

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

22 May 2019

**David Stubbs – Statement regarding agenda item 6
Specials Schools Consultation**

To Councillor Laura Mayes – Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Statement

Like you, I've served my country be it as a public servant or otherwise, with the fundamental ethics being moral standing of being honest, and protecting those most vulnerable around me.

While I was serving overseas for the FCO, I watched an Afghan father leave his daughter in a nearby village to fend for herself with no food or water. We were not allowed to interfere because of tribal and Sharia law. She was caught stealing water and a pomegranate to eat after starving for around 3 days... They caught her, tried her and stoned her to death. She was 8 years old...her father came after 10 days and got ten thousand dollars as a compensation for his 'profound' loss. Apparently, that was the going price for daughter...half the price of a boy. When I think about what I saw there and what I have to witness now with my own child...dear Wiltshire council: In my eyes you are no better than the Afghan father and elders. You put a price tag on the heads of children, thus reducing their value and deal with them as numbers in your petty little graphs and statistics, which are flawed. And you ignore the most important thing – their lives, their wellbeing and their happiness.

This council claims to uphold and protect the same values. Yet, it fails comprehensibly. It states in the government legislation that children of primary age be it mainstream or with special needs should be taught within their own local communities. You, the council, however have sought to destroy this by removing the special needs children from their home community and transporting them 14 miles and more out into a reclusive area that boast with beautiful outdoor area, but very poor access in and out. On the consultation in Devizes the founder of Rowdeford charities himself said that the two hour queuing before and after school needs to be dealt with. That in itself is breaking the forty-five minutes time frame. Also, its breaking the 75 minutes time frame for secondary school children. If the children are queuing for up to 2 hours now, what is it going to be with 400 pupils plus all the staff on top with one road in and one road out?

You , the council, are responsible for all the worries and stress that we parents are under and we hold you responsible. You say that Larkrise and St Nicolas are not big enough, yet you fail to mention that it was your doing. It was you, who have been illegally putting more and more mobile classes to our existing schools to accommodate more children and you have been doing it for years. Well, guess what you have run out of space and now you think you need something bigger. The overcrowding of schools has been going on for ages and yet our children managed to thrive. It was not because of the buildings and equipment but because of the amazing and caring staff. So the whole idea of the 'Centre of Excellence' does not mean anything to us or our children. Next time you do a proposal, I suggest you put the criteria in the correct order and put the quality above value for money section and you might reach the results we as parents, are expecting you to. Yet if you go with the proposal of basically throwing all our kids in one big school, you are taking our fundamental right of choice from us. And we will fight you every single step of the way and we will not let you bulldozer over us. You seem to forget that you should be serving us, not the other way around. You might have the money but we have got the reason to fight. Therefore, we will not go away and we will not back down. At the end of the day we have got something you are lacking, and that is morals.