not one. How would this save money?
 - b. We are aware that some financial modelling and research has been done; however the Council's own report states that *the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely*. We would question why such a major decision purportedly based on the need to save money, will actually achieve the required result when the cost of additional buses is taken into account.
 - c. Has the requirement for extra buses been discussed with bus providers and reassurance obtained that they can meet the extra demand whilst ensuring that children arrive at different schools on time?

2. **It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process.**
 - a. Headteachers have calculated that the long term effects of the change would move approximately 250 secondary aged children from Herefordshire Schools into Worcestershire or Gloucestershire schools costing almost a million pounds per year. Even if the alleged savings were achieved in full, four times this amount will disappear from schools' budgets. How is this justified and what attempts have been made to consider a more coherent and holistic view of funding? Has Jo Davidson, the Director for People's Services, clearly communicated the considerable damage this would cause to Herefordshire schools to all councillors?
 - b. With academies free to design and teach their own curriculum rather than following the national curriculum, students moving school after Year 7, 8 or 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?
 - c. There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this?
 - d. The Kington Area Federation of schools have worked extremely hard to create an effective transition programme with younger students enjoying many visits and activities in LHS, close liaison between heads, governors, teachers and support staff to help with continuity of education, which is crucial to a good start at high school. The proposed transport changes will lead to the abandonment of traditional catchment areas and makes this work much harder. Is this what the Council wishes to achieve? Furthermore, has account been taken of young people making less progress and being unhappier as a result of this?
 - e. This policy could force middle income parents who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. Herefordshire Council have spent considerable sums of money on creating a Children and Young People's Partnership whose vision - the 'Yes, We Can' plan - sets out their aims for children living in Herefordshire and promotes collaboration with different organisations to make things better for children. We would question whether the 'Yes We Can' team have been consulted for their views on the proposed changes to school transport? And if not, why not? A parent who has worked closely with the Headteachers planning group has ironically suggested that the plan should be re-named 'Yes You Can if you can afford it in Herefordshire' which is a less snappy title but perhaps rather more accurate.
 - f. A key part of the coalition government's philosophy on education is based on parents being able to choose a good school for their children. The decision to transport to nearest school is inequitable in that it only provides choice for the better off who can afford the bus fares. How do Councillors square this with the political views the parties they represent espouse about education?

3. **No reasons have been given for dismissing the approaches taken in other authorities.**

We would ask the Council to consider alternative approaches taken by other authorities. For example Gloucestershire operates a 'nearest or catchment' policy. Durham offers a 'nearest school in county' option. Have these options been considered and discounted?

4. SEN proposals go against the Council's first principle of protecting the vulnerable.

- a. Is any account being taken of students with SEN at School Action or School Action Plus for whom moving school will create discontinuity of support and damage their progress and learning? This is equally true of pre and post-16 SEN students.
- b. We have excellent provision for post-16 SEN education in Herefordshire and some schools would not be able to provide the facilities or standards for these students that are currently in operation at Barrs Court School. Has the Council considered the cost implications of post-16 SEN students attending their nearest school and the extra resources that may be required to accommodate their particular needs.

5. The decision has a disproportionate effect on families with more than one child.

- a. If a parent was desperate to keep their children at their current secondary school and had two or three children in Y7-Y9, could they be given any financial help? If so how could this be achieved in a way that is equitable and fair to all parents?
- b. Has due consideration been given to the prospect of splitting children in the same family and forcing them to attend separate schools? Costs to parents could include extra child care provision to meet the different term dates, the inability to pass on school uniform to siblings, the inability to take family holidays at certain times of the year and the sheer impossibility of having two or three children attending schools in adjacent counties.

6. Families unable to support this additional cost have not been given the notice they need to amend their school choice for the September 2014 intake.

- a. We are disappointed that Herefordshire did not make their intentions clear to parents of current Year 6 students before requiring them to make their preferred choice of secondary school. It is further noted that our adjoining English authorities (Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire) would not permit any changes to parental preferences after the official closing date of 31 October 2013. This severely disadvantages residents of Herefordshire and their children. We would ask if due consideration was given to the implementation date of the proposed changes?

7. The total effects of the decision in exporting the County's young people to schools in other counties, in not demonstrating adherence to the principles of our transport plan, is not evidencing alignment with the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for Schools, and in not demonstrating the net savings at council level exist when loss of pupil grants are taken into account, raise concerns that aspects of this decision fall outside of the council's current Budget Monitoring and Policy Framework.

- a. 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?
- b. Education Transport made significant changes to bus routes and contractors in August 2013. How would the proposed changes affect the contractual arrangements currently in place?
- c. Increased traffic into the LHS site would create safety issues in narrow Kington streets and around the school site. Has an impact assessment based on the Safer Routes to Schools programme been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed changes?
- d. Increased volume of traffic would also cause greater congestion, increased road repairs and environmental damage. Has an impact assessment on the environment been carried out?
- e. Has an impact assessment on equality of opportunity especially for vulnerable young people been conducted?
- f. It has been suggested that high schools could be devolved funding to arrange their own transport. We consider that this may be unlawful as local authorities cannot delegate the budget for home to school transport. Could we ask what clarification has been sought on this suggestion?

We firmly believe that the Cabinet decision to withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport policy eligibility based upon nearest and catchment school and replace eligibility based on nearest suitable school with places is incorrect and flawed as it:

- Fails to take account of Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's Partnership vision to ensure children have the best education and opportunities within Herefordshire.
- Has not been subjected to full and proper consultation with all organisations who work with children in Herefordshire to ensure they are healthy, happy and safe.
- Fails to consider equality, diversity and respect for human rights but relies totally on a hard to project financial saving.

We accept the need for the Council to make savings and understand their desire to provide only the statutory minimum service it is required to do, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. We do feel, however, that the Council has failed to take into

account the ripple effect of this decision and consider that there are sufficient good reasons based on the Council's holistic approach to children within Herefordshire, to overturn this decision. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to consider ways of improving transportation and seeking cost savings, if appropriate.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Headteacher

CC [REDACTED] Chair of Governors Lady Hawkins' School

**Gary I House
Headteacher
Lady Hawkins' School and Sixth Form Centre
Kington
HR5 3AR**

Telephone: 01544 230441

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From: Lennon, Frances [mailto:flenlon@herefordshire.gov.uk]

Sent: 08 January 2014 12:09

To: 'Matthew Maund'; 'gmills@ashfieldpark.hereford.sch.uk'; Chris Bandfield; 'Sue Woodrow'; 'Roberts, Kathy'; 'scatlow-hawkins@bhbs.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Sian Bailey'; 'ssmith@bosbury.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Dawn Wilson'; 'psocket@bridstow.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Head'; Oremi Evans; Andrew Morley (amorley@burghill.hereford.sch.uk); 'Beverley Donald'; 'pwhitcombe@lordscudamore.hereford.sch.uk'; Peter Box; 'Adrian Parsonage'; Marie Thomas; 'head@colwall.hereford.sch.uk'; 'h ead'; Bridget knight; 'principal@emc.hereford.sch.uk'; head@eastnor.hereford.sch.uk; Tracey Kneale ; 'Sue Gaston'; jjones@garway.hereford.sch.uk; 'kmiles@goodrich.hereford.sch.uk'; 'datkinson@gorsleygoffs.hereford.sch.uk'; 'spugh@hamptondene.hereford.sch.uk'; J Sheppard (The Hereford Academy); Judy Cecil; 'Jayne Maund'; 'tmilne@ivington.hereford.sch.uk'; Nigel Griffiths; 'Andy Evans'; Angela Daniel; sfisher (sfisher@kingstone-high.hereford.sch.uk); 'aphillips@kington.hereford.sch.uk'; Gary House; 'ltownsend@lea.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Julie Rees'; 'abrandrick@LEINTWARDINE.HEREFORD.SCH.UK'; 'head'; 'rrichards@ljs.hereford.sch.uk'; 'smcgrath@longtown.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Lindsey Taylor'; 'mfreeman@luston.hereford.sch.uk'; Lee Batstone; 'mnewton@marden.hereford.sch.uk'; lkearns@mordiford.hereford.sch.uk; 'hhines@much-birch.hereford.sch.uk'; 'lharrison@muchmarcle.hereford.sch.uk'; 'abreakwell@orleton.hereford.sch.uk'; 'mwoolaway@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk'; 'kfinney@pembridge.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Chloe Evans'; Candyce Garlcik; 'Dr Michael Goodman'; 'jpreston@riverside.hereford.sch.uk'; 'vhancock@shobdon.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Paul Barns'; swalter@kimbolton-st-james.hereford.sch.uk; Kathy Weston; Clive Lambert; 'vwalker@st-martins.hereford.sch.uk'; 'jmoynihan@credenhill.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Tim Wilson'; Andrew Teale; 'kwright@st-peters.hereford.sch.uk'; psmith@lordscudamore.hereford.sch.uk; 'plloyd@staunton-on-
we.hereford.sch.uk'; stevecox@steineracademyhereford.eu; 'mlewis@stokeprior.hereford.sch.uk'; 'Ann Pritchard'; 'Louise George'; 'head@wellington.hereford.sch.uk'; Dean Williams; bbird@weston-under-penyard.hereford.sch.uk; Claire McKeown; Denise Strutt; Andy Shaw

Subject: FW: Scrutiny Call-in School Transport

Importance: High

SENT ON BEHALF OF GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Dear Headteachers

General Overview and Scrutiny have called-in the decision made by Cabinet on 19.12.13 regarding the changes to school transport. As a result, an extraordinary meeting has been arranged for Wednesday 15th January at 9am to determine this matter. The meeting will be held at Brockington in the Council Chamber. I attach a link to the papers for the meeting which includes the full call-in notice along with reasons for the call-in.

Members of the public are allowed to ask questions regarding the topic but only relating to the areas of the call-in. The deadline for submission of questions is Friday 10th January at 5pm. Democratic services shall then forward your questions to the Cabinet Member and officers for responses to be supplied at the meeting.

If you have any queries relating to this matter then please feel free to contact me at gdean@herefordshire.gov.uk or on 01432 261885.

Kind Regards

Gemma

Gemma Dean
Scrutiny Officer
Assistant Chief Executive's Office Law, Governance and Resilience
Herefordshire Council
Brockington
Hereford
HR1 1SH

Tel: 01432 261885

Email: gdean@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 09:10
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: Harvey, Liz (Cllr)
Subject: RE: Scrutiny Meeting 15th Jan 14

Dear Ben,

Please accept these questions which I would welcome clarification on through the call-in process;

1. Has the decision taken into account the impact that may occur on people choosing to live in Cradley/Bosbury/Colwall if they need to pay for transport to their local Herefordshire school?
 - It is unclear that the families who moved to Herefordshire would have done so under a pay for school transport policy and there is a risk that the population mix in villages at county boundaries will be affected.
 - Changes in population mix could have an effect on the number of children attending local Primary Schools and potentially house prices and other aspects of community life.
2. Has the decision taken into account the effect of additional cars on the road travelling to John Masefield High School and particularly the safety aspects of a potentially significant number of cars entering and exiting the school entrance in the mornings and evenings?
 - This decision appear not to support the County transport policy.
 - The JMHS entrance is a narrow and complex junction on a busy through road in Ledbury. The mix of a large number of children and additional traffic could pose a danger to pedestrians.
 - The additional traffic may cause congestion and pollution effects.
3. Has the decision been informed by an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and has the modelling taken into account the financial impact on all affected groups?
 - It is clear that there are a number of affected groups including parents from a spectrum of social backgrounds, the schools both Primary and Secondary, communities, etc.
4. Have parents been asked if they are likely to drive their children into Ledbury or move them to the 'nearest' school, and what the impact on family life is likely to be of siblings going to different schools?
 - It is unclear that parents will pay a substantial amount of money for school transport when a low cost option might be to drive the student to school.
 - It is unclear that families would chose the option of zero cost transport to a new school for one child in a family of several children.
5. Have the predicted savings in the school bus budget been set against the financial impact of the loss of students out of Herefordshire and the potential economic impact of people with families moving out of county?
 - The county of Herefordshire will be paying for a student to leave the county and with them there will be revenue lost to a neighbouring county.
 - Schools losing students will have no choice but to reduce their costs. The fixed costs are likely to be inflexible. Variable cost will have to be adjusted. The largest component of variable costs is staff salaries.
 - It is likely that an immediate action will be to lose staff to balance the school budget. Jobs in Herefordshire will need to be lost.
6. Has the Council considered alternative options to make savings such as charging all students a proportion of the cost (it could be as low as £40 per year) to avoid discrimination against a chosen group who live in specific areas?

- Adopting an approach of supplying the statutory minimum transport in a student community which causes dramatically different treatment is not equitable.
7. 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 and won't be caused to close which would create educational impacts?
 - Student numbers are the only source of financial income for schools. Creating a situation in which students leave the county means revenue will be lost to county schools.
 - It is not clear that all schools will be able to find a financial solution to the changing market conditions.
 - A school closure will increase the transport requirements on the county to transport affected students to their next nearest school.
 - A school closure would likely entail all students being transported to the next nearest school not just the lesser number who live beyond three miles.
 8. It looks like a simple financial model has been created to estimate the potential savings which it is recognised could be very unreliable. Has the question of how to make the required savings been discussed with all stakeholders including the affected school and the bus company to see what innovative solutions can be found that achieves the budget savings and maintains the current bus service.
 - For example, the school start and finish times could be changed to allow the bus company business to more efficiently deliver the students to school
 - The school could pay towards the transport costs where the effect of lost school revenue and potential staff redundancy cost make it economically viable to its business
 9. Has the model considered a set of statistical scenarios covering the likely behaviour of parents to the transport charges?
 - In any given affected community the parents have a finite number of discrete options. The student continues to use the current school bus at no cost to them, the student uses an additional bus to a new school at no cost to them, the student uses the current school bus and pays or the student is transported to school by car.
 - Only one option, the student uses the current school bus and pays, creates revenue for the council.
 - One option, the student uses an additional bus to a new school at no cost to them, increases the cost to the council.
 - Unless the revenue from the paying students is able to more than fund the additional bus the council will increase its cost.
 - A reasonable estimate might be that more parents will chose a zero (travel to another school) or low (travel by car) cost option than pay for transport.
 - Statistically it would appear that the outcome that council transport costs will be reduced in this scenario is low. At the same time it is certain that the likely outcome will lose students and revenue from Herefordshire.
 - The loss of every student is financially approximately 4 times more that the income from one student paying for transport.

