

SPECIAL SCHOOLS PROPOSALS (22 May 2019)

APPENDIX 6:

LETTERS AND EMAILS RECEIVED

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PLEASE NOTE where written permission to share personal information has not been obtained, some names and person identifiers have been redacted or removed to protect the identity of those individuals.

6.1 Rowdeford Staff Statements

6.1.1 Mr M Loveridge, Head Teacher, Rowdeford School (04.02.19)

Re: Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

As you are aware, Wiltshire Local Authority have been debating the future of SEND provision across the county for some time. A current focus for the Local Authority is the three complex needs schools in the north of the county. This includes **Rowdeford (Rowde)**, Larkrise (Trowbridge) and St. Nicholas (Chippenham).

The proposal, tabled at the cabinet meeting, on the 27th November 2018, was that all three schools would close to make way for one big school on the Rowdeford site. **Rowdeford School supports the proposal for the one-school solution on the Rowdeford site.**

I am pleased that Directors, Commissioners and Councillors have recognised the need to **maintain a school on the Rowdeford site** for future generations of young people with SEND. I am delighted that proposals indicate that it will remain a part of Wiltshire Special School provision in the future. It is encouraging that Wiltshire Council will be investing a significant amount of money, £20M, to provide for the future of SEND in the county. The staff, parents and governors at Rowdeford believe in the Local authorities' vision, and are excited to support the local authority with their proposal to create a centre of excellence for Special Educational Needs on the Rowdeford site.

Rowdeford School's unique strength is its outdoor provision and how it is used to develop community links, with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county; it has the potential to lead on a National level. **This kind of outdoor provision could never be replicated if it was lost.** Outdoor Learning is so important to students with SEND because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Working outdoors helps students to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence, they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Research shows that it also has a positive impact on mental health and well-being. Having this facility surrounding, and integral to the new school, will allow all SEND students in the county to benefit from this amazing resource, cutting the counties current bill for alternative education and out of county placements.

Rowdeford School is highly regarded both locally and in the wider community. The school has been commended by Ofsted and has been graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for the last ten years.

Rowdeford School is the **best-placed site to serve most parts of the county**, providing easy access for the North, East, West and Centre of the county. It is within 10mins drive of Devizes, Calne and Melksham and 15/20mins drive of Chippenham and Trowbridge. It could also serve a large part of the South of the county; it is within a 45 min drive of many population areas within the south. This makes Rowdeford an ideal central location for a complex needs school and a hub for outside agencies. Its semi-rural location, within 5 minutes of Devizes, delivers the best of both worlds, big town links whilst boasting substantial grounds, traffic free roads

and space to continue to expand in the future. This could not be achieved in an urban environment.

The Rowdeford School estate has the **space to provide the development that the Local Authority are seeking**; enhancement of the site will easily occur without interrupting the day-to-day running of the school. The current proposal will provide a centre of excellence, for the long term, that will provide an integrated system of education and care, without losing the exceptional outdoor space that has enhanced the curriculum for thousands of students over the years. We see **Rowdeford as the option that will “Future proof” the Wiltshire SEND offer** moving forward, as the opportunities to expand on the site, pre and post-2023 are significant.

Rowdeford School’s consultancy service delivers high quality training for local Schools, Colleges and Universities to understand better the needs of children and young adults with SEND. The school has already established numerous links with mainstream Primary and Secondary, and Special Schools. Rowdeford School already delivers alternative provision via their Plus programme (now accessed by approximately 45 students a week) and specialist SEND training and support to mainstream staff. Rowdeford School has the capability and the established links, to provide the in-reach and outreach model that the county needs.

The provision at Rowdeford School is amazing; **the magic of Rowdeford** must be retained throughout any planned developments. The **ethos of Rowdeford School**, its **values based curriculum** and the **outdoor learning it promotes must be preserved**. I support the current one-school solution, on the Rowdeford site; however, it appears contradictory to shut Rowdeford School, only to open another school on the same site, when the school has such a fantastic reputation. The school is already set to grow with a larger than expected cohort joining the school in September 2019. This natural growth can be extended to accommodate the development planned. **Growth, not closure, of Rowdeford School will help us to preserve the ethos and magic of the school, ensuring that it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.**

The school has always **worked closely with the Local Authority**; recently providing an extension to its designation to support the growth of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). More recently, it has been involved in developing resource base provision in partner primaries and a solutions-focused approach to increased provision for students requiring reception-age placements in September 2019. Next year we are already going to grow by 33%; Rowdeford will be providing education for approximately 180 students from September 2019.

Rowdeford School has a **remarkable and dedicated staff team** that have the energy, enthusiasm and vision to manage lessons in outdoor spaces, utilising animal and woodland areas. Alongside this, the school has an estates manager with woodland and animal management experience. Staff are also highly competent in delivering lessons to students who are grouped both chronologically and based on need. The school already has established links with an excellent MAT and is part of a Teaching Schools Alliance. **Rowdeford School has an excellent reputation and is well placed to achieve an ‘Outstanding’ grade at its next Ofsted inspection. Growth of Rowdeford School will help us to avoid losing**

specialist staff, preserving all of our expertise and fantastic practice, ensuring it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.

Please join me to **ensure that Rowdeford School is retained and that it's Values based curriculum, outstanding practice and Outdoor Learning** is shared for the benefit of all students in Wiltshire. I sincerely believe that the **future of SEND provision is at Rowdeford**, and with the Local Authority we have the vision and drive to make this a reality.

Yours faithfully
Mr M Loveridge
Head Teacher

[6.1.2 Jo Darlington, TA to the Plus Programme, Rowdeford School \(10.02.19\)](#)

Dear Councilor/Cabinet Member

Re: Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

Further to my letter dated 23rd July 2018 (attached below), I write to reiterate and expand on why Rowdeford should be at the heart of future SEND provision in Wiltshire. With my experience as a Teaching Assistant at Rowdeford and my work with the Riding for Disabled Association, in addition to my knowledge as Rural Chartered Surveyor and Landmark Trees Arboricultural Consultants, I write to detail why Rowdeford School should be retained as the 'one-school solution'. I am also keen to acknowledge that outside of a professional environment, my friendship group includes families who have children with SEND, witnessing firsthand how children have benefitted from the teaching environment at Rowdeford. I would also add my personal experience of working in the Rowdeford Team; I have been fortunate to have been part of high-level professional teams during my career and indeed managed my own team of professionals. In my opinion, the Team at Rowdeford is exemplary and dedicated to a level I have rarely experienced before. To make a decision that jeopardizes this team spirit and leadership would be reckless, destroying years of an irreplaceable and symbiotic teaching environment that allows children and young adults to thrive. The one-school solution should augment this existing team by expanding on the provision that is already available at Rowdeford School.

