

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**22 May 2019**

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**Teresa Lilley – Statement regarding agenda item 6 – Specials Schools Consultation**

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

**Statement**

I am a parent of a child currently attending Larkrise.

I am also part of the Wiltshire SEND Action group who have been working tirelessly for the last 6 months to fight for what is right for our children. Not just for our children but for ALL children with special needs and disabilities and their families currently living in Wiltshire and future children and families.

We are extremely grateful that a large amount of money is finally being invested in SEN provision for the North Wilts, although it's disappointing that it has had to reach crisis point for something to be done.

This is a HUGE opportunity for all, including Wiltshire Council to regain the trust and respect of their public. If you follow the local press it is clear that respect and trust is pretty much non-existent and moral is low. I would respectfully remind you that Justice Lord Munby states that a Local Authority is a servant NOT a master!

We will NOT be controlled, we MUST work together! YES my child attends Larkrise and YES I am campaigning AGAINST the one school proposal but I would like to make it clear that it is not for 'selfish' reasons. It is my firm belief and that of many others, that parents of children with SEND should have a CHOICE of where their child attends school, just as mainstream families do.

I have visited Rowdeford School and I have friends whose children currently attend Rowdeford. The site itself is absolutely beautiful and there is no doubt in anyone's mind that the outdoor learning facilities are amazing! My son Lewis is 10 years old and he will be secondary school age next September. I could see him at Rowdeford BUT AS IT IS NOW.... a relatively small school, close knit community within itself, with fantastic opportunities for children with MLD. Lewis does not cope well at all with large buildings or lots of people, he would NOT thrive in a school for over 400+ children. If Cabinet agrees to close Larkrise and St Nicholas, they will leave us with NO CHOICE!!

I have read through Helen Jones' report and the supporting documentation and would make particular reference to Appendix 2, the online survey results. The overall consensus from all is that Rowdeford should remain, with expansion, BUT NOT for 400+!! And that smaller schools should remain in Trowbridge and Chippenham, two of Wiltshire's LARGEST communities which are expanding rapidly and will continue to do so.... THIS GIVES CHOICE!!

Wilts SEND Action group presented this very proposal at the Trowbridge consultation meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and subsequently we had a round the table meeting with Judith, Helen and David who all agreed that this was the most viable and most advanced counter proposal they had received.

We are disappointed that the Council's Report to Cabinet is once again, completely biased! We have had to remind Helen to include certain documents within the report, including our Presentation and details of Larkrise and St Nicholas' petitions, which were conveniently omitted but have subsequently been included upon our request....

We are not just a small group of disgruntled parents... we are supported by a large number of families, staff, governors, professionals, residents of Wiltshire , Town and Wilts Councillors AND our local MP's Andrew Murrison and Michelle Donelan.

Does this stand for NOTHING??

**COME ON WILTSHIRE COUNCIL!!! LETS GET THIS RIGHT FOR EVERYONE!!  
PUT WILTSHIRES MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BEFORE  
MONEY!! HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE THAT 'EVERYBODY  
MATTERS' !!!!!**