I hope that all questions are valid and helpful to council members.

Please could you confirm receipt of the questions.

Regards



From: Baugh, Ben [mailto:bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 07 January 2014 16:45
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Harvey, Liz (Cllr)
Subject: RE: Scrutiny Meeting 15th Jan 14

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email, the link to the agenda for the meeting is:
<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=809&MId=5046&Ver=4>

You will see the following note:

Questions must be restricted to the grounds for the call-in - see pages 8/9 - and must be received no later than 5.00pm on Friday, 10 January 2014.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards, Ben

Ben Baugh
Governance Services
Herefordshire Council
bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2014 08:54
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: Harvey, Liz (Cllr)
Subject: Scrutiny Meeting 15th Jan 14

Dear Ben,

I have been passed your details by Liz Harvey.
I was wondering when you defined the 'no later than two working days before the meeting' for the meeting on 15th Jan (I am unsure of the time of the meeting).

I want to be very clear about the date and time you consider to be the cut off for answers to be generated for the meeting.

I am speaking with interested parents this Thursday in Cradley to make sure they are all away of the process in place and the types of question that can be submitted.

I look forward to your reply. Any helpful advice you can offer would be gratefully received,
Best wishes

[REDACTED]

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 09:51
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Transport Changes

Mr Baugh,

Your details have been passed on from several different sources as the point of contact for me to feedback to the scrutiny meeting being held in respect to the School Transport changes recently passed by Herefordshire Council. From the documents I have seen to date it appears that this change is not only designed to save money but bring in revenue.

As a council tax payer living in Cradley we seldom get to see any direct benefit of our contributions to the running of the county, albeit refuse collection and the odd burst of pot hole repairs on the Bosbury road. Our decision to move to the county and specifically Cradley was based on the excellent Primary school and its association with John Masefield High School. Indeed we have two children at JMHS already and plans for the other two to join them in a couple of years. We understand the need to save money and that parents funding transport on behalf of the county seems a good way to go. Personally at £720 per child per year this seems excessive and as for at least half of the week this would be a one-way trip, due to after school activity! The alternative 417 bus route seems to be the target of another cost saving from other council committees so we'll see even less for our contribution into the county bank account.

Please pass on to those concerned that Herefordshire council will not be getting any money from my pocket. We will instead drive in and out, no doubt increasing the traffic congestion in the heart of Ledbury during the week.

My questions for the committee are have the council considered

- The number of parents in impacted areas that will not pay for the transport and therefore not provide the expected revenue?
- The traffic and pollution increase over the early morning and extended afternoon period in Ledbury
- An increase in possible claims from drivers due to pothole damage as less money is spent on road maintenance

I very sincerely hope that the huge weight of emails hitting your inbox and the many arguments provided within them, especially those submitted by the schools are more than enough to provide the committee grounds to overturn this before September.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:02
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Transport - Scrunity Committee
Attachments: School Transport.doc

Dear Sir,

I attach a letter raising my concerns for the Scrutiny committee on 15th January 2014.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]



10th January 2014

Dear Sir,

School Transport

I am writing to you so that you can forward my questions to the scrutiny committee which will be meeting on 15th January 2014; in connection with the School Transport Decision made on the 19th December 2013.

a) Why has there been no in-depth cost analysis based on nearest school in county?

As according to your figures 180 pupils live nearer other authorities. If they left the area the council would lose approx £720,000 a year (pupil premium) whilst still paying out £144,000 to bus them there. Where is the saving?

b) Could the proposal of schools running their own buses (as in many other authorities); with a subsidy provide by the council not be looked into further?

As there appears to are no financial models done on this. Schools know where there pupils come from and how they are actually transported.

c) The cost analysis based on the decision being implemented over two years; would not achieve the £250,000 savings immediately as there would be duplicate buses running.

Wouldn't this be costing more in real terms for the next two years?

d) Have the bus companies been informed/consulted?

As some pupils catch the public transport costing £450 per year. The council are already saving £350 a year per pupil. If this was multiplied by the estimated 800 pupils this decision affects, the council could save £325,000 per year.

Could this cost analysis not be looked into?

I hope that some of these questions along with many others which are being raised will be looked at and raised at this meeting. As I feel that the consultation process has been hurried and not all avenues explored.

Yours faithfully,

 Parent of JHMS School Pupil

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:03
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Re: Questions for the The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 January 2014

Importance: High

Dear Mr Baugh,

Regarding the proposed changes to Herefordshire Schools and Post 16 Transport Policy, I would like to submit the following questions to The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting to be held on 15th January.

1. I took the time, along with many other people to submit my opinions during the consultation period and would like to know what the outcome of that process was?
2. How much will be saved by introducing this change and how will the money be saved?
3. What alternatives have been explored / rejected and why?
4. Is it acceptable that those that can afford it can choose which school to send their children to whilst those that can't afford it do not have a choice?

I look forward to your prompt response.

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] org.uk>
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:11
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: SUBMISSION TO THE GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - P HAMMOND
Attachments: SUBMISSION TO THE GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - P HAMMOND.pdf

Dear Mr Baugh

Please find attached my submission for the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday 15 January 2014.

I would be grateful if you would bring my questions to the attention of the Committee.

Your sincerely

[REDACTED]
John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
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Submission to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In relation to the call-in of the cabinet decision on changes to Herefordshire Schools and Post-16 Transport Policy

Meeting to be held on Wednesday 15 January 2014

Dear Members

Please find below the questions that I wish to raise in relation to the call-in of the Cabinet decision on changes to the Herefordshire Schools and Post 16 Transport Policy.

My questions are restricted to the grounds for the call in.

Yours sincerely


Assistant Headteacher (Herefordshire)

1. The council has agreed that to achieve its priorities (Supplement to the Agenda, point 10, page 66, it **must** ensure 'that the services that we do provide are cost effective'.

It is not clear that there is sufficient and compelling evidence to indicate that it will be cheaper to transport students to the nearest school for the following reasons:

The savings set out in paragraphs 10.8 and 10.9 seem to be based on the assumption that at least 40% of children affected and currently entitled to free transport will elect to attend a school of their choice (which is not their nearest school) and therefore will lose their entitlement to free school transport. If 100% of the children entitled to free school transport elect to attend their nearest school, there will be no consequent cost saving. As the documentation repeats, it is impossible to predict the choices that parents will make. However, with the widely accepted increased cost of living the reality is that many will not be in a position to pay significant transport costs. This is supported in the Mainstream Education Transport Consultation documentation (Appendix 2) where it states that responses received from those objecting identify the main issues against the proposals which include:

- The proposed of cost paying for a seat - £660 per annum – much too expensive
- Families with more than one child using this system will have to pay a significant amount each year i.e. £1220 or £1980 or £2640'
- These costs are based on current figures; the members have voted an increase to £770 per annum from September 2014. 1 child - £770, 2 - £1540, 3 - £2,310, 4 - £4080.

Secondly, it is not at all clear that there will be cost savings, and indeed, there is very likely to be an increase in council costs due to the requirement to provide two school buses where currently one is required.

Lastly, It has been suggested in the documentation that the result of this policy may be that schools may have to close. If a school became unviable, the students currently attending it and who do not rely on free school transport (i.e. local students) would then have to be transported to an alternative school thereby increasing the overall cost to the council, notwithstanding all of the implicit social and educational impact.

How does the Council's recent decision on changes to Herefordshire School transport policy comply with its stated aim that it must ensure 'that the services that we do provide are cost effective'?

2. In so far as consultation has taken place, the council appears to have paid no regard to the views of the individuals, schools and organisations that have raised objections. The only supporting comment in the Mainstream Education Transport Consultation documentation (Appendix 2) is 'those in favour of the proposals cited matching responsibility with choice and the current financial climate as the reasons for their support'.

Could the Council provide evidence of its consultation process? It is stated that Council Officers *asked interested and affected parties to respond through their web site*. How were the following interested and affected parties consulted:

Parents and Carers

Headteachers

Governors,

School based staff

The 'Yes We Can' Team

The Shadow Board (whose very remit is to give children and young people a voice about the issues that affect them).

Parents and Carers of Year 6 children making decisions about secondary school choices

Current contracted bus contractors and local bus service providers

Elected Members of Herefordshire Council

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:16
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Questions for the Scrutiny Committee

Good morning.

It is my understanding that the decision to remove funded school transport from the rural communities on the outskirts of Herefordshire has been brought into scrutiny, thank heavens!

I have a long list of issues and questions surrounding this decision, it is frankly preposterous, but will constrain myself to just a few key points.

Firstly it seems clear to me that the financial repercussions of this change have not been thought through. The Council's own report states that the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely. I would question why such a major decision based on the need to save money, will actually achieve the required result when the cost of additional buses is taken into account. Is it not very possible that it will, in-fact, create a financial loss across Herefordshire?

Has some kind of equality impact inquiry been carried out? It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process. There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this? This policy would force middle income parents, of which I am one, who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. A key part of the coalition government's philosophy on education is based on parents being able to choose a good school for their children. The decision to transport to nearest school is inequitable in that it only provides choice for the better off who can afford the bus fares. How do Councillors square this with the political views the parties they represent espouse about education? Is any account being taken of students with SEN at School Action or School Action Plus for whom moving school will create discontinuity of support and damage their progress and learning? This is equally true of pre and post-16 SEN students.

Why is it that Herefordshire are seemingly the only county to be making this choice? Would it not be prudent to consider alternatives taken by other local authorities? For example Gloucestershire operates a 'nearest or catchment' policy. Durham offers a 'nearest school in county' option. Have these options been considered and discounted?

As a parent with 2 children at JMHS (both extremely happy and achieving well I might add) and a 3rd to attend in the future, I feel that my only option, as with many others in Cradley, would be to drive my children to school. Has the environmental impact been considered? Increased volume of traffic would cause greater congestion, increased road repairs and environmental damage. Has an impact assessment on equality of opportunity especially for vulnerable young people been conducted? Increased traffic into the JMHS site would create safety issues on the site. Has an impact assessment based on the Safer Routes to Schools programme been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed changes?

I would also like to add that I feel this decision smacks of hypocrisy. How can the council introduce fines for parents who wish to take their children out of school for a week to enjoy a family holiday

and yet on the other hand make it exponentially harder for us to get them to school in the first place?!

I understand and accept the need for the Council to make savings, we are all trying to cut costs, everyone I know is in the same boat, but the knock on effect of this change would be vast. The impact on children and families in Herefordshire would be detrimental, not to mention the added strain to rural communities already under pressure. I sincerely hope that this decision will be reconsidered.

Yours hopefully



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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:19
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Transport To Schools Council Decision.

Dear Mr Baugh

As a resident of Cradley and a parent of a child at John Masefield High school I attended a meeting last night at which it was explained that the council's recent decision to alter the free transport to school arrangement has been called into question.

I would wish to ask that the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask on my behalf a question relating to **how this proposal will in fact save money and how much money will be saved?** I note that the financial cost benefit analysis is at best unclear, surely the Council would like to know exactly how much can be saved by making such a drastic change to children and their families living in Herefordshire?

There are many issues which remain unclear, including any consideration of the initial consultation process, the facts of whether transport free or otherwise will still be available to children in the village of Cradley, the effect of the loss of pupils to Herefordshire schools, how this decision complies with the sustainable transport policy, the effect of the loss of JMHS as a catchment school on the socio-economic background of Cradley to name but a few.

Whilst I fully understand that the Council does need to make savings I feel that offering our children education based on the bare minimum of a transport service is not the way forward. I do trust that these points along with others will be raised at the meeting

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:46
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Public questions for Scrutiny Committee on January 15th

Dear Mr Baugh,

As a member of the public and a Herefordshire tax payer, I have some questions for the Scrutiny Committee meeting next Wednesday (January 15th) with reference to the Cabinet decision on Changes to Herefordshire Schools and Post 16 Transport Policy. The online agenda states that all public questions should be forwarded to you by 5pm today. I would be grateful if you could confirm that you have received this email (and that you are the correct contact) since there is not long until that closure time?

I am extremely concerned about the lack of transparency relating to the justifications put forward in support of the proposed changes to schools transport policy. When I have previously raised my concerns with Councillor Millar last year, his 'explanation' was that:

"I disagree with the financial outcomes your letter anticipates ... I have assured myself that financial outcomes are reasonable ... I feel unable to further question the figures which it is my responsibility to present".

This is profoundly unsatisfactory and I would therefore like to submit the following questions relating to the Scrutiny Committee's 'call-in' – with particular reference to the cost modelling and associated assumptions underpinning the proposal:

Question 1: What is the average difference in cost between providing travel to a child's catchment school and providing travel to the same child's nearest school (excluding any projected revenues from the vacant seat payment scheme)?

Question 2: Does the average difference in cost between existing travel arrangements to a catchment school and new travel arrangements to the nearest school (Question 1) include the provision of new/extended commercial transport contracts where appropriate?

Question 3: Are the estimated savings of £250,000 a year for the nearest school only policy anticipated to be an ongoing year-on-year saving? (i.e. £250,000 every year.)

Question 4: If the proposal does assume a year-on-year saving (Question 3) then what is the basis for assuming that parents will not include transport costs in future school selection and select the nearest school where free transport is provided – hence eroding the projected year-on-year savings?

Question 5: If parents do include transport costs in future school choice decisions and hence favour 'nearest' over 'catchment' schools in order to obtain free transport, then how does this affect the savings resulting from the proposed travel changes?

Question 6: The report estimates a maximum potential saving of £680,000 per annum "if no child changed school and all transport was withdrawn for all those non-entitled pupils" and bases this on an average per child transport cost. Given that the majority of school transport contracts include overheads (driver, insurance, maintenance, depreciation, etc.) that are unrelated to the number of children (and that these overheads actually benefit from economies of scale) then how is a maximum saving based on an average per child calculation valid?

Question 7: What is the revised figure for the maximum potential saving that is actually achievable - rather than the figure in Question 6? (i.e. In general one would expect the majority of school buses routes to remain in service to transport unaffected children and, whilst it might be possible to close some routes it would presumably also be necessary to open new routes in other locations.)

Question 8: What is the current cost of providing school buses (excluding any revenue generated from the vacant seat payment scheme)?

Question 9: What cost reductions are forecast from being able to cancel or renegotiate current school bus contracts as a result of the proposed change (excluding any revenue generated from the vacant seat payment scheme)?