It has always been my belief that Rowdeford had the capacity to provide outstanding SEND provision on one site. Indeed, my original report strongly advised that this was the most favourable option, organically growing from the heart of excellence that already exists within Rowdeford School. However, I was also mindful of the support for the other two schools in the consultation. It is now reassuring that the proposal, tabled at the cabinet meeting on the 27th November 2018, is for one all-encompassing school on the Rowdeford site.

This letter reiterates the wealth of information provided in my previous submission. Due to the significant volume of information confirming the clear need to retain Rowdeford School, I would like to highlight the following points:

- **Growth, not closure, of Rowdeford School will preserve and expand on the existing ethos and magic of the school, ensuring that it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future;**
- The rising awareness that the loss of exposure to the natural environment will have negative long-term consequences on all children;

- The existing evidence that will require researchers and policymakers to meet at the interface of research and policy, in order to shape a positive future for all children and **formally include LoTC within the National Curriculum**. I believe we will witness a holistic change in policy emphasis, resulting from the body of irrefutable research and profound need to get the future generation to reconnect with their environment;
- **Rowdeford School represents opportunity for Wiltshire Council to meet the changes that are occurring in longer term educational policy. Rowdeford has the potential to lead on a National level with LOtC provision and providing children with SEND a first class learning environment. This kind of learning environment could never be replicated if lost in this consultation process.**
- The Rowdeford School estate has the space to provide the development that the Local Authority are seeking; enhancement of the site will easily occur without interrupting the day-to-day running of the school. The one-school option at **Rowdeford will provide a center of excellence** with an integrated system of education and care. Furthermore, **bringing the rest of the estate back in-hand for educational use would provide more opportunities to enhance and improve the existing opportunities for LoTC**. Expanding Rowdeford is the option that will “Future proof” the Wiltshire SEND offer moving forward.
- As the map below illustrates, ‘all roads lead to Rowdeford’. **The school and its environs provide an ideal central location for a complex needs school, and a hub for outside agencies**. It is within 5/10mins drive of Devizes, Calne and Melksham and 15/20mins drive of Chippenham and Trowbridge. It could also serve a large part of the South of the county; it is within a 45 min drive of many population areas within the south.
- **Rowdeford’s semi-rural location delivers the best of both worlds**. It has big town links whilst boasting substantial grounds, traffic free roads and space to continue to expand in the future. This could not be achieved in an urban environment, where space it at a premium and costly.
- **The unique strength is Rowdeford’s outdoor provision** and how it is used to develop community links with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county. Furthermore, the pupils are engaged with various communities outside the grounds of the school, including work with the Canal Trust and local farmers;
- There is **strong community support for the school**, with funding from the Rowdeford Charity Trust restoring dilapidated buildings to advance the education of children and young people with disabilities or special needs; as a responsible landowner the Council has accepted this capital input for educational use.
- **The success of the Plus Programme** (a unique school outreach programme that not only provides a valuable educational resource, it also secures the well-being of young adults who are disengaged with the conventional educational system) provides essential links for the Rowdeford School Community. This outreach can be developed further, to provide vital opportunities for other mainstream children to re-engage with education through LOtC. The consultation process needs to recognize that **Rowdeford provides the same outreach experience and support that is being championed by Forest Schools and other similar projects**.
- The school and its resources, both in terms of staff and facilities, are the best within the consultation;

- The success of Rowdeford in placing their students into colleges and providing future employment opportunities, with the corresponding cost-benefit to the Council;
- The opportunities Rowdeford has for income generation and to generate sustainable power;
- **The fact that future uses of the site other than a special school will be extremely constrained** by the Listed Building, AONB, trees and protected wildlife.
-

If you require any further clarification on any of the points raised above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jo Darlington BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, MRICS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR LETTER SENT TO COUNCILLOR MAYES DATED 23rd JULY 2018

I believe that loss of the Rowdeford School estate would be to the detriment of SEND provision across the county. Rowdeford School site is an exceptional resource that must remain part of Wiltshire Special School provision in the future.

The following pages provide both factual and practical notes to support the above.

Background

I understand that Wiltshire Council will need an additional 220 places by 2026 for children and young people with special needs and/or disabilities; 50 – 70 more special school places will be required in the north for children and young people with complex needs/SLD. The consultation will also address where the schools are placed to ensure sufficient spaces are available for different needs in the north and south. The consultation is to consider the following three options to provide these additional places:

1. Develop a single school.
2. Develop two schools.
3. Develop/continue the existing three schools: St Nicolas in Chippenham; Larkrise in Trowbridge and Rowdeford School in Rowde

The consultation was supported by yourself, cabinet member for children's services. I believe that your following statements are important to the process: "We know people have concerns about what this will mean and we want to hear from everyone so we get this right..... This is about providing more school places and ensuring our children and young people have the right facilities which help them to thrive and reach their potential." The consultation guidance also noted that SEND pupils need to be educated within a community to allow for their integration into society, rather than their isolation from it.

This letter draws on my experience as a Teaching Assistant supporting the Plus Programme at Rowdeford for three days a week, in addition to my role as a supply Teaching Assistant in the main school on the remaining two days. I also have previous experience as a Rural Surveyor specializing in Rural Land Management, Estate Management, Expert Witness Evidence at Planning Inquiries, EIA for development in rural areas and Arboricultural Impact Assessments. I also have experience as a LOTC Assistant and Chairman of the Parents Association at St Margaret's Preparatory School. I am therefore well placed to provide an informed input into this consultation process.

The Importance of Rowdeford

Rowdeford School cares for and educates pupils with complex learning difficulties, focusing on improving communication, social interaction and preparing pupils to lead independent, adult lives. Rowdeford School is highly regarded both locally and in the wider community. The school has been commended by Ofsted and has been graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for the last 10 years. The house, outbuildings and grounds have been a School within the ownership of Wiltshire Council since 1963, opening originally as a Special School for girls. Rowdeford School's unique strength is its outdoor provision and how it is used to develop community links, with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county. There is international recognition that Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is so important because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Current research proves working outdoors helps pupils to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence; they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Pupils also learn how to look after themselves and stay safe so that they can be an active part of their local communities.

The School has recently received a Gold Award LOtC (Learning Outside the Classroom) - a first for a UK Special School recognizing the extremely high quality of this particular aspect of the school's work which extends to training as well as teaching. Rowdeford School's unique strength is its outdoor provision and how it is used to develop community links, with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county. Outdoor Learning is so important because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Rowdeford has an exemplary track record of placing their pupils in age-appropriate locations/colleges and finding them relevant work experience. I believe there will be additional future employment opportunities for the pupils, particularly following a successful Brexit agreement where additional workers will be required in agriculture, horticulture and woodland management.

