

Supplementary question to the Children's Select Committee, April 17th 2018

Regarding agenda items:

5: Public Participation / 9: Task Group Updates

This question comes from me, Cllr Sue Hughes, as parent and as a tax payer.

Following:

- 10 months of consideration* ¹
- Direction to complete work "*within 9 months*"²
- Cost savings, which I now understand could be as small as £135k³ **
- And the need to call the decision in, to confirm that it was "*fair*"⁴

As well as, all the Wiltshire County Council documentation highlighting the decision to be (and this is in your words not mine):

- "*premature*"⁵
- lacking in "*evidence*"⁶ and "*due diligence*"⁷
- not having enough understanding of "*costs and risks*"⁸
- being made without alternative outdoor provision^{9,10} or "*AG&T provision in place*"¹¹

¹ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 3: "During the 13 June 2017 meeting of the Children's Select Committee, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills asked if the Committee Would consider looking into Traded Services for Schools." – Now April 17th 2018.

² Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 5: "The Committees agreed the establishment and commencement of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group (thereafter referred to as "the task group"), to complete its work **within 9 months**"

³ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 16: "Following the 7 February 2018 meeting it was noted by members of the task group that the budget papers, in the "Summary of Savings and Income Proposals" (page 6 of 10) listed **savings of £0.135m** through "proposal to be brought to Cabinet to consider review of Outdoor Education Centres", however the budget papers included no further details on how these savings would be made."

⁴ Swindon Advertiser, Wiltshire Council Under Scrutiny Over Braeside And Oxenwood Closure, 10th April: "Cllr Hubbard said: "What is fair about a decision where the people who run the facilities are not given the opportunity to contribute towards the decision to close them? Where the users and stakeholders are excluded from the decision-making process. There was nothing **fair** and open about this decision." "

⁵ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 38: "Based on the evidence available **the task group could not be convinced that a decision to close both centres would not be premature** and could have a higher cost in the immediate future than retaining the centres."

⁶ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 45: "With regards to the draft Cabinet report it considered on 7 February 2018, the task group concluded that there was **insufficient evidence within the draft report for Cabinet to make an evidence-based decision on any of the four options.**"

⁷ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 39: "The main reason for this was that **the task group had not received evidence that due diligence in terms of true costs, and potential risks, of closure had been undertaken.**"

⁸ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 43: "The task group reached the same conclusions for this option [Option 4] as it did for Option 3 (closing the centres) in so far as it had not received evidence confirming the true costs and potential risks, of closure."

⁹ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 40: "**...no alternatives were identified for the relocation of the Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) Programme or the offsite services offered by Oxenwood.**"

¹⁰ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 36: "there was no consultation with Wiltshire Schools currently using the centres to ensure that they would be able to access those alternative (either because of travelling distance, difference of activities on offer or increased cost."

¹¹ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 40: "Additionally, **no alternatives were identified for the relocation of the Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) Programme**"

And, in the context of well over 11,000 parents and teachers telling you that this, is the wrong choice, by means of a petition.

Please can the Committee provide clarity, on where Wiltshire County Council plans to go from here, with regards to outdoor provision for our young people?