Question 10: What additional costs are likely to be incurred for providing new school buses where children change school as a result of the proposal (excluding any revenue generated from the vacant seat payment scheme)?

Question 11: The report describes the proposed increase in travel costs as:

“a 9% annual increase, which, although significant, is more reasonable in the current economic climate”.

What is the basis for judging an increase far in excess of inflation as “reasonable” especially in terms of the “current economic climate” where many people are experiencing year-on-year pay freezes or pay rises well below inflation?

Question 12: Is there a significant *saving* from introducing this proposal (i.e. will the council spend significantly less on school transport) or is the financial benefit actually a reduction in the net transport expenditure due to the projected additional revenue from parents?

Regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:56
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Questions for the Scrutiny Committee
Attachments: Questions for the Scrutiny Committee.doc

Dear Ben

Please find attached the questions for the Scrutiny Committee for School transport from Cradley CE Primary School.

Many Thanks

Adam Greaves
Headteacher
Cradley CE Primary School

CRADLEY

C. E., V. A., PRIMARY SCHOOL

Herefordshire Council

Headteacher:

Mr A .Greaves MA.PGCE

Tel: 01886 880315

Fax: 01886 880913

E-Mail: admin@cradley.hereford.sch.uk

Cradley

Nr. Malvern

Worcs.

WR13 5NG

Questions for the Scrutiny Committee

1. **It is not clear that the cost modelling has taken the full cost impact of the decision into account across all areas of the council's operation, and therefore assurance is sought that the total anticipated net financial effort is achievable, realistic and proportionate.**
 - a. From Cradley and Mathon, current students in Y10-Y13 at JMHS and other eligible students would still have to be bused into JMHS. However other students would need to be bused to Dyson Perrins or The Chase in Worcestershire. Thus there would be two buses paid for by the Council not one. How would this save money?
 - b. Our understanding is that part of Colwall is nearest to The Chase School in Malvern and part is closer to JMHS. Again the Council will therefore have to pay for two buses instead of one. How would this save money? Furthermore if the Chase School was full (and Worcestershire have already indicated that they will not be making any changes to their admissions criteria) a third bus may be required to transport students from the village to yet another school.
 - c. We are aware that some financial modelling and research has been done; however the Council's own report states that *the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely*. We would question why such a major decision purportedly based on the need to save money, will actually achieve the required result when the cost of additional buses is taken into account.
 - d. While the immediate effect will be on Year 6 pupils and those attending JMHS, has any analysis been conducted to assess the impact on the rural communities affected as well as the primary schools that serve these communities?
 - e. Has the requirement for extra buses been discussed with bus providers and reassurance obtained that they can meet the extra demand whilst ensuring that children arrive at different schools on time?
 - f. At Cradley we could face a situation where if Dysons was full, the next nearest school is the Chase, before John Masefield third. Does this situation mean that the Council would run three separate buses to get the children to their schools? With birth rates rising in Worcestershire and no changes to the admission policies for Cradley and Colwall children, with regard to Worcestershire schools. How are the Council going to address the active discrimination against these children that will be the effect of the transportation changes?

2. **It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process.**
 - a. JMHS have calculated that the long term effects of the change would move approximately 250 secondary aged children from Herefordshire Schools into Worcestershire or Gloucestershire schools costing almost a million pounds per year. Even if the alleged savings were achieved in full, four times this amount will disappear from schools' budgets. How is this justified and what attempts have been made to consider a more coherent and holistic view of funding? Has Jo Davidson, the Director for People's Services, clearly communicated the considerable damage this would cause to Herefordshire schools to all councillors?

- b. 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?
 - c. There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this?
 - d. The Ledbury Cluster of schools have worked extremely hard to create an effective transition programme with younger students enjoying many visits and activities in JMHS, close liaison between heads, governors, teachers and support staff to help with continuity of education, which is crucial to a good start at high school. The proposed transport changes will lead to the abandonment of traditional catchment areas and makes this work much harder. Is this what the Council wishes to achieve? Furthermore, has account been taken of young people making less progress and being unhappier as a result of this? For Cradley this will mean becoming a feeder school for a secondary school that is out of County and in a different CE Diocesan area.
 - e. This policy would force middle income parents who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. Herefordshire Council have spent considerable sums of money on creating a Children and Young People's Partnership whose vision - the 'Yes, We can' plan - sets out their aims for children living in Herefordshire and promotes collaboration with different organisations to make things better for children. We would question whether the 'Yes We Can' team have been consulted for their views on the proposed changes to school transport? And if not, why not? One of our parents has ironically suggested that the plan should be re-named 'Yes You Can if you can afford it in Herefordshire' which is a less snappy title but perhaps rather more accurate.
 - f. A key part of the coalition government's philosophy on education is based on parents being able to choose a good school for their children. The decision to transport to nearest school is inequitable in that it only provides choice for the better off who can afford the bus fares. How do Councillors square this with the political views the parties they represent espouse about education?
 - g. Has any thought been given to the effects on the viability of the primary schools who will be greatly affected by the proposed changes?
 - h. Herefordshire Council has recently held a joint educational conference with Ofsted to highlight the need to raise the County's overall performance at both KS2 and KS4. Has thought been given to the detrimental effect on Herefordshire results due to the removal from the County of the high achieving results and pupils from Cradley, Colwall and Bosbury schools?
- 3. No reasons have been given for dismissing the approaches taken in other authorities.**
- a) We would ask the Council to consider more realistic approaches taken by other **local** authorities. Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire all operate a nearest or catchment policy. We note that other counties have adopted different schemes but consider that adjoining counties' policies should be given more weight as they have a direct influence on parental choice within Herefordshire. It is already clear from our September 2014 admissions data that some parents have already made the decision to accept free transport to Worcestershire schools from Herefordshire Council.
 - b) We have carefully read Appendix 2 submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 19 December 2013 and consider that one statement is particularly misleading and that this could have affected the way Members voted; on page 78, item G) it states "*a response from Worcestershire LA confirming our proposals are as per their own back in 2011*". JMHS contacted Stephen Wheatley, Policy and Performance Manager at Worcestershire Council and he confirmed that Worcestershire did consider adopting a statutory minimum policy but after consultation and thorough research found that it was unworkable as it significantly affected catchment boundaries and the additional costs incurred would cancel out any potential savings. Of course, Worcestershire have middle schools to consider which

Herefordshire do not but, nevertheless, it is misleading to say that Herefordshire's proposals would align them with Worcestershire. It would be more accurate to say that the post-16 SEN provision is similar. We consider this point to be significant because:

- It shows an important piece of information provided to Members was misleading.
- It shows that other authorities realised that the decision that Herefordshire has made is not cost effective, appropriate or rational.

4. The decision has a disproportionate effect on families with more than one child.

- a. If a parent was desperate to keep their children at their current secondary school and had two or three children in Y7-Y9, could they be given any financial help? If so how could this be achieved in a way that is equitable and fair to all parents?
- b. Has due consideration been given to the prospect of splitting children in the same family and forcing them to attend separate schools? Costs to parents could include extra child care provision to meet the different term dates, the inability to pass on school uniform to siblings, the inability to take family holidays at certain times of the year and the sheer impossibility of having two or three children attending schools in adjacent counties. We have already seen in the past year different holidays for Herefordshire and Worcestershire

5. Families unable to support this additional cost have not been given the notice they need to amend their school choice for the September 2014 intake.

- a. We are disappointed that Herefordshire did not make their intentions clear to parents of current Year 6 students before requiring them to make their preferred choice of secondary school. The effect on the year 6 parents of Cradley has been huge, with many parents actively considering a house move to try to maintain their allegiance to JMHS. It is further noted that our adjoining authorities (Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire) would not permit any changes to parental preferences after the official closing date of 31 October 2013. This severely disadvantages residents of Herefordshire and their children. We would ask if due consideration was given to the implementation date of the proposed changes?

6. The total effects of the decision in exporting the County's young people to schools in other counties, in not demonstrating adherence to the principles of our transport plan, is not evidencing alignment with the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for Schools, and in not demonstrating the net savings at council level exist when loss of pupil grants are taken into account, raise concerns that aspects of this decision fall outside of the council's current Budget Monitoring and Policy Framework.

- a. 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?
- b. Education Transport made significant changes to bus routes and contractors in August 2013. How would the proposed changes affect the contractual arrangements currently in place?
- c. Increased traffic into the JMHS site would create safety issues on the site. Has an impact assessment based on the Safer Routes to Schools programme been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed changes?
- d. Increased volume of traffic would also cause greater congestion, increased road repairs and environmental damage. Has an impact assessment on the environment been carried out?
- e. Has an impact assessment on equality of opportunity especially for vulnerable young people been conducted?
- f. It has been suggested that high schools could be devolved funding to arrange their own transport. We consider that this may be unlawful as local authorities cannot delegate the

budget for home to school transport. Could we ask what clarification has been sought on this suggestion?

We firmly believe that the Cabinet decision to withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport policy eligibility based upon nearest and catchment school and replace eligibility based on nearest suitable school with places is incorrect and flawed as it:

- Fails to take account of Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's Partnership vision to ensure children have the best education and opportunities within Herefordshire.
- Has not been subjected to full and proper consultation with all organisations who work with children in Herefordshire to ensure they are healthy, happy and safe.
- Fails to consider equality, diversity and respect for human rights but relies totally on a hard to project financial saving.

We accept the need for the Council to make savings and understand their desire to provide only the statutory minimum service it is required to do, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. We do feel, however, that the Council has failed to take into account the ripple effect of this decision and consider that there are sufficient good reasons based on the Council's holistic approach to children within Herefordshire, to overturn this decision. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to consider ways of improving transportation and seeking cost savings, if appropriate.

Adam Greaves
Headteacher



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:56
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to Herefordshire school transport policy

Dear Mr Baugh,

I would like to add my voice again to that of the head teachers of Herefordshire's state schools and would like all their concerns properly addressed.

These changes will not only have profound effects both on destabilising the education of my son and 2 daughters, nephews and nieces and other families in my community, but also have longer term effects on the existence of our rural schools.

I sometimes feel our leaders feel backed into a corner to make decisions to justify the money spent on looking into the issues by agreeing with them despite the fact that they clearly wont make the short term or long term savings needed and will just succeed in making it even more difficult for some middle and lower income families to continue living in rural areas. These people being forced to move to towns will not save the council in the long term as the average age of the inhabitants of our villages will be encouraged to increase at an even greater rate than it is already. This may be good for reducing the education budget but has profound long term effects on our health and social care budgets which are becoming more unsustainable than education.

Rather than reducing rural buses we should be looking at ways to utilise them more. Allowing all the public to use school buses in my mind is practical and environmentally friendly and should not be dismissed as politically unacceptable. Most child abuse occurs in the home!

I work as a rural GP but spend one day a week travelling to Gaol Street clinic in Hereford. I have to allow an extra half an hour in term time and this situation would only get worse if more children had to travel to Hereford for school. It is ironic that we cant sort out the overcrowding of some city schools by encouraging and supporting all our rural schools.

The council's financial situation is clearly dire but maybe it is time to consider whether Herefordshire council was ever a viable independent entity and whether it has served the people of Herefordshire any better than amalgamation with Worcester did. Maybe there are more savings to be made by merging again rather than shaking up the school transport system and at least the administrative savings could be used to maintain rural services..What do council members think of that?

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: Baugh, Ben
Sent: 10 January 2014 12:08
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: FW: Change to transport proposals
Attachments: Change to transport proposals.docx

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 10:01
To: Dean, Gemma
Subject: Change to transport proposals

Please find as discussed a short version of the questions for Scrutiny.

Thank you for your help.

Andrew Shaw

Change to transport proposals,

As a school and on behalf of the community of North Herefordshire we would like the following questions considered regarding the transport proposal changes:

1. In the supporting statements that were attached to the tabled proposals there was a factual error we believe in the claim that neighbouring authorities (Worcs/Shropshire) had gone to a similar system. This is not true. Did the cabinet know this as this would be part of the leverage we are sure in suggesting this is a “fair” proposal?
2. If the nearest school (across the borders maybe) is in special measures is that a reasonable choice?
3. Did the cabinet know that Worcestershire changed their proposals?
4. Although a different “pot” of money, school funding could be reduced by just under £1m by loss of pupils to out of Herefordshire schools. The capacity to offer education and the quality of that education would be impacted on greatly. Given the pressure to improve standards for children in Herefordshire has the council recognised its responsibility within this and the consequences that would be irreversible?
5. As the Teaching School for our region if not viable and closed where will the root of school improvement and support be centred? If an alternative school is to be suggested then it would be outside of Herefordshire as no other meets the criteria at present.
6. The calculations of savings changed from £250k to £180k when considering (eventually) that Wales is not an option for our children. We would like answers/comment on the idea that having looked at the calculations further we believe that they are flawed and the proposals will certainly cost more money in two ways:
 - a. For the first two years there would need to be additional transport available to accommodate the Key Stage 4 protection and to apply the rules to “make” the nearest school plan work. Our estimate is an additional £300k minimum.
 - b. There is no reference to the capacity of other perhaps closer but outside of Hereford schools and an assumption that there would be places for our children. In fact 50% of the alternative, over border schools are full and would not be able to accept and therefore transport would have to be provided to another school, possibly even the catchment school that may have been affected. Again possible cost of £450k.
 - c. Is there capacity as far as the bus companies are concerned?
 - d. If buses have to be more “efficient” do the time schedule allow for that or do we accept that children (from the age of 4?) can travel 2 hours per day?
7. There has been very little recognition of the local knowledge that is more accurate about parental choice, catchment behaviour, and the reality that some families who would be desperate to keep the link with their catchment school just simply could not afford to do so. This removal of right and condition of choice by financial means is not only a moral but parental (and child) rights issue. A comment would be well received.
8. There are examples where if taken to extreme and children do not have routes or funds to get to some schools both Primary and Secondary, then, those schools become unviable. Is the Council and LA prepared for this and what plans does it have to provide places as the commissioning agent for those children? There would be two cost elements to consider also, one of redundancy costs which would be in hundreds of thousands and the additional

transport costs to get children to another school with the possibility of lengthy travel times and journeys.