Working outdoors helps students to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence, they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Students also learn how to look after themselves and stay safe so that they can be an active part of their local communities. By being able to permanently commit to learning both inside and outside the classroom, Rowdeford is able to allow pupils to learn everywhere, at all times. The outdoor learning experiences at Rowdeford enable pupils to:

- develop reflective and inquisitive thinking along with problem-solving approaches in 'real' situations;
- encourage their holistic development;
- develop resilience and adaptability in occasionally adverse circumstances;
- allow pupils to become more able to identify hazards and risks;
- develop a love, appreciation and respect for nature and all that is living;
- develop an understanding of how we can look after our environment;
- develop self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem;
- develop collaborative-working and communication skills;
- provide positive health benefits – both physically and mentally – and assist gross and fine-motor development;
- give the pupils life skills that open up employment opportunities in agriculture, horticulture and general estate management;

- develop a lifelong love of the outdoors.

I have always known that the outdoor learning environment at Rowdeford plays an invaluable role in securing the well-being of all the pupils at Rowdeford. My role as Teaching Assistant for the Plus Programme over the past two years has provided clear evidence of how outdoor learning benefits mainstream pupils. The young people who attend Rowdeford as an outreach resource base are typically divorced from all forms of outdoor activities and disengaged from learning. The facilities at Rowdeford, in addition to the high caliber staff team that manage them, allow these children to experience the natural world, to understand how to care for it, to learn life skills in terms of horticulture and animal care, to develop an interest in the natural world and so many other invaluable skills. Their well-being, self-confidence, communication and teamwork improves as they begin to embrace the outdoor environment that often initially seems almost foreign to them. By using the John Muir award scheme, we have encouraged many of our plus programme students to get involved in environmental activities. We have also enabled students to gain BTECs in Sustainability and Land Based Studies. This resource should be developed, not closed down.

The LOTC opportunities for the main school meet all of the current guidance that education of all young people should embrace, let alone the benefits to young people with special educational needs. All of the staff are part of a wonderful network of support. The young adults benefit not only from the learning opportunities the grounds provide, but also the tranquility and peace they can seek when particularly anxious or stressed. If you position yourself for a day in the garden, you really understand just how Rowdeford can shape a young person's life so positively.

Rowdeford is the only school that enables pupils to have daily access to animals. The farm animals on the site are not just an educational resource, but an unquantifiable benefit for the pupils with SEND. Through my own experience, it is clear that access to animals has a definitive calming effect on the pupils at Rowdeford. In the classes I assist with, we have pupils who show totally different behaviour characteristics as soon as they are around the pigs and hens. They immediately go from high anxiety to calm, stroking the chickens and scratching the backs of the pigs. There are young people who ask to be taken to the hens when they are experiencing difficulties in class. If you take a group of children outside with baby chicks, all are captivated and calm, listening to instructions and taking it in turns to hold the chicks gently. Even pupils which initially show reluctance to be near animals soon grow in confidence and gain unquantifiable benefits from contact with them.

To verify the findings at Rowdeford, there are recent studies of the impact of animals in educational settings are beneficial for the wellbeing of SEND children. Research has proven that interacting with some types of animals can act as a buffer against social stress in children with autism spectrum disorders. One area that is receiving a lot of attention is the use of animal-assisted therapy for individuals with autism. While research is limited, studies reveal that children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) laugh, talk, and display other positive social behaviors when they have a companion animal with them. A recent study explored the viewpoints of youth with ASDs. This innovative study finds that animals help individuals with autism combat feelings of loneliness. Additional research finds that animals can reduce the anxiety, depression, and fear that many people with an ASD feel. Furthermore, studies

indicate that behavioral problems decrease while positive social interactions and a desire to participate are gained through animal-assisted therapy.

Rowdeford School benefits wholeheartedly from the generosity and knowledge of a local farmer, Dave. In the light of the fact that research has identified that the types of animals that assist individuals with autism vary, Dave has built up his stock of therapy animals which include rabbits, guinea pigs, sheep, Shetland ponies, alpaca and cattle which he regularly brings to the school. These therapy animals provide unconditional love, calming cuddle sessions and happiness that benefit the vast majority of the pupils at Rowdeford. This would be an unquantifiable loss to the Wiltshire SEND community if Rowdeford should be closed.

Rowdeford has also benefited from a therapy dog, with another dog undergoing training following the retirement of the extremely successful sheepdog called Jack. Jack was so popular with many of the pupils, who would eagerly await his lunchtime visits. Even the anticipation of his arrival helped improve their communication skills. Furthermore, Jack was able to comfort pupils during stressful moments, especially in the boarding house. Like the hens and pigs, Jack was able to calm certain pupils, also acting as an 'ice breaker' giving them a reason to smile and interact socially. It is hoped that Jack's replacement will provide the same tangible benefits.

Our gardener is a vital part of the team, with young adults seeking the calming environment of 'Di's Greenhouse' when they are particularly stressed or unable to concentrate in class. Whilst Di is irreplaceable, a recent injury has required her role to be temporarily filled. I have been lucky enough to spend a day a week in her shoes; only through this role do you get a full picture of uniqueness and value of Rowdeford's learning environment, combined with the expertise and compassion of all the staff. It is the ability for the children to leave the classroom and have animals, garden and woodland just outside. All of the staff utilize the opportunities available to maximize the wellbeing of the pupils. There are children popping over with support staff to see the animals, science lessons using the greenhouse resources, pupils and staff on learning breaks to ensure that the rest of the class could learn whilst ensuring the individual needs could be met productively. These opportunities ensure the young people leave Rowdeford as 'the best that they can be'. No other school in the consultation can provide this. The consultation process must take into account the school's interaction with local community. Rowdeford is in the unique position with the support it receives from The Rowdeford Charity Trust. Whilst the purpose and details of the Rowdeford Charity Trust (RCT) will have been dealt in detail by other correspondents, it is important to re-emphasize that the closure of Rowdeford School could put the Council at risk action from the Trust. It was founded in 2001 (Registered Charity No 1088605) and works with Rowdeford School and the community to advance the education of children and young people with disabilities or special needs, especially by developing, renovating and conserving the building and grounds of Rowdeford School. They have raised millions in good-faith, with Wiltshire County Council fully aware of the financial input to their buildings.

Any sale and alternative use of the site will see the Council financially benefit from all of the work this Trust has done, yet ignore the fact that all of the funds invested have been for children with special needs. Where is the morality of this, let alone the legality of such a sale? The school is an invaluable asset for these children, that should not be used to raise money for the Council.

Rowdeford School has also forged strong links with other local community groups and resources. There is a wealth of educational resources within walking distance, such as the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust. Groups of pupils go and benefit from the knowledge and work of the Trust, in addition to providing their own support by volunteering to undertake vital estate management works for the Trust. The school also benefits from the proximity of the swimming pool at Devizes, in addition to local businesses willing to provide work experience for the pupils in Year 11.

Rowdeford has considerable future potential, not only in the potential to expand educational uses on the school but also to develop Council owned outdoor learning resources to replace the loss of Braeside and Oxenwood. There are a wide range of future opportunities to open up the vital outdoor learning facilities to other local mainstream schools, including 'Forest School' days. In brief, a Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Rowdeford could offer this specialized learning approach, as it already compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education that is currently offered. It is important to note that Rowdeford are already widening access to the vital outdoor learning resources it has, seeing the first of the Primary School Days being launched. Furthermore, the boarding facilities still exist, opening the opportunity to expand into residential courses, particularly the Duke of Edinburgh Award which is already operated by the school.

The income generated from lettings is already used to further improve Rowdeford's community facilities as well as additional resources for the pupils. Arts Centre comprising a main hall with seating for 50 at tables or up to 80 in theatre style. The space is fully equipped with ICT, audio and visual equipment. There are two further rooms with a variety of furnishings to provide for break out, meeting or other purposes and a kitchen. There are additional facilities for hire, including the sports hall, outdoor learning center, assembly hall, ICT suite, interactive sensory room, grounds and woodland. The school also offers training courses, in addition to the Rowdeford Consultancy Service. There are opportunities to develop these income-generating activities, given security in the school's long-term future.

Rowdeford has the potential to be so much more. It is important to consider the outdoor learning opportunities in greater detail. With the loss of Braeside as a Council owned outdoor activity resource, Rowdeford could provide a replacement, even benefitting from the relocation of some of the equipment to the Rowdeford School Site. Even without this re-use of equipment, the existing resources and plans for additional outdoor learning classrooms have to be considered in terms of income generation.

There are opportunities to expand the outreach Plus Programme, securing the integration with the mainstream schools. This is a two-fold benefit, where the pupils from mainstream will receive more kinetic and visual learning in an outdoor environment, coupled with skills that will widen future employment opportunities. The Rowdeford Pupils will also benefit from the integration with mainstream Pupils at breaktimes and mealtimes. This integration could be developed further, with shared activities including sport. There is already clear evidence that the Plus Programme Pupils do enhance the sports, including joining activities such as football. The consultation process will be too blinkered about the future, considering the short term financial gain only in what is typically called 'bean counting'. There is a vital need to consider

the facts that in 10 – 20 years there will be a whole new set of pressures on any special school. For example, fossil fuels will run out – power generation will require alternative energy. Rowdeford has the roof-space and grounds for solar panels, coppice in the woodland and already has a bio-mass boiler. Food prices will increase. The ability to be even partly self-sufficient should be taken into account. There is the potential for Rowdeford to meet self-sufficiency in part, then utilize local produce to assist in reducing food miles. There are also developing technologies, such as a solar cell film for windows which lets in visible light, creates electricity from the infrared light rays and reflects the part of the infrared spectrum that generates heat to cool a building. This type of technology will ensure that older, less efficient buildings can become more efficient in the future. In all of the above terms, Rowdeford is extremely well placed to be efficient and cost-effective in the future compared to the other options.

The Importance of Learning Outside the Classroom

There have been many recent news articles and research papers detailing the problems that the digital age is creating for the current generation of young people. As children are exposed to gaming and electronic devices they are leading an ever more sedentary lifestyle. This can result in a “nature deficit disorder,” which is a way to describe the psychological, physical and cognitive costs of human alienation from nature. Whilst not yet proven, it is suggested that “nature deficit disorder” in any child may lead to obesity and possible psychological and academic issues.

“Xbox detox”, is something that researchers have observed repeatedly when studying the effect of nature on the brain. Outdoor learning allows students to put their focus back on nature. Consistent exposure to nature decreases stress and anxiety, helps elevate mood, and helps with emotion. It is therefore vitally important that the Council seek to build learning opportunities that take pupils out of the classroom. This may be mathematics lessons, in which challenges are measuring tasks around the school or counting in the garden, hunting for different types of mini-beasts or a tree survey. All of this is available at Rowdeford.

Similarly, we are becoming ever more risk-averse and wrapped in cotton wool. It is very easy to take the view that something is too difficult, that the problems outweigh the benefits. In short, we give up too easily. By ensuring that Wiltshire special schools can have a curriculum with a strong focus on outdoor learning, the children can be taught to be resilient, determined and to see things through. The consultation process should ensure that Rowdeford is retained so that children in Wiltshire are able to see the world around them and can understand that learning occurs everywhere, inside and outside. The important thing is to enable SEND pupils and other young people to seize opportunities, be positive and seek out new challenges.

In outdoor settings, children are more motivated to work together in groups, which can improve their social skills. They learn to manage conflicts, communicate, and cooperate with their peers in a more effective manner. Any pupil who gets to experience an outdoor learning environment tend to be more attentive and, therefore, have a better recollection of the information that was shared.

Outdoor learning provides children with hands-on experiences in nature. Most children, let alone those with special educational needs, learn better by using their senses. Outdoor environments provide the perfect place to do this. Instead of viewing different types of plants or wildlife on a computer or TV screen, they can see, smell, hear and touch them in nature.

Students at Rowdeford enjoy a garden and grow fruits and vegetables. These hands-on experiences cultivate a love of nature and provide life skills.

A 2010 study from the University of Rochester found that spending time outdoors not only makes you happier, it can lead to an increased sense of vitality. It has also been found to have a calming effect on the mind, ease depression, spark creativity and improve attention and focus. A five-year study, which examined 500 children from 14 primary schools across Melbourne, Australia, found that those children who spend break times in more natural playgrounds as opposed to asphalt ones feel better rested and therefore more able to concentrate back in the classroom. The researchers discovered that had a direct correlation to exam results and attainment. But despite these findings, a recent survey of parents revealed that three-quarters of UK children spend less time outside than prison inmates. This means schools have an opportunity to make a huge difference to young people's mental health by increasing time spent outdoors. This is where the facilities at Rowdeford provide an irreplaceable opportunity to meet the needs of this and future generations of young people.

A further study in 2010 to examine the benefits of outdoor experiences for children with autism was conducted by interviewing teachers, parents and volunteer workers as to how they perceived the benefits of taking a child with autism outside to learn. The main benefits that they reported were improved physical activity, better social interactions and communication, and in some cases that child specific sensitivities decreased when the child spent more time outdoors. Outdoor learning helps to manage difficult behaviour so that children are in a much better, happier and calmer place mentally, and so more ready and open to learning.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is common in children with autism. Research on the physical benefits of exposure to nature has highlighted that time spent outdoors can help fight ADHD, and psychologists have linked contact with nature to restored attention, recovery from mental fatigue and enhanced mental focus. A greater ability to focus immediately after spending time outdoors in nature and shorter recovery periods for stress and anxiety have also been recorded.

It is not just direct contact with nature that makes the difference, but also having a view of and access to more natural settings which has been shown to benefit children's cognitive functioning. While not all autistic children suffer with ADHD, the message here is entirely clear. More time spent engaged in outdoor learning and play has tremendous benefit for autistic children in terms of their behaviour.

Ofsted has produced a range of documents and case studies to demonstrate the importance of LOfC, and to support schools to develop LOfC opportunities for their pupils. A key document is the 2008 report Learning outside the classroom: How far should you go? This is a survey of a range of schools and educational establishments which examines LOfC in practice, and highlights what schools are doing well and where there is room for improvement. Key findings of the report include the following, all of which are being achieved at Rowdeford:

- When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards & improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
- Learning outside the classroom was most successful when it was an integral element of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities.