9. Has the safety of children been recognised? The safer routes to school, isolation, rural transport poverty and danger to lives has not been considered fully as it does not appear in the papers as a discrete risk assessment. No one would wish for the level of danger to life to be increased in what is already a dangerous road system. Have the police and road agencies been consulted for views? The view of our local police in North Herefordshire is that more cars due to fewer coaches would be a very bad idea. Will the cabinet take responsibility for this if a disaster occurs? Will this be reviewed?
10. We believe that as a very rural area which are all proud the cabinet is guilty of the rural prejudice that it claims we suffer from central government. Is this a new stance and one that means we will base choice on the ability to pay? In "Herefordshire you can" tag line may need extending to in "Herefordshire you can but only if you can afford to".
11. Regarding post 16 and SEN there is simple question of is the council happy making our most vulnerable children and young people even more vulnerable by putting additional pressures on the families who care for them?

We recognise that some decisions are difficult. We also see that there are alternatives and there are just some things that are too important to risk. No one for the council either members, or officers has been brave enough to face some of the communities that could be affected. Councillors have not fielded the questions from distraught parents with crying children who gave uncertainty over their educational future and choices. Why haven't the cabinet been brave enough to speak to the public and communities? The consultation was limited and in fact flawed. Having attended a meeting where options were discussed, as Headteacher I was told by the Director Of Children's Services (title at time) that "doing nothing was not an option" which when I asked why then was it in the consultation document as a consideration, I was told that it wasn't there and even if it was it wasn't possible. Is this acceptable protocol, professional, fair?

We thank you for your time and consideration of this very important issue.

Mr A Shaw, Headteacher Wigmore Schools

Baugh, Ben

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 10 January 2014 12:44
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

Importance: High

Dear Mr Baugh

I would like to submit the following questions to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 January 2014.

1. When are we going to know the outcome of the consultation that has taken place?
2. We aware that general savings are to be made across the County, but nowhere has a figure been quoted, on the savings for transport, for children to and from school. What is the predicted savings going to be?
3. It's a known fact, that Cradley CE Primary, is one of other surrounding Schools, which are in the Cluster that feed into John Masefield High, Ledbury. Since when did the catchment area for Cradley, change?

[Redacted]

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 13:37
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Changes to Herefordshire Schools Transport Policy

Dear Ben,

Here are the questions I would like to put to the Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2014, regarding changes to the Herefordshire Schools Transport Policy:-

1. **Where are the proposed cost savings going to come from, bearing in mind that the council will now, in many places be required to provide at least 2 free buses?** For example, from Cradley it will have to provide a bus to JMHS for the yr 10s, Yr 11's and low income students, but it will also have to provide a bus to Dysons for everyone else. Also in the event that Dyson's becomes oversubscribed, Cradley children will not get a place as they are out of county so they may well have to provide an additional bus to the Chase. Colwall will need 2 buses, one to The Chase and one to JMHS. How will this save money? If you are relying on generating income from parents paying for the Guaranteed Seat Scheme you may well have to think again, as most parents are so outraged by this decision they will, on principle, not pay and children will be driven to school which will just clog up HCC's roads causing an increase in road repair costs and a loss of business as people will avoid going into Ledbury because of all the congestion at the crossroads.
2. **Have the proposed new routes actually been looked at in any depth to establish whether they are actually cheaper?** From Cradley to Dysons is about 4 miles via the quickest route, but a bus can't go the quickest route (over the Cowleigh road). The bus would need to go through Leigh Sinton which is a journey of 7 miles from the centre of Cradley (Cradley Surgery). The quickest route to JMHS from Cradley Surgery is 8 miles. Are you really prepared to cause all this disruption to the education for the children of Cradley for the sake of 2 miles a day. In Colwall the distances between Colwall and The Chase, and Colwall and JMHS, is even smaller, especially when you consider the route to the Chase involves negotiating British Camp which will lose any fuel advantage gained from driving 4.8miles to The Chase as opposed to the 5.2 miles to JMHS.
3. **Has any account been taken of the cost of losing all these children from Herefordshire to Worcestershire?** The cost to HCC of losing the quoted 250 children long term far outweighs any financial savings from the amended transport bill. I accept that these are 2 different budgets, but as a tax payer I contribute to both of them and strongly believe they should not be looked at in isolation.
4. By allowing Yr 10's and Yr 11's to stay on the current transport policy HCC has admitted that forcing children to change school midway through their education is detrimental to them. As HCC seems unconcerned about the effect that changing schools will have on the current Yr 7's and Yr 8's, then presumably it has undertaken research which shows that they will not be detrimentally affected. **Please can this research be made public to reassure the parents of HCC that our Yr 7's and Yr 8's will not be affected in the way that KS4 students will obviously be? This research has actually been done hasn't it?**
5. **Why did HCC claim that this policy is currently in place in Worcestershire when it isn't?** WCC do not force their Pre 16's to go to school out of county. They bus them to the nearest school within the county. They did indeed look at the model that HCC is proposing and decided that financially (and most probably ethically) it did not stack up. Presumably they factored in the lost income from sending children to be educated elsewhere. **So, did HCC make this incorrect claim in an attempt to mislead people, or did it make it because it hadn't done enough research?**
6. **Parents of current Yr 6 children were not told of this change before applying to their catchment school. Why was this? Is it acceptable that an important criteria for the decision about secondary schools is removed without any warning, and after it is too late to change secondary choices?**

7. The nearest school to Cradley is Dysons. This is a C of E School. This means that those people who are not C of E are less likely to get in. **How is a policy which discriminizes people on the basis of any faith except C of E a good option for Herefordshire, which already has extremely low levels of ethnicity?**
8. **How is the admissions process for the children of Cradley going to be handled in the future, when the Malvern schools are up to full capacity as is predicted in the next 2 or 3 years?** We are not even in the catchment area for the school to which we will be eligible to free transport. In 2 or 3 years, our only choice would be to apply to Dysons knowing that we probably wouldn't get in, then we wouldn't get into the Chase as we would have to put that as 2nd choice and they will also be oversubscribed. The next obvious choice would be JMHS, but at 3rd choice again we probably wouldn't get in, which would mean our children would be at the mercy of the council and would be sent to whatever school did have spaces, which could be anywhere – and HCC would have to pay for them to get there. This could mean numerous buses from Cradley and our children being spewed to the 4 corners of either Herefordshire or Worcester. **How is this a cheaper scenario when all we want is 1 bus to 1 school (JMHS)?**
9. **Were any other options looked at?** The consultation process threw up a number of other options. Were these discussed in detail and were stakeholders allowed to give an opinion. If so, can these discussions be made public. I am sure the majority of parents would be willing to pay a small amount for the bus (not the current £720), or perhaps the bus companies would be prepared to renegotiate their contracts. Have they even been asked?
10. **Is the council wise to ignore the advice of so many of the Counties Headteachers?** Headteacher's are professional people who are in the best place to see the devastating impact that this policy will have on Herefordshire's Secondary and Primary schools and its Communities. **Why are their concerns being ignored?** Surely they are the very people to whom HCC should be turning to for advice, in order to find a more workable solution.
11. **How will this policy affect Herefordshire's schools in terms of results?** Many of the affected children go to some of the counties highest achieving schools (e.g. Cradley and Colwall). Sending children who are potential high achievers to out of county schools will have a negative impact on the counties results and this impact will spiral over the years, i.e. schools with low results only attract low achieving pupils.
12. **What will HCC do if this new policy does not achieve the savings it hoped?** If this new model is brought in and doesn't make the required savings it will need to be changed again. Even HCC have admitted that the numbers are not very clear, and a saving of £250k is so small that it only takes one variable to be wrong in order for the savings to actually become a loss. This would either mean that HCC would need to change the policy again, or would have to continue indefinitely in a policy which is costing more than anticipated. If the council is desperate to save money, then the latter choice of continuing with the policy is obviously not an option, so the only choice the council would have would be to change the policy. This would mean that all the children who changed schools due to this change would then need to change schools again. This would have a devastating effect on Herefordshire children, Herefordshire schools and Herefordshire Communities and is completely unacceptable.

Best wishes



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 13:41
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Herefordshire transport policy changes
Attachments: Herefordshire transport policy changes.pdf

Dear Mr. Baugh

Please forward the questions in the enclosed PDF doc. To the General Overview and securing committee.

I have been unable to get hold of an agenda but believe that questions must be submitted by the close of play today!!!

I would like to also register my utter disgust in the Councils actions and believe it to be very short sighted and detrimental to the education and well being of Herefordshire's children.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Questions that we would like to be submitted to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee as parents from Cradley with 2 pupils currently at JMHS.

1. It is not clear that the cost modelling has taken the full cost impact of the decision into account across all areas of the council's operation, and therefore assurance is sought that the total anticipated net financial effort is achievable, realistic and proportionate.

a. 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. How would this save money?

b. Our understanding is that part of Colwall is nearest to The Chase School in Malvern and part is closer to JMHS. Again the Council will therefore have to pay for two buses instead of one. How would this save money? Furthermore if the Chase School was full (and Worcestershire have already indicated that they will not be making any changes to their admissions criteria) a third bus may be required to transport students from the village to yet another school.

c. We are aware that some financial modelling and research has been done; however the Council's own report states that the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely. We would question why such a major decision purportedly based on the need to save money, will actually achieve the required result when the cost of additional buses is taken into account.

d. Has the requirement for extra buses been discussed with bus providers and reassurance obtained that they can meet the extra demand whilst ensuring that children arrive at different schools on time?

e. When determining the nearest school, has any account been taken of physical obstacles such as the Malvern Hills or the River Wye?

2. It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process.

a. We have calculated that the long term effects of the change would move approximately 250 secondary aged children from Herefordshire Schools into Worcestershire or Gloucestershire schools costing almost a million pounds per year. Even if the alleged savings were achieved in full, four times this amount will disappear from schools' budgets. How is this justified and what attempts have been made to consider a more coherent and holistic view of funding? Has Jo Davidson, the Director for People's Services, clearly communicated the considerable damage this would cause to Herefordshire schools to all councillors?

b. 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?

c. There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this?

d. The Ledbury Cluster of schools have worked extremely hard to create an effective transition programme with younger students enjoying many visits and activities in JMHS, close liaison between heads, governors, teachers and support staff to help with continuity of education, which is crucial to a good start at high school. The proposed transport changes will lead to the abandonment of traditional catchment areas and makes this work much harder. Is this what the Council wishes to achieve? Furthermore, has account been taken of young people making less progress and being unhappier as a result of this?

This policy would force middle income parents who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. Herefordshire Council have spent considerable sums of money on creating a Children and Young People's Partnership whose vision - the 'Yes, We can' plan - sets out their aims for children living in Herefordshire and promotes collaboration with different organisations to make things better for children. We would question whether the 'Yes We Can' team have been consulted for their views on the proposed changes to school transport? And if not, why not? One of our parents has ironically suggested that the plan should be re-named 'Yes You Can if you can afford it in Herefordshire' which is a less snappy title but perhaps rather more accurate.

f. A key part of the coalition government's philosophy on education is based on parents being able to choose a good school for their children. The decision to transport to nearest school is inequitable in that it only provides choice for the better off who can afford the bus fares. How do Councillors square this with the political views the parties they represent espouse about education?

3. No reasons have been given for dismissing the approaches taken in other authorities.

We would ask the Council to consider alternative approaches taken by other authorities. For example Gloucestershire operates a 'nearest or catchment' policy. Durham offers a 'nearest school in county' option. Have these options been considered and discounted?

4. SEN proposals go against the Council's first principle of protecting the vulnerable.

a. Is any account being taken of students with SEN at School Action or School Action Plus for whom moving school will create discontinuity of support and damage their progress and learning? This is equally true of pre and post-16 SEN students.

b. We have excellent provision for post-16 SEN education in Herefordshire and JMHS would not be able to provide the facilities or standards for these students that are currently in operation at Barrs Court

School. Has the Council considered the cost implications of post-16 SEN students attending their nearest school and the extra resources that may be required to accommodate their particular needs.

5. The decision has a disproportionate effect on families with more than one child.

a. If a parent was desperate to keep their children at their current secondary school and had two or three children in Y7-Y9, could they be given any financial help? If so how could this be achieved in a way that is equitable and fair to all parents?

b. Has due consideration been given to the prospect of splitting children in the same family and forcing them to attend separate schools? Costs to parents could include extra child care provision to meet the different term dates, the inability to pass on school uniform to siblings, the inability to take family holidays at certain times of the year and the sheer impossibility of having two or three children attending schools in adjacent counties.

6. Families unable to support this additional cost have not been given the notice they need to amend their school choice for the September 2014 intake.

a. We are disappointed that Herefordshire did not make their intentions clear to parents of current Year 6 students before requiring them to make their preferred choice of secondary school. It is further noted that our adjoining authorities (Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire) would not permit any changes to parental preferences after the official closing date of 31 October 2013. This severely disadvantages residents of Herefordshire and their children. We would ask if due consideration was given to the implementation date of the proposed changes?

b.

c.

d. **7. The total effects of the decision in exporting the County's young people to schools in other counties, in not demonstrating adherence to the principles of**

our transport plan, is not evidencing alignment with the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for Schools, and in not demonstrating the net savings at council level exist when loss of pupil grants are taken into account, raise concerns that aspects of this decision fall outside of the council's current Budget Monitoring and Policy Framework.

- e. a. 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?
- f. b. Education Transport made significant changes to bus routes and contractors in August 2013. How would the proposed changes affect the contractual arrangements currently in place?
- g. c. Increased traffic into the JMHS site would create safety issues on the site. Has an impact assessment based on the Safer Routes to Schools programme been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed changes?
- h. d. Increased volume of traffic would also cause greater congestion, increased road repairs and environmental damage. Has an impact assessment on the environment been carried out?
- i. e. Has an impact assessment on equality of opportunity especially for vulnerable young people been conducted?
- j. f. It has been suggested that high schools could be devolved funding to arrange their own transport. We consider that this may be unlawful as local authorities cannot delegate the budget for home to school transport. Could we ask what clarification has been sought on this suggestion?
- k. We firmly believe that the Cabinet decision to withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport policy eligibility based upon nearest and catchment school and replace eligibility based on nearest suitable school with places is incorrect and flawed as it:
 - l. • Fails to take account of Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's Partnership vision to ensure children have the best education and opportunities within Herefordshire.
 - m. • Has not been subjected to full and proper consultation with all organisations who work with children in Herefordshire to ensure they are healthy, happy and safe.
 - n. • Fails to consider equality, diversity and respect for human rights but relies totally on a hard to project financial saving.
- a. We understand the need for the Council to make savings and understand their desire to provide only the statutory minimum service it is required to do, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. We do feel, however, that the Council has failed to take into account the ripple effect of this decision and consider that there are sufficient good reasons based on the Council's holistic approach to children within Herefordshire, to overturn this decision. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these questions and hear from the council responses to them.