- The success of learning outside the classroom depended very much on the leadership of the schools and colleges.

The existence of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) is another example of the growing importance of LOfC. It is a registered charity existing to champion learning outside the classroom. They believe that every child should be given the opportunity to experience life and lessons beyond the classroom walls as a regular part of growing up. The CLOtC ensure that more young people have access to these life-changing educational experiences by providing support on the ground, facilitating the sharing of best practice and promoting the benefits of LOfC in raising attainment and aspirations, reducing truancy and re-motivating those who are disengaged from their education.

There is another organization called Learning Through Landscapes (LTL), which states that learning outdoors brings teaching alive. LTL has built up a comprehensive library of research into the benefits of outdoor learning and play for children. This research builds a substantiated case for increased outdoor learning and play in education. This includes a RSPB report that states: “The consequence of removing nature from children can be likened to a malnourished child whose development is slowed and possibly damaged. How permanent this damage may be is for future generations to research but as discussed earlier the negative attitudes to nature of adults who did not have access to nature as a child are worrying..... For childhood development access to nature should be as important as a good diet, education and activity. In fact, as we have seen, nature is a vital ingredient to help all these areas to develop.”

Rowdeford is an Eco-School. Eco-Schools empowers pupils, raises environmental awareness, improves the school environment and also creates financial savings for schools. Independent research into the Eco-Schools programme in England found evidence of the positive impacts on pupils, including increased confidence, development of leaderships skills, improved pupil well-being and behaviour and greater motivation at school.

Rowdeford meets all of the Council’s Objectives for Healthy schools; it is hard to conceive a ‘super-school’ site that would offer what Rowdeford already provides.

Planning Constraints

In recent planning applications, Wiltshire County Council officers have supported the continued use of the site as a school. The National Planning Policy Framework outlines that “the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education”.

The School is well established at the site and the planning history above reveals that the School has been adapted and extended over time. The further expansion of the School is considered acceptable; there is a master plan for the site which proposes an additional phase of development to replace the remaining mobile classrooms. The Council has confirmed that it is the long term aim to replace all temporary classrooms.

It is clear from the planning history that any new build/renovation works have been justified on the basis of securing educational use on the site.

Other constraints that will affect future non-educational uses include archaeology. For example, the bridge that crosses the stream along the eastern boundary is the site of a Civil War rear guard action when 40 Royalist troops were killed in 1643. There are also various mature trees around the site. All trees, regardless of their protected status, have the potential to be a material consideration in a planning application. The British Standard “Trees in relation to construction – Recommendations” BS5837:2012 recommends the steps that should be taken to ensure that trees are appropriately and successfully retained when a development takes place.

Any attempt to consider wholesale non-educational use of the site would also be constrained by the fact that the site lies in the open countryside, is visible from the adjacent North Wessex AONB (see below), contains a County Wildlife Site (Rowdeford Wood) and the protected species on site (mainly bats). This issues are not a barrier to development for educational purposes.

There is clear precedent for the educational use of the site. The existing resources can continue to be sensitively adapted and re-used for such uses. The Rowdeford Charity Trust funding has secured much of the existing resource. Fund raising will continue, although the Council have an opportunity with the Consultation to provide the additional funding already promised for permanent classrooms. It also has an opportunity to fund additional improvements in the outdoor adventure activities, to secure a dual-purpose outdoor activities use of the site (effectively replacing Braeside).

North Wessex AONB



The Other Schools

It is clear that there are inadequacies and site-related problems with both Larkrise and St Nicolas’s. Furthermore, the Council are clearly looking for cost savings. The immediate financial considerations allocated to each school cannot be considered in isolation from the unquantifiable benefits offered by each school, the cost-savings offered to the Council from securing employment and self-sufficiency of pupils leaving the schools, or their longer-term viability/sustainability. We must consider the need to balance monetary considerations against the wellbeing of children and young adults with SEND, particularly in terms of the future they have as adults in the local communities.

The map below shows how centrally located Rowdeford is. Bearing in mind that one of the minimal criteria given for the consultation was the need to reduce the travel time, Rowdeford’s central location puts it in a strong position., the door-to-door collection requires a different strategy than mainstream schools in terms of support and monitoring during the journey. Rowdeford could offer economies of scale and increase efficiency through its central location.



I have compiled an initial comparison table of the three schools below.

Clearly each school will hope to add information, although it is clear that the facts that exist today identify Rowdeford as being in a very positive position. The majority of the information has been found on the websites of each school, with additional information gained during the recent meeting with Alan Stubbersfield. It is important to note that Mr Stubbersfield said there were no criteria for assessing the merits of each school, with a 'grey smoke' of information on special schools being analyzed by his team as part of the consultation process.

	Rowdeford	Larkrise	St Nicolas
Location	Rowde Centrally located in the north of Wiltshire	Trowbridge To the west of the County	Chippenham North of the County
OFSTED Rating	Good with outstanding features	Good	Requires Improvement
Current Pupil Numbers	130	85	78
Age of pupils	11 - 16	3 - 19	3 - 19
Range of SEND	MLD and SLD (Also SLCN, ASD and PD) – students not able to access a subject based curriculum	SLD/PMLD (also ASD) – students not able to access a subject based curriculum	SLD/PMLD (Also ASD) – students not able to access a subject based curriculum
Future Capacity	Extensive	None	At capacity/insufficient
Existing Buildings	Good	Poor	Good

Ability to Expand	Extensive	No	No
Outdoor Learning/Sports facilities	Grass and tarmac playgrounds; fitness trail; football pitch; athletics track; outdoor learning centre; walled garden and other horticultural areas; woodland; pond; animal pens with washdown facilities.	Limited within the immediate vicinity of the buildings. Off-site LOtC.	Very limited
Support from the Community	Friends of Rowdeford School The Rowdeford Charity Trust	The Friends of Larkrise School	FoSN Friends of St Nicholas School
Capital value of the site	Likely to be over-estimated; alternative uses limited; further investigation required. Alan Stubbersfield suggested £1.5m	Residential housing use.	Residential housing use.

Within the Council’s own consultation notes, it is highlighted that Larkrise is under pressure from a number of challenges including the school’s site size and quality of the facilities, green space and the expectations from parents and carers on these. This should be extended not only to parents and carers, but also national educational bodies and the organizations/research supporting LOtC. It has a range of ages from 3 – 19, although only provides 85 places in ‘poor’ buildings.

Ariel View of Larkrise (Source: Google)

Currently the main site of St Nicolas’ school is extremely limited in terms of the amount of room for physical expansion and it is operating up to the physical limitations of the site with only 78 pupils. The 2017 Ofsted Inspection noted that this is a school that requires improvement. During the recent meeting with Alan Stubbersfield, it was indicated that the main site of St Nicolas’s School is inadequate. Mr Stubbersfield gave a clear statement of intent to sell the main site for residential use, with the funds generated used to provide a new purpose-built school in a new site in Chippenham. He also noted that there was to be a Central Government funded SEND school in the south of the County.