With thanks





HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Wellington Primary School, Wellington, Hereford HR4 8AZ

Telephone (01432) 830264 Fax (01432) 830020

Mrs W Harrison, Headteacher

Email: admin@wellington.hereford.sch.uk

10 January 2014

Mr B Baugh
Governance Services
Herefordshire Council

Via email

Question to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 15th January 2014

'Are all Councillors fully satisfied that open and transparent discussion has taken place and are they aware of the implications on rural primary schools by changing the criteria to 'nearest school' i.e. children currently attending one school will be split resulting in half of their home village being nearer one school and the other half being nearer their current school? Are Herefordshire Council going to provide free transport to both nearest schools? Can the Council show a cost saving in that instance? Within the discussion papers on which the decision was made, no mention was made of implications on primary schools other than the Year 6 transition to Secondary school. However, given the scenario above, children from all year groups will be affected; thereby having an impact on budgets culminating possibly in the closure of smaller village schools.

What is the definitive cost saving figure?'

Given all of the above, I wish this question to be answered under Para. 5.2 (a) of the Call-In Reasoning i.e. 'make sure the action is proportionate to what the Council wants to happen'

S LOSH
Chair of Governors





Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 14:09
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School Transport - Scrutiny Meeting

As many of the young families within our parish will be affected by the proposed changes, the Titley Group Parish Council would like to make the following comments:

To disregard catchment areas and use nearest school as the criteria for free transport shows a fundamental lack of understanding of how our rural communities work. In the instance of Staunton-on-Arrow whose primary catchment school is Pembridge, much of the parish is closer to Pembridge but a significant part is closer to Shobdon. Community events organised through the village hall, church, WI or any other local group, involve the WHOLE of the parish. Friendships and bonds made between families are reinforced by inclusion at the same school creating a stronger community. We should be trying to encourage this sense of community in our young people rather than fragmenting it as this proposal would do.

With regard to saving money and providing the statutory minimum transport requirements. We feel Hereford councils approach to this is altogether wrong. A proper review of how the council provides its entire school bus service is long overdue. This 'knee jerk' reaction to make possible short term savings will have much longer term implications to how families choose schools. Contrary to the councils own environmental policies the proposal will result in less children travelling to school on the bus and more cars on the roads. Problems of congestion already exist at school drop on/off times at both our primary and secondary schools.

In our experience the vacant seat policy simply does not work, as the cost to families, particularly with more than one child, is far too high (for example paying ~£2000/year to send three children a 4 mile return trip to school when fuel cost in a car would only be ~£500). This policy has strangled the effectiveness of the bus service as many families within 3 miles, but still too far to walk to school, could again not consider the bus as an economic option. Indeed how can the council justify the relative cost of a scheduled bus service (for example a return trip from Kington to Hereford costing approximately 12.5p/mile) to the cost of sending a child to school using the vacant seat policy (for example a four mile return trip costing 50p/mile).

In conclusion we feel this is a very poorly conceived proposal. Some of the potential ramifications of which would lead us to consider if Herefordshire council really has the best interests of its community at heart. Encouraging a more efficient use of the school buses by making them affordable to all who could use them and ensuring truly competitive tendering for the routes should be proposed first. Removing pupils from our school buses, which this proposal would surely do, should be the last thing the council considers.

Titley Group Parish Council

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 14:11
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School transport

We as governors of Cradley C of E Primary school support our Head teacher and parents' views and comments.
Eryl Copp
Chair of Governors



10 January 2013

Questions for Scrutiny

Item: Changes to Herefordshire Schools & Post 16 Transport Policy

- 1) What weight did Herefordshire Council's Cabinet and Senior Management Team give to the report produced by Maggie Atkinson the Children's Commissioner for England, entitled "We want to help people see things our way"?

This report found out that poverty does have a significant impact on the lives of disabled children and their families, greater than in other families due to the additional costs of caring and reduced opportunities of parents to work. The report also identified travel and transport as a key barrier to children with a disability being able to enjoy the same opportunities to cultural, leisure, economic and social activities as other young people.

The Children's Commissioner called on Government and Local Authorities to remedy this situation.

- 2) How can Herefordshire Council reconcile the decision to make 16+ SEN Students pay for school transport with its:
 - a. centralised model of service provision
 - b. Equalities and Human Rights Charter
 - c. Previous promises to minimise the impact of Rurality on the vulnerable
- 3) Has the Council considered that if only one family feels unable to cope because of the withdrawal of this support, and the young person has to be 'looked after' as a consequence, then all the savings accrued to this measure will be wiped out?

Herefordshire Carers Support is a registered charity providing practical support and advice to the carer community in the county

Berrows Business Centre, Bath Street, Hereford HR1 2HE | Tel: 01432 356068

email: help@herefordshirecarerssupport.org | www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org

Charity No. 1051774 | Company No. 3032478 | Supported by Herefordshire Council



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 14:26
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: General Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting
Attachments: JMHS Newsletter January 2014.pdf

Dear Ben

CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

At the meeting on 19 December 2013 the Cabinet of Herefordshire Council decided to withdraw free home to school transport eligibility based upon **catchment** school and replace eligibility based upon **nearest** suitable school in England.

I live in Cradley and have four children, three who will be affected; one is in Yr 9 at John Masefield High School (JMHS), one is in Yr 7 at JMHS, and two are in Yr 5 at Cradley Primary School. Because the youngest three will not be eligible to free school transport from September 2014, I will have to send them out of the county which will disrupt and adversely affect their education. As I will have children attending different schools this decision will penalise my family financially, as well as **costing** Herefordshire Council **more** money to run **more** buses. Furthermore, JMHS will suffer reduced funding, affecting the quality of education provision and possibly jobs.

I understand that the decision has been 'called in' by the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As a Herefordshire Council Tax payer, please would you instruct the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ask the following questions:

1. I cannot see how running more buses from Cradley (and Colwall) to almost equidistant schools can possibly result in a cost saving; can the Council explain how their financial model predicts a cost saving in this specific case?
2. Have the Council consulted alternative transport providers or been in dialog with the current one to try to make the same level of savings?
3. The decision goes against the Council's *Yes We Can* plan to support children, young people and families. My family will be impacted financially and educationally. Can the council clarify how the decision better supports my children and family after it comes into effect?
4. How does the decision align with the Council's *Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for Schools* since more buses and/or more cars will necessarily be using, congesting and polluting Herefordshire roads after it comes into effect?

I would also like to see answers to the questions posed by the headmaster of JMHS (in the attached pdf) please!

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
 Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
 Registered in England and Wales Company Number: 07631985 An exempt charitable trust

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www.jmonline.org.uk

admin@jmonline.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

January 2014

Dear Parents

CHANGES TO HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

I am sure you will be aware through JMHS Newsletters and the local media that Herefordshire Council voted on 19 December 2013 to make changes to their home to school transport policy. At the meeting in December the Cabinet of Herefordshire Council decided to withdraw free home to school transport eligibility based upon **catchment** school and replace eligibility based upon **nearest** suitable school in England. This decision was supported and recommended by the Director for Peoples Services, Jo Davidson, and will take effect from September 2014.

This means that if your child currently attends JMHS but you live closer to another school (eg The Chase or Dyson Perrins) you will not be eligible to free school transport. From September you will either have to arrange to transport your children privately or pay £720 per annum to purchase a seat on a school bus, but there is no absolute guarantee that a spare seat will be available. Students who will be in Year 10 or Year 11 in September 2014 will continue to receive free school transport, if they are currently eligible. JMHS fought extremely hard to persuade Cabinet not to make these changes as we fear they are detrimental to our students, our school and the local area in which we all live.

Despite our robust challenge, in conjunction with other schools, the appeal was unsuccessful. We have subsequently been informed by Cllr Liz Harvey with whom we have worked closely on this project, that the decision has been 'called in' by the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This means that the decision may not have followed the decision making principles set out in the Council's Constitution and is therefore going to be re-considered. We believe that this gives us a second opportunity to put forward our concerns and to challenge a decision which we consider to be incorrect, is based on inaccurate financial forecasting, and goes against the Council's *Yes We Can* plan to support children, young people and families.

The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee are meeting on 15 January and members of the public are free to ask questions, however these must be submitted in advance and must be directly related to the item on the agenda. As we write the agenda has yet to be published but we have been advised that questions must be submitted no later than Friday 10 January to Mr Ben Baugh (bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk). We would urge parents who are affected, or who may be in the future, to submit their views to Mr Baugh by the deadline so that the Committee is made aware of the tremendous implications of the decision made by Cabinet.

Parents who live in Cradley, or any of the surrounding villages, may also wish to attend the public meeting organised by parents at Cradley Village Hall on Thursday 9 January at 6pm to explain the situation and discuss appropriate questions. Representatives from JMHS will also be in attendance.

JMHS will be submitting a formal response and we give below some of the areas we will be raising. Please feel free to use any of this information in your response.

Questions JMHS intends to submit to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1. It is not clear that the cost modelling has taken the full cost impact of the decision into account across all areas of the council's operation, and therefore assurance is sought that the total anticipated net financial effort is achievable, realistic and proportionate.**
 - a. 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. How would this save money?
 - b. Our understanding is that part of Colwall is nearest to The Chase School in Malvern and part is closer to JMHS. Again the Council will therefore have to pay for two buses instead of one. How would this save money? Furthermore if the Chase School was full (and Worcestershire have already indicated that they will not be making any changes to their admissions criteria) a third bus may be required to transport students from the village to yet another school.
 - c. We are aware that some financial modelling and research has been done; however the Council's own report states that *the actual financial savings are hard to forecast precisely*. We would question why such a major decision purportedly based on the need to save money, will actually achieve the required result when the cost of additional buses is taken into account.
 - d. Has the requirement for extra buses been discussed with bus providers and reassurance obtained that they can meet the extra demand whilst ensuring that children arrive at different schools on time?
 - e. When determining the nearest school, has any account been taken of physical obstacles such as the Malvern Hills or the River Wye?

- 2. It is not clear that the significant and negative effects of the changes highlighted in the consultations have been given proper weight and due consideration in the decision-making process.**
 - a. We have calculated that the long term effects of the change would move approximately 250 secondary aged children from Herefordshire Schools into Worcestershire or Gloucestershire schools costing almost a million pounds per year. Even if the alleged savings were achieved in full, four times this amount will disappear from schools' budgets. How is this justified and what attempts have been made to consider a more coherent and holistic view of funding? Has Jo Davidson, the Director for People's Services, clearly communicated the considerable damage this would cause to Herefordshire schools to all councillors?
 - b. 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?
 - c. There is considerable research evidence that children who move secondary school after they have started do less well. What account has been taken of this?
 - d. The Ledbury Cluster of schools have worked extremely hard to create an effective transition programme with younger students enjoying many visits and activities in JMHS, close liaison between heads, governors, teachers and support staff to help with continuity of education, which is crucial to a good start at high school. The proposed transport changes will lead to the abandonment of traditional catchment areas and makes this work much harder. Is this what the Council wishes to achieve? Furthermore, has account been taken of young people making less progress and being unhappier as a result of this?

- e. This policy would force middle income parents who live in Herefordshire to choose a school out of the county. Herefordshire Council have spent considerable sums of money on creating a Children and Young People's Partnership whose vision - the 'Yes, We can' plan - sets out their aims for children living in Herefordshire and promotes collaboration with different organisations to make things better for children. We would question whether the 'Yes We Can' team have been consulted for their views on the proposed changes to school transport? And if not, why not? One of our parents has ironically suggested that the plan should be re-named 'Yes You Can if you can afford it in Herefordshire' which is a less snappy title but perhaps rather more accurate.
- f. A key part of the coalition government's philosophy on education is based on parents being able to choose a good school for their children. The decision to transport to nearest school is inequitable in that it only provides choice for the better off who can afford the bus fares. How do Councillors square this with the political views the parties they represent espouse about education?

3. No reasons have been given for dismissing the approaches taken in other authorities.

We would ask the Council to consider alternative approaches taken by other authorities. For example Gloucestershire operates a 'nearest or catchment' policy. Durham offers a 'nearest school in county' option. Have these options been considered and discounted?

4. SEN proposals go against the Council's first principle of protecting the vulnerable.

- a. Is any account being taken of students with SEN at School Action or School Action Plus for whom moving school will create discontinuity of support and damage their progress and learning? This is equally true of pre and post-16 SEN students.
- b. We have excellent provision for post-16 SEN education in Herefordshire and JMHS would not be able to provide the facilities or standards for these students that are currently in operation at Barrs Court School. Has the Council considered the cost implications of post-16 SEN students attending their nearest school and the extra resources that may be required to accommodate their particular needs.

5. The decision has a disproportionate effect on families with more than one child.

- a. If a parent was desperate to keep their children at their current secondary school and had two or three children in Y7-Y9, could they be given any financial help? If so how could this be achieved in a way that is equitable and fair to all parents?
- b. Has due consideration been given to the prospect of splitting children in the same family and forcing them to attend separate schools? Costs to parents could include extra child care provision to meet the different term dates, the inability to pass on school uniform to siblings, the inability to take family holidays at certain times of the year and the sheer impossibility of having two or three children attending schools in adjacent counties.

6. Families unable to support this additional cost have not been given the notice they need to amend their school choice for the September 2014 intake.

- a. We are disappointed that Herefordshire did not make their intentions clear to parents of current Year 6 students before requiring them to make their preferred choice of secondary school. It is further noted that our adjoining authorities (Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire) would not permit any changes to parental preferences after the official closing date of 31 October 2013. This severely disadvantages residents of Herefordshire and their children. We would ask if due consideration was given to the implementation date of the proposed changes?

7. The total effects of the decision in exporting the County's young people to schools in other counties, in not demonstrating adherence to the principles of our transport plan, is not evidencing alignment with the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy for Schools, and in not demonstrating the net savings at council level exist when loss of pupil grants are taken into account, raise concerns that aspects of this decision fall outside of the council's current Budget Monitoring and Policy Framework.

- a. 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?
- b. Education Transport made significant changes to bus routes and contractors in August 2013. How would the proposed changes affect the contractual arrangements currently in place?
- c. Increased traffic into the JMHS site would create safety issues on the site. Has an impact assessment based on the Safer Routes to Schools programme been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed changes?
- d. Increased volume of traffic would also cause greater congestion, increased road repairs and environmental damage. Has an impact assessment on the environment been carried out?
- e. Has an impact assessment on equality of opportunity especially for vulnerable young people been conducted?
- f. It has been suggested that high schools could be devolved funding to arrange their own transport. We consider that this may be unlawful as local authorities cannot delegate the budget for home to school transport. Could we ask what clarification has been sought on this suggestion?

We firmly believe that the Cabinet decision to withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport policy eligibility based upon nearest and catchment school and replace eligibility based on nearest suitable school with places is incorrect and flawed as it:

- Fails to take account of Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's Partnership vision to ensure children have the best education and opportunities within Herefordshire.
- Has not been subjected to full and proper consultation with all organisations who work with children in Herefordshire to ensure they are healthy, happy and safe.
- Fails to consider equality, diversity and respect for human rights but relies totally on a hard to project financial saving.

We accept the need for the Council to make savings and understand their desire to provide only the statutory minimum service it is required to do, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. We do feel, however, that the Council has failed to take into account the ripple effect of this decision and consider that there are sufficient good reasons based on the Council's holistic approach to children within Herefordshire, to overturn this decision. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to consider ways of improving transportation and seeking cost savings, if appropriate.

Andrew Evans

Headteacher

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 14:53
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: General Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Attachments: Response from Pembridge CE School

Dear Mr Baugh,

I would like to submit the following questions to the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the proposed changes to Herefordshire school's transport policy.

1. If the proposed changes were to go ahead would the council be prepared to pay for Y6 pupils to finish their education at their catchment rather than nearest school to avoid a potentially harmful change at this crucial time in their education?

2. Would the council be prepared to pay for a family of more than one child to continue at their current school if the nearest school were unable to accommodate all of the siblings?
If the council is not able to make this financial commitment and the family were unable to afford to pay for the transport to their current school what would the council propose as a solution?

I have also attached a statement to the committee in response to the decision made on 19th December 2013.

Kind regards,

Kerri Finney

Head teacher
Pembridge CE Primary School



Pembroke CE Primary School: Changes to Herefordshire School's Transport Policy January 2014

We believe that the Cabinet decision to withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport eligibility based upon catchment school and replace eligibility based upon nearest suitable school is highly detrimental to our school community, to our neighbouring schools as well as many other schools around our county. We are pleased that the decision has been called in and will be reconsidered at next week's meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and would urge the members to use that opportunity to take heed of the concerns being raised not only by myself but fellow professionals and worried parents around the county.

We all acknowledge the necessity for the council to make financial savings and that there is a clear wish to provide the minimum statutory service but we feel that this decision is being pushed through following minimal consultation with the professionals who work in the schools and with the children and families who will be affected. The longer term effect of these changes is very hard to predict and could have a significant impact upon schools and communities who are already vulnerable. Herefordshire is a uniquely rural area and everything needs to be done to protect the future of education in our county for all of our young people. It seems that the decision made by the cabinet has been based on a financial saving that the council admits is "hard to forecast precisely" without due account being given to the happiness and welfare of the children and families, or to impact upon the schools that have served their communities for many years.

The changes in September will pose a number of problems for our school community, for example:

- Families of Y6 pupils will be forced to choose between sending their child, at this crucial stage in their education, to a new school that is closer or paying for transport to Pembroke. This does not seem to be fair or equitable as it is actually only a choice that those who have the financial means can make
- If the nearest local school only has space for 1 child from a larger family then siblings risk being split between 2 schools and communities. This also assumes that the families can actually afford to pay for seats on the bus to their current school
- Currently there isn't a bus running to Shobdon School or from Eardisland to Pembroke or from Lyonshall to Almeley all of which it would seem would need to be in place for September. We do not understand how this will be a saving on current provision and question if contactors have been consulted to see if they could support additional services
- Parents who make the decision to keep their children at Pembroke and drive to school will be adding to the problems that already exist in our congested village. Many hours have been spent in recent years devising school travel plans, encouraging parents to use the bus and reduce car traffic and congestion around school. It would seem that this



investment in time and energy was in vain

- As the impact from these changes is so difficult to forecast it is quite likely that the cost effectiveness of running the Pembridge bus service is decreased and therefore the alleged savings of introducing the alternative provision will not take place
- Having worked hard to develop excellent working relationships with the Kington Federation of Schools, for example many of our pupils enjoying visits, activities and exciting transition opportunities at Lady Hawkins' School; it would seem that the proposed transport changes will lead to the traditional catchment areas being a thing of the past. This makes joint working become harder to achieve and long established and successful networks of school to school support becoming fragmented and less effective for the benefit of our children

I strongly urge that the Scrutiny Committee consider overturning the decision made by the Cabinet, by taking a more rounded view, not solely based upon the council's sketchy financial model, but considering all of the needs of the children, families and schools in our county.

Kerri Finney

Head teacher
Pembridge CE Primary School

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 15:41
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Bus Routes

Dear Mr Baugh

With reference to proposed revised bus services, I am a bit puzzled to the thinking behind cost savings.

I live in Colwall, a village which would be split in half between John Masefield High School (JMHS) where my son currently goes, and The Chase which is in Worcestershire. We do in fact actually live 0.5 miles nearer to the Chase but the route the bus would have to take would mean that it would have to go down Church Street in Malvern which is not the widest of roads, and the cost of fuel would be more than if going to JMHS due to the hill climb. And where would the bus start its journey from? Where ever it started it would mean a double journey over the hills!

Also, would this mean that 2 buses would be sent to Colwall – one for those who live nearer to the Chase and one for those who live nearer to JMHS? This means extra buses which would mean extra cost.

If parents do object and decide to transport the school kids themselves – this would create a lot more traffic – both these last two points do not go together with easing road congestion.

Or is it the intention that the Council think that parents will pay the extraordinarily high cost thus part funding the councils transport bill.

Your Sincerely

Adrian Ward

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Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 15:49
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School transport changes

Dear Mr Baugh

I am a parent, one of many I assume who as been disheartened to hear of the proposed changes to transport provision to our Primary school's main Secondary school. Cradley C of E primary and John Masefield respectively.

I wish to ask a couple of questions of this process as I do not think it seems necessarily logical let alone fair on the local population who have to foot the bill for undefined financial savings to the local council.

1. How much is the projected saving and how is it expected to be used?
2. Have the coach companies that provide the transport at present been through a tendering process with atleast two (ideally more) other competing companies in order to ensure that the best possible price is assured?
3. Parents at Cradley could face a situation where if Dysons was full, the next nearest school is the Chase, before John Masefield third. Does this situation mean that the Council would run three separate buses to get the children to their schools? With birth rates rising in Worcestershire and no changes to the admission policies for Cradley and Colwall children, with regard to Worcestershire schools. How are the Council going to address the active discrimination against these children that will be the effect of the transportation changes?

I would appreciate hearing your answers to these questions, although very much hope they might also prompt a little better analysis of the situation by your department as a better solution must surely exist!

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Parent of children at Cradley C of E Primary School.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 15:55
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: changes to school transport cradley

dear sir, I would like to request detailed forecasts of the savings hereford council are going to make by these changes also how the consultation process evaluated the disruption of a childs education and the problems that will arise from this.

the mileage saved from cradley to dyson perrins is two miles per day ! also the funding per pupil £4000 each would be going to Worcestershire, this does not seem the most viable solution please reconsider.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:25
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: re hereford school transport changes - questions for meeting

We have 2 children that attend John Masefield High School in Ledbury, they are currently in years 10 and 8. Both are eligible for free school transport. We live in Yatton, nr Much Marcle so are actually closer to John Kyrle as the crow flies. But JMHS is our CATCHMENT school.

For context, we applied for a place in John Kyrle when our eldest was entering year 7 but did not get offered a place (over subscription), so we appealed this decision but were unsuccessful. It was worth noting that the transport officer pointed out to us we were eligible for free transport to EITHER secondary school. When our second child was in year 6 we applied to JMHS only as we could not risk having to pick 2 children up from different schools at the same time.

It seems ludicrous that a policy can be retrospectively implemented after we had made decisions for our children based on the understanding of free transport. We are not in control of the catchment area and therefore feel extremely wronged that by doing the right thing, we have still been penalised.

We might point out that with our situation(and your assumption that we move the second child to a different school) you would have to arrange for 2 buses to pick up our children each morning and evening costing substantially more.

I would like to question the following:-

Why didn't you review last years bus schedule and place our pickup from the Much Marcle bus (adding an extra 5 miles in total to its journey) rather than adding us to the Eastnor bus which adds 15 miles to every journey? – that is wasting money!

Why is the policy changing for current students as opposed to giving potential students the chance to make an informed decision based on the costs involved?

Moving schools whilst in secondary school is madness and detrimental to the child's education so why would you place our children in this situation.

What happens if your nearest school doesn't have enough space – that's not my fault but you expect me to pay for transport still?

Assuming we moved the second child and there was a place at John Kyrle, how can providing 2 buses to our house be cheaper to you than providing 1?

Since our eldest will still get free transport (year 10/11 rule) the bus will already be visiting our house so what rationale is there for paying for our other child to sit on this bus or having to make the same journey myself.

We can't afford £720 per year for this service so I would end up driving to school myself each day, with that in mind can I charge you for the expense as you would be saving money not having to pick up/drop off my first child?

Why is the cost per year way more than the current fee, it looks like you are getting us to pay for everyone's bus journey?

How much does it cost to run the current service and will this policy change remove the need for any council subsidy (the paying parents would basically cover all costs involved with that bus route)?

Will there be an appeal process for cases like ours?

How are you going to deal with the increased traffic into Ledbury and the school grounds?

Has the council considered the environmental damage by adding more cars onto the road, and how does this fit with the commitment to reduce the environmental footprint?

John Masefield works closely with its feeder primary schools, inviting primary students into school several times to get them used to the staff and environment, this will be utterly pointless if students can't afford to go to the school.

We are as parents, supposed to have the right to choose our secondary school but in practice it's the catchment school as the other school is oversubscribed. Now our school decision may have to be based on costs involved and not educational value.

Yours sincerely,



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:26
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Scrutiny Questions for January 15th- School Transport.

Dear Ben,

The agenda for next week has asked for questions by 5.00pm today. Please see below, thank you. I have highlighted text straight from the report. For clarity "you/your" is directed at Cllr Johnson as Leader of the Council.

10.10 The consultation responses also raised concerns about the ability of parents to pay, particularly those on low incomes. The Council's transport policy will continue to include extended rights to free transport for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and this will mitigate effects for those students eligible for this support.

What strategy is in place to support families, when parents enter into employment and are no longer entitled to Free Transport?

Who will support families with changes of school uniform if children are forced to change schools? Please take into account middle income families who are not receipt of benefits.

Why is this policy being rushed through for Sept 2014? When your own Local Authority School Admissions policy clearly states all entries must be in by end of 2013. Families have chosen school for many reasons and not been able to factor in transport costs

The Council's priority areas are, within the resource available to us, to keep children and young people safe,

and give them a great start in life, enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives,

and invest in projects to improve roads, create jobs and build more homes.

In you policy statement you state and give them a great start in life.

How will you measure the effect of this decision will make on Children and Young People?

For example a family with a 14 Year old having started GCSE's in one school, younger siblings in now forced to attend an out of county high school with different term dates.(This will split households and rural communities.)

New Central Government policy clearly states Head teachers may not permit holidays in term times unless in exceptional circumstances. Therefore if the family takes a holiday outside of the out of county term times, they will liable for prosecution.

This School Transport policy is not joined up with your Priorities or your other school admission policies.

Although you have received a huge amount of replies to your consultation, you have failed to consult directly with Parish Councils in villages adjoining other counties. Therefore failing in your duties as a democratic council.

I am sorry , due to work commitments I am unable to attend on January 15th.

many thanks,

██████████

██████████

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

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:30
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Proposed School Bus Withdrawal

Dear Sir

I am writing to ask you to re-consider the council's decision to remove the free school bus service from the village of Cradley to JMHS in Ledbury.

I decided to send my child to JMHS as I envisaged it was for the whole of her schooling. Another consideration was that a free bus service was available from the village. If I had know at the time that the transport was to be removed I would never have made this decision and I feel the council has misled me as they offered JMHS as my first choice with free transport.

It is imperative that my mixed race, adopted child has consistency in her life as she had a very poor start and finds it difficult to make friends etc. The staff at JMHS have been amazing dealing with any racism/problems she has encountered, have supported her emotionally and she is thriving. The impact that having to move schools because of your rash decision will have on her is totally beyond my comprehension. I truly believe that it will hamper her reaching her full potential and that she is going to need considerable extra support. I am contacting the Post Adoption Team with regards to this and requesting that they provide a taxi for her each day to JMHS to avoid this happening. Ultimately it will cost Herefordshire Council a far higher amount.

This is just my issue but I know many, many other families that have their own concerns of equal importance.

I cannot belief that you expect us to move our children to a poorly performing school which is only 1 mile closer than JMHS. It beggars belief. Can you please confirm back to me exactly what saving you think this is going make? Do you have any supporting evidence? What will it mean to the affected schools? You will be taking finance away from one county and sending it into a different county.

I would appreciate a response by return.

Yours in total disbelief

[REDACTED]

Sent from Windows Mail

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:33
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Comments for scrutiny committee re sen transport

Dear Ben,

Further to our conversation earlier, I will start this email in the hope that I can get internet access at some point before 5 although I will not have had the opportunity to prepare it adequately given the lack of notice given. This is likely to be incomplete and I still hope to write fully and submit it over the weekend.

I understand that any comments/questions should relate to the stated reasons for call-in and I would particularly like to address:

Point b: Consult properly

Point c: Consider equality, diversity and human rights

Consultation:

I am the parent of a 17 year old with profound and multiple learning disabilities who attends Barrs Court School. A small number of parents heard (mostly by chance) that there was a consultation about proposed charging for school transport for post-16 SEN young people in April. This was during a school holiday so school could not inform parents, there was little notice and the link did not work initially. I know that several parents, including both my husband and I, did put a lot of time into this and commented extensively. When a further consultation was announced, I checked and was told that previous comments would be included. From the documents presented at the cabinet meeting in December, it is clear that this did not happen and that some important points were apparently not considered. I would ask the committee to bear in mind that many parents of children with SEN are struggling to meet their daily needs and cannot find time to contribute to one consultation, let alone two. Some parents are cynical about the influence they can have – understandable when the first consultation said the decision had been made and the consultation was about impact of this decision. The date for the December meeting was again announced at short notice making it difficult for people to attend. This further opportunity to contribute to the scrutiny committee review was also communicated so late that once again there is very little time to prepare a considered, researched response.