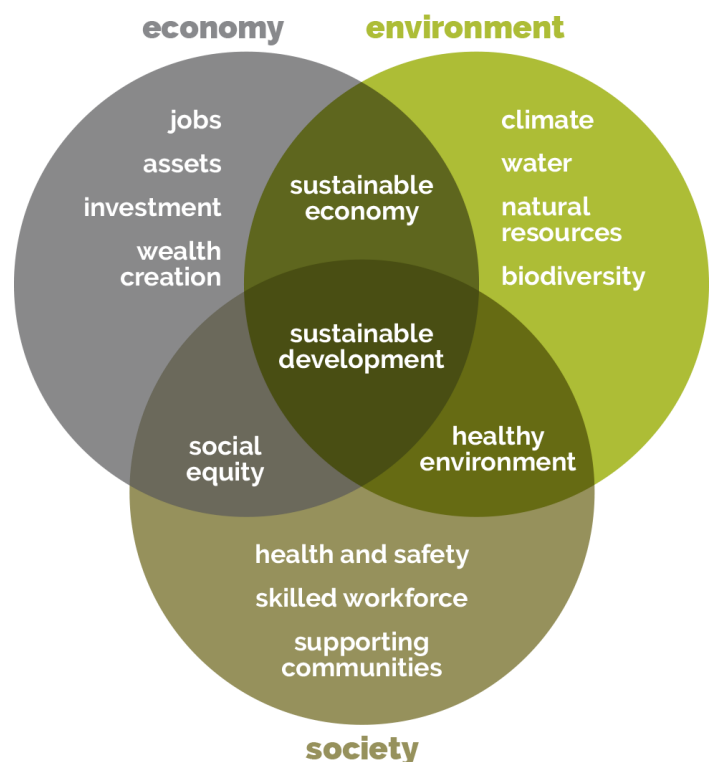


Aerial view of main site at St Nicolas, Chippenham (Source: Google)



My initial thoughts on the relocation of St Nicolas determined that this would give the Council the opportunity to create the ‘Superschool’. However, the one-school solution should surely use the existing site at Rowdeford, which has the clear potential to provide a sustainable solution. Sustainability is most often defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Bruntland Report). The three pillars of sustainability are a powerful tool for defining the complete sustainability problem. This consists of at least the economic, social, and environmental pillars. If any one pillar is weak then the system as a whole is unsustainable. The development of a one-school around the heart of the existing school at Rowdeford would ensure a central location providing a strong society pillar (existing and expanded interaction with local communities), a strong economic pillar (utilizing a site with limited alternative uses to provide on-site opportunities to retain and increase a skilled workforce, providing long-term employment opportunities) and a strong environmental pillar (existing biodiversity/natural resources with opportunities for greater enhancement and utilization). Rowdeford is uniquely strong in all these areas.

The three pillars of sustainable development



Rowdeford is not currently at capacity and has the potential to be so much more. This letter has identified that it is the strongest candidate for retention. It is important to consider the outdoor learning opportunities in greater detail. The existing resources and plans for additional classrooms and outdoor learning should not only be considered in terms of the benefits to the existing pupils, but also in terms of additional income generation. There is also potential to expand the outreach Plus Programme, securing the integration with the mainstream schools. This is a two-fold benefit, where the pupils from mainstream will receive more kinesthetic and visual learning in an outdoor environment, coupled with skills that will widen future employment opportunities. The Rowdeford Pupils will also benefit from the integration with mainstream pupils at breaktimes and mealtimes. This integration could be developed further, with shared activities including sport. There is already clear evidence that the Plus Programme pupils do enhance the sports, including joining activities such as football.

Rowdeford School and Grounds



The capital value of the Rowdeford site will be limited. The Council have had past experience of sites that have been over-valued; for example Urchfont Manor Estate was considered by the Council to be worth £6m, whereas it was eventually sold on the open market for £2.7m.

The consultation process is at considerable risk of being blinkered about the future. The process must consider the fact that in 10 – 20 years there will be a whole new set of pressures on any special school. Fossil fuels will run out – power generation will require alternative energy. Rowdeford has the roof-space and grounds for solar panels, coppice in the woodland and the possibility of using bio-digesters. Food prices will increase. The ability to be even partly self-sufficient should be taken into account. There is the potential for Rowdeford to meet self-sufficiency in part, then utilize local produce to assist in reducing food miles.

New schools in Chippenham or Trowbridge would need to be designed to be flexible in terms of future demands. However, land prices are likely to dictate that it will not have the grounds or resources that are available at Rowdeford. There may be opportunities to use the additional Council land around Rowdeford, which is currently under an agricultural tenancy.

Conclusion

Whatever the outcome of the Consultation for the other schools, it is vital that Rowdeford is retained in the light of current/emerging evidence of the importance of LOtC and animal therapy. The Consultation must look beyond the bottom-line monetary figures, considering

factors that have invaluable contributions to the well-being and future lives of children with SEND in Wiltshire and the surrounding areas.

A clear set of criteria for the consultation process is required, to ensure transparency. These criteria must include LOfC and the success of each establishment in providing the life-skills to be self-confident, self-sufficient and integrated within local communities. This would ensure that Rowdeford is given a fair assessment and all of its attributes are valued within the process, not just the monetary factors.

6.1.3 Rowdeford School Full Governing Board's response (12.02.19)

SUMMARY

Having given due consideration to Wiltshire Council's proposal for special needs education in the central and northern part of Wiltshire, the FGB of Rowdeford School believe that the one school solution on the Rowdeford site is the best option to provide outstanding learning and teaching for the full range special needs students in the central and northern parts of Wiltshire. However the FGB of Rowdeford School consider that this can be achieved by the growth of Rowdeford School rather than its closure.

STATEMENT

The Full Governing Board (FGB) of Rowdeford School recognises that the number of pupils in Wiltshire needing Special School places is growing and that there is insufficient space for the number of pupils.

The FGB of Rowdeford School acknowledges that Wiltshire Council proposes that the Rowdeford School site will remain open and that a new school accommodating 350 students will be built on the site with some existing buildings also being used. The Rowdeford School site provides 'Future Proof' opportunities for further expansion that are likely to be needed in subsequent years.

Having reflected on its position and made enquiries including visits by the Chair of Governors to Three Ways School in Bath and Milestone School in Gloucester, the FGB of Rowdeford School believe that the one school solution on the Rowdeford site is the best option to provide outstanding learning and teaching for special needs students in the northern part of the county from 2023 and beyond.

There is already planned growth at Rowdeford School in September 2019. This will mean a 23% increase in Rowdeford School's PAN. It is testament to Rowdeford School's willingness to work with the Local Authority that they have already flexed the school's designation and age range.