Equality etc:

I am not a lawyer and, as you know, I have not been able to access the internet to research this fully today. However, I would like to raise a couple of points for consideration as it would appear that this decision is at least unfair and may leave the council open to legal challenge.

The equality Act 2010 defines several types of discrimination. Of relevance here are discrimination arising from disability and indirect discrimination. Further, people with disabilities are protected from discriminatory treatment by the imposition of a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Discrimination arising from disability: a child with a disability may experience a detriment arising from his disability if required to pay for school transport. To illustrate this, I would like to compare the situation with my older non-disabled daughter and my disabled son. We live near Whitchurch and both children have attended post-16 education in Hereford as the best (or, indeed, only option for [REDACTED]). We did not need to pay for transport for our daughter as she only occasionally had to take a bus. If I was working in Hereford, I could drop her early and she could look after herself before classes started. Similarly, in the afternoon, she could look after herself and meet me after work. She had options of lifts with friends and neighbours, staying over, taking the occasional bus. She could have attended 6th form at a closer school. Our son, on the other hand, needs specialised transport with trained, experienced escorts. As Barrs Ct is the only option for many children with SEN, people come from all over the county so there are no neighbours going to the same school. If there were, we'd struggle to support each other as our children have such diverse and complex needs. [REDACTED] most certainly can't stroll up to my office at the end of the day – indeed he cannot be left unattended. No amount of travel training will change this. Even for more able youngsters who may be able to develop some independence, provision of travel training has been reduced. The DfE guidance

states that local authorities must give special consideration to the circumstances of disabled children and families on low income before making charges for transport, but instead, Hfcs Council plans to charge all families the same in order to be 'fair and equal'. It might be 'fair and equal' if the families and their situations were the same. It is not equality to charge such a child the same as a non-disabled child. Their needs are not the same and their families do not have the same possibilities of reducing the cost.

Is charging 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'? (Section 15, (1), (a) and (b)). A service provider who is simply aiming to reduce costs 'cannot hope to satisfy the test' for legitimate aim –part 3, code of practice, 6.20. Financial considerations alone cannot render treatment proportionate. (a/a, 6.24)

Discrimination by association: Forcing families to pay who don't have the same options to reduce costs as a result of their child's disability is discrimination by association.

Indirect discrimination: the following is quoted from Disabled children: a legal handbook, Broach, Clements and Read with reference to section 19 of the Equality Act. 'Indirect discrimination occurs if a person applies a 'provision, criterion or practice' which is discriminatory in relation to a person's disability. A 4-stage test is set out to determine whether a particular 'provision.....' is discriminatory.....

- It applies, or would apply, to people who are not disabled (as post-16 transport charging does)
- It puts, or would put, disabled people 'at a particular disadvantage' when compared with non-disabled people (as outlined above and also discriminates against families by association).
- It puts, or would put, the individual disabled child at that disadvantage
- The person applying or operating the provision..... Cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (see comments above re proportionate means and legitimate aim .')

Reasonable adjustments: Failure to make reasonable adjustments will amount to discrimination. One of the elements of the reasonable adjustment duty is:

'a requirement, where a provision..... puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid the disadvantage. As noted above, many young people with disabilities do not have the options open to their non-disabled peers to minimise the cost of transport. It is well known that those families with disabled children already experience higher rates of unemployment, poverty, stress and family breakdown. Their earning power is less because of the time spent caring for their children (and fighting for their basic rights and for adequate services) but their costs are far higher because of the needs of their children. Charging would save the council a relatively small sum of money but increase the financial burden of families already paying the price of disability. What sort of society do we want to be that doesn't share the cost but allows families to sink?

There is reference in the papers to using school bursary to pay: I understand, there is a guaranteed £1200 bursary for looked after children and for those who receive DLA and ESA. However, many families would be worse off if the young person claimed ESA as they could lose tax credits, council tax, housing and child benefits and income support therefore many might be advised not to claim ESA thus not being eligible for the bursary either. There may be a discretionary award of £500 for those on free school meals, subject to the amount allocated to the school and the number of eligible children. This would not cover the transport cost and I understand that the school can use this money as they see fit ie it could be used to meet an educational need in the school rather than disbursed to individual children. At present, the bursary can be used to buy expensive equipment needed to support learning in those with severe disabilities. If it is all used for transport, that possibility will be lost impacting on their education, communication and life chances.

At least in the initial information published on-line, the transport officer suggested that DLA could be used to fund transport. This is in conflict with the Dept for Education's guidance which states that DLA must not be used to fund school transport. For many families, the mobility component of the DLA is used to pay for more expensive adapted vehicles, wheelchairs and mobility aids and is simply not available to pay for school transport.

As my husband has not had the opportunity to contribute/comment on this, I am sending this solely from me but I know he would have wanted to add more evidence on the rights of disabled children.

I trust I can send this to you in time and that some of the contents can be given due consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:34
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Question for the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee 15/01/14, School Transport Policy

Dear Mr Baugh

I understand that you are collating questions for the above committee on 15/01/14. I would be grateful if my questions could be raised as my Son will be effected by this new policy.

Have the council staff responsible for drawing up and approving this change of policy fully calculated the outcome of this change, as I understand a council report states that they can't forecast precisely what the actual financial savings will be as its too hard to do. If unable to say how much this is going to save, is there a question that it may actually increase the spending on school transport? The options could throw up two or three buses visiting some villages to transport children to various schools when at the moment only one or two visit at present. Have bus and coach operators been approached to see if vehicles and drivers are available along with the existing committed routes they operate? The council may end up paying for three partly filled rather than two fuller buses- how would that circumstance create a cost effective saving? Will it save £300,00.00?

The above question is just about the transportation implications but my second is the wider effect of Herefordshire based children leaving the county to be state educated. I assume that each child attracts a sum of money from either central or local government when they attend school. If that money is diverted to a different Education Authority, what effect will this have on how existing Herefordshire schools are funded? Will staff be made redundant and the costs of that process need to be factored into the decision. In some cases will whole schools close because of viability and if so, how much will it cost to transport the pupils to a new school(s)

I urge the General Overview and Scrutiny committee to look very carefully and deeply into this new policy so they are without a doubt, absolutely sure this is the way to save money. The implications of this policy are flawed , are far reaching and detrimental to the future of this county.

yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:51
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: FAO Scrutiny committee on 15th Jan re School transport

Dear Mr Bough,
 Please submit my letter below to the Scrutiny Committee meeting re school transport on 15 January,
 Thank you,
 [REDACTED]

The cost of operating a bus service cannot be properly assessed by reference only to expense incurred in providing the bus service itself.

There are other wider issues to be considered many of which have financial implications far in excess of the cost of providing the bus service and manifestly much greater than any potential saving to be made in the school transport budget.

Listed below are some of the issues which need to be addressed and fully costed in **SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL TERMS** before implementation of cost-cutting exercise based on the bus running costs alone.

Under the Freedom of Information Act I shall be requiring full disclosure relating to (a) the extent of the aspects considered and research undertaken

- (b) the qualifications and experience of the person or persons undertaking the research
- (c) details of the publication of that research and when and whom the research was made available
- (d) the extent to which these wider issues have been considered by the committee taking the decision.

Listed below are some of the issues that need to be addressed,

- 1) The significant potential loss of pupils and the consequential revenue implications for John Masfield High School
- 2) The loss of trading revenue in Ledbury town
- 3) The financial implications of losing revenue from the county into Worcestershire
- 4) The consequence of families being split with children in different schools
- 5) The proposed upheaval of pupils in yr7-9 that will have to change schools
- 6) The incidental cost to parents e.g cost of school uniforms
- 7) Re arranging child care in different location for working parents, e.g collection of children out of hours from different locations
- 8) The very serious loss of choice for the parents concerned which will inevitably discriminate against the disadvantaged families.

Whilst as a policy for the county as a whole the cost cutting exercise may be acceptable, the social and financial implications for the schools and parents residing in the extremities of the county ought to receive special treatment and their needs must be properly investigated and researched before implementing a decision in these marginal areas .

[REDACTED]
 JMHS parent governor

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:51
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: changes to school transport in Cradley

Dear Mr Baugh,

I would like to add my voice to those who are opposing the school transport changes, as a parent of twins who are currently in Year 4 at Cradley School. My eldest son is in Year 11 at JMHS and I have been very happy with the support provided by the school. My 9 year old twins are looking forward to following in his footsteps and attending JMHS in several years. I will certainly be sending them there, but will not be making use of the bus, but will instead organise lift shares with other parents. There will therefore be no income generated by this change from our family, but rather an extra car driving to Ledbury twice each day.

Yours sincerely, [REDACTED] (parent of 3 children and teacher at Cradley School)

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:58
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: school transport to JMHS changes

Dear Mr Baugh

As a Parent of two pupils at JMHS I am amazed at the agreed changes being made to their School transport. I am aware that a Scrutiny Committee is due to meet on 15th January and that members of the public are free to ask questions.

Presumably there has been a formal consultation whereby all concerned, including Parents were informed of these possible changes to the Transport arrangements? Unfortunately I was unaware of this consultation and was therefore unable to make any comments. Will we now as parents have the opportunity to see the consultation document so that we can try and understand the benefits such major disruption to our children's education will achieve? Presumably a thorough cost analysis has taken place and members of the Council are clear as to the exact amount of money that will be saved by these radical changes? 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. How would this save money?

My problem now is that I unexpectedly face the possibility of having to pay for both of my children to attend full time education at their catchment school. As I understand it, the transport department of Herefordshire Council appear not to use 'catchment areas' however, Schools within the County still do use such area identifications within their admissions Policy. JMHS has been the 'feeder school' for Cradley and was one of the reasons we initially chose Cradley School when we were looking to move into Herefordshire from Worcestershire. My daughter, currently in Year 7 attended Cradley Primary School and as a parent I was delighted with the amount of pastoral care and attention that was given to aid her transition from this relatively small primary school to a much larger High School. It was due to the many opportunities the children were given to both attend events at JMHS and for Staff to work with the pupils whilst at Cradley. My daughter is already settled, happy, has made many friends and because of this she is achieving well and thoroughly enjoys attending school. What is going to happen regarding transition to High Schools if these small village schools, such as Cradley no longer have a 'feeder High School' that the majority of the children will attend? Who will be providing this Pastoral care, Herefordshire or Worcestershire?

I clearly understand that Herefordshire County Council are in a position whereby they have to make serious savings. Unfortunately these proposals are likely to have a major impact on both our Children's lives and the communities that we live in. Is the amount of money that will be saved therefore worth this?

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]



Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:59
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: questions for the scrutiny meeting on jan15th

Dear mr. Baugh,

Like many parents from Colwall Primary School, I like to express my concern at the decision taken re transportation to schools in december.

1. Has the council considered the long term costs of pupils leaving the county as a result of this policy?
2. Have you considered exempting schools, who are bordering other counties to be exempt from this policy, so that students who would prefer to remain within Herefordshire can do so? (other counties who have adopted this policy have done this)
3. Colwall primary school is an official feeder school for JMHS, and it seems ludicrous if a pupil cannot get free transport to its first High School, has this been taken into consideration?
4. It will definitely affect the choice for a pupil from lower income families (vey unfair), some families would generate a pupil premium for the schools, which the school would prefer to spend on children's education and would be a source of income for Herefordshire.
5. Would it not increase the national budget by supplying more busses

I hope you will take the above points into consideration.

Kind Regards,
[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: Admin <admin@lea-primary.hereford.sch.uk>
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:59
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Questions for Scrutiny Committee to ask
Attachments: Questions for Scrutiny.doc

Please find attached questions to be asked at the Scrutiny Committee Meeting on Wednesday 15th January, 2014.
Many thanks
Linda Townsend

Questions re: Herefordshire School Transport Decision

For Scrutiny Meeting on Wednesday 15th 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?

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 17:02
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: School transport questions

Dear Mr Baugh,

Following the recent decision by the council to potentially stop the free school bus service for students who attend John Masefield High School, when it is not their nearest school I have the following questions:-

1) Can you please provide me the financial analysis which shows define cost savings for Herefordshire Council, when all factors are taken in to consideration, including administration, provide transport for students who do not attend John Masefield who will be forced to under these new rules, at best I can see this policy breaking even not saving money.

2) Has the council conducted an impact analysis on effect of the students education being forced to leave their current school to join an unwanted school as parents will not be able to afford to pay for transportation within the current financial constraints.

I) My children chose John Masefield for very specific reasons:- Size of school, excellent education and it is a specialist drama school.

Given that I have 2 children that is a transport cost of £1400 per annum, a bill I cannot afford and they will therefore not get the education they want or deserve and work very hard for.

3) Has the Council checked the availability of places in the schools surrounding the areas affected, especially for schools that fall into a neighbouring councils jurisdiction?

4) Cannot the council reach a compromise on the cost of the transportation and provide some of the funding. Surely if this is such a cost saving to the council then there is room for a contribution?

5) If parents chose the drive their children to John Masefield has an analysis been conducted on the extra traffic on the roads, in Ledbury and at the school gates and the effect of this?

I will be submitting a Freedom of Information request on the initial councils decisions to understand on what grounds they decided to remove free school transport, and I can assure you that I and many other parents intend to fight this decision through all routes available.

I thank you for you response, I can be contacted by return or on [REDACTED]

I would be grateful if you can provide acknowledgement of receipt of this mail as a courtesy.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
 Cradley resident.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 17:32
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

Mr Baugh,

I am a parent with two children caught by you proposed changes to the schools transport policy. I am strongly opposed to the changes and have some questions:

1. What is the ACTUAL calculated saving from this change?
 Does it take into account:
 - the increased road use?
 - the lose of income to schools?
 - the reduction in council tax as areas like Cradley become less popular?
 - the impact on villages like Cradley?
 - disruption in education?
 - the cost of the consultation and work implementing the changes (working with schools to get children to fill the places vacated by those being shipped to different counties etc)
2. When and where will the calculation be published for public scrutiny?
3. How is Herefordshire making this a viable proposition when I understand that both Gloucester and Worcestershire have looked at similar schemes and decided they couldn't predict that they would actually save any money at all?
4. The difference in distance between the school my children currently go to, and the proposed school is only a couple of miles - why is this going to cost me over £1500 a year? In the worst case, why can I not just pay the difference rather than a whole journey?
5. Why is my children's education be disrupted, with the proposal to being moved to school with a terrible reputation, for a few miles a day?
5. How is running two school buses from Cradley saving money?
6. As the council currently seems to be doing the very minimum to give the impression of consultation, when and where are councillors going to make themselves available to answer questions face-to-face with the people impacted by these changes?

Yours

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 21:01
To: Baugh, Ben; scrutiny
Subject: Questions for Scrutiny Committee regarding school transport decision

Dear Sirs

I believe it is quite correct that the scrutiny committee is reviewing this decision. It is clear that the action proposed is extremely disproportionate even based upon the projected cost savings. Further, the supposed costs savings are very unclear and the significant negative effects highlighted by the consultation responses and objections have not been given due consideration.

I would like to put the following questions/remarks before the scrutiny committee:

1. Has any consideration been given to, or legal advice taken about, the wording of the Government statutory guidance (Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance) on the meaning of the legal duty to provide free transport to "eligible" children under s508B of the Education Act 1996? There is no evidence in any of the consultation outcome paperwork that this has been considered at all.

s508D of the Act specifically requires local authorities to have regard to this Guidance and it is clear that the Council has not done so. Paragraph 109 of the Guidance clearly states both that the point of assessment of "eligibility" is **when places are allocated**, and also that any changes in policy should be phased in and come into effect as pupils start school. Therefore, pupils are assessed as 'eligible' at the point of the school place being allocated to them. All those pupils who have already been assessed as eligible for school transport, surely must remain 'eligible' if they remain in the same catchment area that gave them the eligibility when the place was allocated (or under the relevant income thresholds if applicable). So if the Council removes the right to free transport for a child who has already been assessed as eligible, that would appear to be a breach of statutory duty. Further, any proposed changes in policy should be phased and come into effect as pupils start school – ie when they are assessed for eligibility.

This is an important point to be considered and appears to have been completely ignored to date. It could leave the Council open to legal challenge which could quickly cost more than any proposed saving.

2. How have the cost savings been modelled, and have the circumstances of the individuals actually affected been considered properly to calculate the supposed savings? Taking the example of Pembridge school which is one of the affected schools, this is currently served by one bus for eligible children. Some of those children live, by a matter of a few hundred metres, closer to a different primary school which currently has no bus service because it has too few eligible children attending. How can preventing a number of children from getting on the Pembridge bus, which will continue to run, save any money? I don't expect the bus company to charge any less because it picks up from 2 or 3 fewer locations. In fact this scenario is much more likely to cost the Council more money, since if all or any of those children transfer to the slightly nearer school, the Council will have to fund transport for them, in addition to continuing to pay for the existing Pembridge bus. This is one very clear example of how the decision is based upon weak financial presumptions, and the savings have not been shown to be achievable, realistic and proportionate.

3. How have the effects on families with more than one child been taken into consideration? If a nearer school can take one sibling but not another, will families be forced the send siblings to different schools in

order to continue to receive school transport? If so, this is another example of the draconian and disproportionate nature of the decision.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 21:20
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: (no subject)

To all councillors:

Re: Post 16 SEN Transport Charges

As a parent of a young man with severe and complex needs who attends Barrs Court Special School I am very worried and concerned about the proposal to charge for transport. I have a young family, low income and a very challenging teenage son – maintaining this is a real stress and challenge.

I do not think the consultation has been effective as I never received a letter which apparently was sent out to all affected parents and could not put my views onto the website as it stated the 'web-site is down' whenever I tried.

My question is why is there no reference to parental views that I did finally send through and how can you rely on the consultation feedback as the website was not working?

When you made the decision to charge – did you consider the full impact upon a family such as mine? I have young children who attend a school on the other side of the city from Barrs Court so how can I drop off and pick up from two schools punctually and ensure the safety of all of them? These real practicality and safety issues have not been worked out or thought through. What will happen when I have work commitments or am ill?

What is the criteria for families that will be exempt from paying? This has not been made clear and as a low income earner that is critical for me.

As a low income earner will this additional cost and payment be taken into account and balanced out through other benefits such as housing funding and top-up benefits?

I am concerned that this plan does not take into account the individual needs of the young people with special needs – the legal requirement to keep in education until 18 - or where they travel from. **How can one charge be used when they all travel different distances? And how was the charge of £720 arrived at?**

As a final comment I was concerned to receive a travel warrant for my son on the 11th December which is valid from 17th December 2013 to April 2014. We have never had such an item before and I have been asked to return it as it was issued by mistake by the LA. This was before any decision had been made at the meeting on 19th December. **Had the council already made the decision before this meeting and begun to implement by issuing this pass?**

I am glad that you are looking at this again and ask that you please listen to the real concerns of this family that is going to be hit hard. I am sure we are not alone in that.

[REDACTED]

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 January 2014 09:34
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: RE: Additional Questions for School Transport Meeting

Dear Ben,

Apologies I could not get a note to you yesterday but one other query has come up that will call in to question the savings.

Many people in Colwall I know who chose to send their kids to The Chase are relishing this change as they believe they will now be entitled to free transport, where they currently pay or organise it themselves. So the question is would this be right and if so was this taken into account in calculating the savings.

Many thanks

From: [Baugh, Ben](#)
Sent: 09/01/2014 12:39
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Additional Questions for School Transport Meeting

Dear [REDACTED]

The link to the agenda for the meeting is:
<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=809&MId=5046&Ver=4>

The meeting will convene at 9.00am on Wednesday in the Council Chamber at Brockington, Hafod Road, Hereford. It is a public meeting. I would advise you to arrive early to ensure that you have parking (pay and display) and seating.

I will get back to you about your questions, you will see the following note:

Questions must be restricted to the grounds for the call-in - see pages 8/9.

Kind regards, Ben

Ben Baugh
 Governance Services
 Herefordshire Council
bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk

“Any opinion expressed in this e-mail or any attached files are those of the individual and not necessarily those of Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG), Wye Valley NHS Trust or 2gether NHS Foundation Trust. You should be aware that Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG), Wye Valley NHS Trust & 2gether NHS Foundation Trust monitors its email service. This e-mail and any attached files are confidential and intended solely for the use of the addressee. This communication may contain material protected by law from being passed on. If you are not the intended recipient and have received this e-mail in error, you are advised that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error please contact the sender immediately and destroy all copies of it.”

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 January 2014 11:44
To: Baugh, Ben
Cc: epjharvey@herefordhsire.gov.uk; Millar, Jeremy (Cllr); Seldon, Alan (Cllr); jkenyon@herefordshire.co.uk
Subject: Fw: Comments for scrutiny committee re sen transport

Dear All,

Please see comments below re charging for SEN post-16 transport. Due to lack of notice and having to prepare most of this while on a train without internet access in order to submit it before the Friday 5pm deadline, this should not be considered a complete, fully evidenced response. The highlighted section I have added today and I believe it may be a key point so I would ask that this be considered if this process is to be worthwhile.

Sincerely,
 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:33
To: 'bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk'
Subject: Comments for scrutiny committee re sen transport

Dear Ben,

Further to our conversation earlier, I will start this email in the hope that I can get internet access at some point before 5 although I will not have had the opportunity to prepare it adequately given the lack of notice given. This is likely to be incomplete and I still hope to write fully and submit it over the weekend.

I understand that any comments/questions should relate to the stated reasons for call-in and I would particularly like to address:

Point b: Consult properly

Point c: Consider equality, diversity and human rights

Consultation:

I am the parent of a 17 year old with profound and multiple learning disabilities who attends Barrs Court School. A small number of parents heard (mostly by chance) that there was a consultation about proposed charging for school transport for post-16 SEN young people in April. This was during a school holiday so school could not inform parents, there was little notice and the link did not work initially. I know that several parents, including both my husband and I, did put a lot of time into this and commented extensively. When a further consultation was announced, I checked and was told that previous comments would be included. From the documents presented at the cabinet meeting in December, it is clear that this did not happen and that some important points were apparently not considered. I would ask the committee to bear in mind that many parents of children with SEN are struggling to meet their daily needs and cannot find time to contribute to one consultation, let alone two. Some parents are cynical about the influence they can have – understandable when the first consultation said the decision had been made and the consultation was about impact of this decision. The date for the December meeting was again announced at short notice making it difficult for people to attend. This further opportunity to contribute to the scrutiny committee review was also communicated so late that once again there is very little time to prepare a considered, researched response.

Equality etc:

I am not a lawyer and, as you know, I have not been able to access the internet to research this fully today. However, I would like to raise a couple of points for consideration as it would appear that this decision is at least unfair and may leave the council open to legal challenge.

The equality Act 2010 defines several types of discrimination. Of relevance here are discrimination arising from disability, indirect discrimination and discrimination by association. Further, people with disabilities are protected from discriminatory treatment by the imposition of a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Discrimination arising from disability:

A child with a disability may experience a detriment arising from his disability if required to pay for school transport. To illustrate this, I would like to compare the situation with my older non-disabled daughter and my disabled son. We live near Whitchurch and both children have attended post-16 education in Hereford as the best or, in [REDACTED] case, the only option. We did not need to pay for transport for our daughter as she only occasionally had to take a bus. If I was working in Hereford, I could drop her early and she could look after herself before classes started. Similarly, in the afternoon, she could look after herself and meet me after work. She had options of lifts with friends and neighbours, staying over, taking the occasional bus. She could have attended 6th form at a closer school. Our son, on the other hand, needs specialised transport with trained, experienced escorts. As Barrs Ct is the only option for many children with SEN, people come from all over the county so there are no neighbours going to the same school. If there were, we'd struggle to support each other as our children have such diverse and complex needs. [REDACTED] most certainly can't stroll up to my office at the end of the day – indeed he cannot be left unattended. No amount of travel training will change this. Even for more able youngsters who may be able to develop some independence, provision of travel training has been reduced.

The DfE guidance states that local authorities must give special consideration to the circumstances of disabled children and families on low income before making charges for transport, but instead, Hfcs Council plans to charge all families the same in order to be 'fair and equal'. It might be 'fair and equal' if the families and their situations were the same. It is not equality to charge such a child the same as a non-disabled child. Their needs are not the same and their families do not have the same possibilities of reducing the cost.

Is charging 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'? (Section 15, (1), (a) and (b)). A service provider who is simply aiming to reduce costs 'cannot hope to satisfy the test' for legitimate aim – part 3, code of practice, 6.20. Financial considerations alone cannot render treatment proportionate. (a/a, 6.24). I would lie to comment on whether this is a proportionate means of achieving an aim. Imposing a charge has implications for all families but particularly for those with children with disabilities. This was partially discussed during the December meeting and I summarise my concerns about the financial impact below, under 'reasonable adjustments'. I would particularly like to address a further impact of imposing a charge which is possibly more serious and which is not referred to in the documentation I have seen. Councillors will be aware of the numbers of children with disabilities who are 'looked after' as their birth parents have been unable to continue to care for their child. There is not enough time for me to provide the evidence that these families are the tip of the iceberg and that there are far more who are just coping, on the cliff edge. You should know that a decision like this makes 'just coping' families feel more vulnerable, that the principle of state support for children in need is threatened, that the safety net has gone and that we are on our own. This needs to sound emotive as it is about how I know many parents feel. Whether we are right to feel that all state support is at risk is irrelevant - the fear and anxiety that many of us are experiencing (even the few for whom paying a transport bill may not be a great burden) is enough to push some of us over the edge. I believe that this impact is potentially more important than the financial impact and should influence opinions on whether this is a 'proportionate means' and whether charging will even achieve the aim of saving money. How many more 'looked after children' would wipe out all the 'savings' resulting from imposing this charge? I do not believe I am exaggerating.

Discrimination by association:

Forcing families to pay who don't have the same options to reduce costs as a result of their child's disability is discrimination by association.

Indirect discrimination:

The following is quoted from Disabled children: a legal handbook, Broach, Clements and Read with reference to section 19 of the Equality Act. ‘Indirect discrimination occurs if a person applies a ‘provision, criterion or practice’ which is discriminatory in relation to a person’s disability. A 4-stage test is set out to determine whether a particular ‘provision.....’ is discriminatory.....

- It applies, or would apply, to people who are not disabled (as post-16 transport charging does)
- It puts, or would put, disabled people ‘at a particular disadvantage’ when compared with non-disabled people (as outlined above and also discriminates against families by association).
- It puts, or would put, the individual disabled child at a disadvantage
- The person applying or operating the provision..... cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (see comments above re proportionate means and legitimate aim .’

Reasonable adjustments:

Failure to make reasonable adjustments will amount to discrimination. One of the elements of the reasonable adjustment duty is:

‘a requirement, where a provision..... puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid the disadvantage’. As noted above, many young people with disabilities do not have the options open to their non-disabled peers to minimise the cost of transport. It is well known that those families with disabled children already experience higher rates of unemployment, poverty, stress and family breakdown. Their earning power is less because of the time spent caring for their children (and fighting for their basic rights and for adequate services) but their costs are far higher because of the needs of their children. Charging would save the council a relatively small sum of money but increase the financial burden of families already paying the price of disability. What sort of society do we want to be that doesn’t share the cost but allows families to sink?

There is reference in the papers to using school bursary to pay: I understand, there is a guaranteed £1200 bursary for looked after children and for those who receive DLA and ESA. However, many families would be worse off if the young person claimed ESA as they could lose tax credits, council tax, housing and child benefits and income support therefore many might be advised not to claim ESA thus not being eligible for the bursary either. There may be a discretionary award of £500 for those on free school meals, subject to the amount allocated to the school and the number of eligible children. This would not cover the transport cost and I understand that the school can use this money as they see fit ie it could be used to meet an educational need in the school rather than disbursed to individual children. At present, the bursary can be used to buy expensive equipment needed to support learning in those with severe disabilities. If it is all used for transport, that possibility will be lost impacting on their education, communication and life chances. At least in the initial information published on-line, the transport officer suggested that DLA could be used to fund transport. This is in conflict with the Dept for Education’s guidance which states that DLA must not be used to fund school transport. For many families, the mobility component of the DLA is used to pay for more expensive adapted vehicles, wheelchairs and mobility aids and is simply not available to pay for school transport.

As my husband has not had the opportunity to contribute/comment on this, I am sending this solely from me but I know he would have wanted to add more evidence on the rights of disabled children.

I trust I can send this to you in time and that some of the contents can be given due consideration.

Yours sincerely,