The FGB of Rowdeford School wish to encourage and support those students and staff from other local special schools and are sensitive to the feelings of students and staff of those special schools.

The FGB of Rowdeford School believe that significant growth in student and staff number on the site can best be achieved if the Local Authority moved to allow Rowdeford School to

remain open and have an active and full role in the development of the site with input from senior staff from St Nicholas' and Larkrise schools.

The vision of Rowdeford School is growth of the present school. The FGB of Rowdeford School consider that growth of Rowdeford School rather than its closure is needed for the following reasons:

- (a) Learning outside the classroom is its unique strength and is outstanding both in its facilities and the teaching. This is only achievable due to the uniqueness of the Rowdeford School site. This could not be replicated in any other location. If it is lost, it would never be replaced.
- (b) The excellent skills set of teachers and teaching assistants will be maintained and improved further. All the staff have an outstanding commitment to delivering excellent teaching and support for the students.
- (c) Rowdeford School has an amazing community spirit and the students are an integral part of that. Growth will ensure that community feeling amongst students will continue to be promoted and nurtured. Students at Rowdeford School benefit from the links with other schools, parish councils and community groups which fully support the students towards independence.
- (d) The ability of Rowdeford School to be flexible in working with its many stakeholders.
- (e) The ability of Rowdeford School to remain a small community and centre of excellence and yet embrace significant growth in student numbers, teaching staff and buildings.
- (f) The ability and willingness of Rowdeford School to adapt and respond to the changing needs of students and ever changing funding constraints.
- (g) The Leadership team and the Governors have the vision, enthusiasm and drive to fulfil the Local Authority's vision of a Centre of Excellence based at Rowdeford School.
- (h) The ability of Rowdeford School (already recognised by the careful management of its finances) to manage economies of scale.
- (i) The ability of Rowdeford School to develop teaching and learning. Rowdeford School has a values based curriculum, which has achieved the VbE Gold award. This makes it unique. Rowdeford School was the first SEND provision in the country to achieve this status.
- (j) The students, who are amongst the most vulnerable young people in society, thrive at Rowdeford School. They feel safe in our educational setting. The parents and carers also recognise that their children thrive and feel safe. This is due to the recognised exceptional safeguarding practices of the school.

CONCLUSION

Rowdeford School has been consistently graded by OFSTED as an outstanding school or good school with outstanding features for a number of years. The FGB of Rowdeford School supports outstanding learning and teaching of **all** special needs students irrespective of their needs and abilities.

This can be achieved in the central and northern parts of Wiltshire by the one school option allowing the significant development and growth of Rowdeford School. This growth would enable all special needs students to retain the 'small setting' educational environment in which many thrive and yet satisfy the ever increasing numbers of special needs students in a cost effective and outstanding setting and environment.

Annette Foster
Chair of Governors
Rowdeford School

6.1.4 Staff member, Rowdeford School (26.02.19)

Dear Wiltshire Council,

Following on from my attendance at a meeting at Rowdeford School this afternoon I would like to address some of the questions raised by Wiltshire Council representatives, as well as points raised as potential concerns as to the suitability of Rowdeford as the best site for a school to serve our students with special educational needs.

- Recruitment - a question was asked as to how difficult it is recruiting staff at Rowdeford given it's perceived rural and isolated location. I have worked in a number of schools in both rural and central locations, including inner city, and can report that we do not have the same recruitment barriers as other schools. Staff wish to come and work here from a range of locations. Our existing staff commute from up to one hour away, part time staff hail from Trowbridge, Chippenham, Calne, Rowde, Bromham, Devizes and all surrounding areas in between. I have been at Rowdeford for just over a year. I worked as a consultant for the school 6 years ago and when the opportunity arose to apply to work at Rowdeford I leapt at the chance, despite being very happy in a mainstream secondary school (neighbouring authority). I understand the concern is that the roles for part-time support staff may be difficult to fill given the location, but I can assure the council that this is not the case. People want to work here, it's a very special place and staff return routinely after working in other places as Rowdeford is unique, as I have done.
- There is concern about the plan to close all 3 schools and re-open with a new school. I share my colleagues concerns very strongly. The risk of losing staff with expertise is a valid risk as this process moves forward. Why close all three, why not integrate Larkrise and St Nicks on the Rowdeford Site? The question was around how we would suggest facilitating an evolution rather than a shut-up-shop exercise. Each school has different strengths, by allowing all of us ownership of the process of integration we all have a stake in what should be a continuation of Best Practice in one place, rather than starting from scratch. It makes sound financial sense to have this continuity, the cost financially of recruitment is massive, not of course forgetting the loss of skills, disruption to students and the inevitable dip in stability and outcomes. in the early stages. Across our schools, we already meet and share knowledge and good practice, I belong to a group of (job role) from Larkrise, St Nicks, Downland and Exeter House. We meet regularly to support our students with our differing skill sets. Other groups of colleagues, including teaching staff, senior leaders, and admin staff meet in each other's schools so the idea of coming together now to create the new school together makes perfect sense.
- One of the issues around student participation in the local community that needs addressing is the lack of suitable and safe pavements from the school to Rowde Village, and the 50mph speed limit past the school. I walk to school, but it's quite

unsafe once you leave the village boundary as the pavement stops and I have to cross the road. The pavement on the other side of the road once I have crossed is really narrow, due to not being cleared, and as the speed limit is 50mph past the school (!) it's not a pleasant walk and is at the moment unstable for walking by students with special needs, or those in a wheelchair. This of course has not prevented our students from integrating and engaging fully with the local communities around the school. We have a path from the woods to the centre of the village and this is planned to be fully accessible with the addition of a boardwalk, and students visit areas all around by minibus, bus, train and even barge.

I hope that the points above will assist with the final decision making process, I do sincerely hope that the decision to close and re-open is one that the council will reconsider.

Kind Regards,

6.1.5 [Libby Mornement, Behaviour Support Manager, Rowdeford School \(26.02.19\)](#)

To Whom it may concern:

Rowdeford School site is an exceptional resource

- Learning outside the classroom - totally unique - totally successful - skills, training and qualifications allowing realistic employment opportunities - currently for Rowdeford pupils and a host of others from around the county.
- If it is lost to special education it will be lost forever - losing a valuable resource - completely environmentally un-friendly approach.
- Large enough to accommodate a 'super' school. - central in the county - close links to both communities of Bromham and Rowde with added advantage of rural, natural, awe-inspiring campus.

Rowdeford can grow to accommodate the increase in numbers rather than needing to close.

- Huge resource of expertise
- strong senior leadership and wider leadership able to work collaboratively toward solutions
- A values based curriculum established forming a valuable foundation.
- Already proven to accommodate increasing numbers
- A ethos and culture that proves successful with it's magic time and time again.

Many thanks for taking the time to take on board our opinions.

Libby Mornement
Behaviour Support Manager

6.1.6 [Terri Chard, Deputy Head Teacher, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Council Members,

I just wanted to share my expertise and experiences of Rowdeford School.

I joined Rowdeford at the start of 2018 as the Deputy Head. I had previously taught in Mainstream Schools in South Gloucestershire and Bristol. I had decided to leave mainstream education because I had become increasingly uncomfortable with the “games” that schools were playing to ensure that the league tables were positive; most of these decision were counter intuitive to student welfare.

The moment I stepped into the grounds of Rowdeford, I knew this was a special place. Although a bit daunted at my first experience into SEND, I was completely overwhelmed with the environment, atmosphere and values of the school. For once I had joined a school that made decisions in the best interest of children.

Rowdeford Children thrive at School. It is a bright, happy place where children are valued, build independence and are cared for and nurtured. I believe a large part of this is due to the uniqueness of the grounds, house etc and the expertise of the staff members who know how to use these to get the best out of the children.

I think all children should have the right to be educated at a place like Rowdeford. I understand that some of the other parents have concerns about transport. However I would draw attention to the fact that only 23% of current children are educated in their communities and student already have long taxi journeys to Larkrise and St Nicks.

We are the only school to provide annual training to all if its Pas and Taxi drivers. This ensures that the transport is a positive experience that is used as a learning opportunity to help student be more independent.

I also wanted to share some of the quotes I have gathered from children today about their taxi transport.

“I love the time in the morning when I on my taxis, I get to see friends I don’t normally see. We chat and listen to music and then we do it all again going home.”

“I love my taxi driver, he is friendly and helps me, he’s like my second dad.”

“We have soooooo much fun in our taxi”

“I like helping the two yr 7’s I have in my taxi, we talk about anything they are worried about and I make sure they are happy. If I can’t help I tell a teacher who then helps them”

“I like that we are all different ages on the taxis, but we all live in the same place. Because I know them from the taxi, we go and play with each other in the evening.”

“Taxis are really important for making you start the day happy”

“I had a problem, I told my PA and she fixed it for me”

“I like my PA because they are not like teachers, you can laugh and joke with them”

“It’s the best bit of the day”

I like the time in the taxi, I can fall asleep and relax”

“I love my PA she is kind and helps me”

“I like the taxi as I get to see my friend from Yr 11”

“I like talking to people in the taxi – we have fun”

“I like looking out the window –we play games like I spy”

To sum up, I believe the opportunity to give all SEND students in Wiltshire a “Rowdeford Education” is just too good to miss. I would suggest one adaptation to the proposal and that

is to allow Rowdeford to remain open. With the current proposal of closure, I fear that a lot of staff (me included) would have to reassess their current employment and may seek a permanent guaranteed job elsewhere.

I believe that Rowdeford has the expertise, vision and Leadership to allow it to develop and grow to meet the needs of all children in the area.

T.L Chard
Deputy Headteacher
01380 850309

TerriChard@rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk

6.1.7 Staff member, Rowdeford School (27.02.19)

To whom it may concern,

Regarding the consultation on Rowdeford School, I would like to make the following points.

I have worked at Rowdeford school for over 10 years, initially as a TA and currently as a teacher. During this time I have seen many changes at the school which is a testament to our flexibility and ability to adapt to the varying needs of our students.

During my time at the school, the number of pupils on roll has grown significantly and our designation has changed to embrace a wide variety of needs and disabilities, most recently the inclusion of students with SLD. This forward thinking mindset has always been a fundamental part of the forward thinking ethos of the school.

We are well known and respected in the local community and take every opportunity to provide active and positive experiences for our students. This, combined with the school's fantastic outdoor learning environment, allows them to gain the independence and skills they need to take them into adulthood in a safe and stimulating setting.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this response.

Yours faithfully,

6.1.8 Adrian Paviour, DT/Enterprise Coordinator, Rowdeford School (27.02.19)

Dear Councillors,

I am the Design Technology/ Enterprise Co ordinator at Rowdeford School.

I would like to take the opportunity to mention a number of community based events that I have been involved in during my time as DT/Enterprise Coordinator at Rowdeford School.

- It has been a pleasure to invite students from Larkrise School to take part in Technology days where they have accessed the Rowdeford Technolgy room to design, make and take home a number of functional products. Accompanying staff who came with students had feedback how rewarding it had been for students to makend take home a Clock. It also gave Rowdeford Students the opportunity to work with younger members of a different special school.

- Enterprise Co ordinator has given Rowdeford Students the opportunity to appreciate and understand the real world of Enterprise. Rowdeford Students take part in 3 Enterprise Days per year where they have the opportunity to design and make a variety of functional products to sell. We have developed a small Enterprise Shop that has given Students to market and sell products to the public at the Garden Fete and Summer Fair. It has been great to see Rowdeford students representing and engaging with public at these events. Students seeing the design process through to the making and finalling the marketing and selling of many useful and fuctional products made with Computer aided design and technology.

I hope this information highlights the hard work put in by Students and Staff and reflects a small but important part of the practical Technolgy based curriculum at Rowdeford School.

Best Wishes,

Adrian Paviour, Design Technology and Enterprise Co ordinator.

6.1.9 Staff member, Rowdeford School (27/02/19)

To whom it may concern

I am writing to share my views on the consultation relating to Rowdeford School.

I strongly agree with the proposal to site the new special school at Rowdeford School but would suggest that Rowdeford School stays open rather than closing to open a new school on the same site. My reasons for this are that:

Rowdeford School has established community links – keeping the school open will help keep these ties and enable them to grow. Students joining from other schools will benefit from these links and Rowdeford School is more than capable of expanding/growing these links in a holistic manner to reflect the changing profile of its students.

The school already has established links with hospices and other agencies and charities – closing the school to open a new one on the same site will certainly not have a positive impact on these links but may complicate things. An established school like Rowdeford is known and respected which makes networking much easier, allowing greater access to local and national resources.

Rowdeford is a school that can change and has changed – it has doubled in size in the last 15 years and can double again. Expertise has developed and expanded from SPLD to include ASD and other needs and staff are keen and proactive in gaining relevant CPD that helps them better-support the students.

Rowdeford's location is particularly central. I am the (job role) at Rowdeford and I meet up with other Coordinators in Wiltshire on an annual basis. Teachers always request Rowdeford as the meeting point because of its central location within the county. This also has a positive impact on transport time on taxis; a central location is paramount to minimise student travel time.

Rowdeford School may be set in a rural location but it has years of experience utilising that to the maximum; this makes the fact a positive rather than negative, in my opinion. Rowdeford engages effectively with the local community and students have positive experiences outside of the school which encourages them to be a part of the community; they engage with the community through sports trips where they do actually compete, rather than passively spectating and also learn to use public transport – the school runs trips to Devizes, Chippenham and Bath using public transport where students proactively buy their own tickets and take responsibility for themselves throughout the trip. This is an important life skill and one of many that the school instils throughout students' time at the school. Rowdeford challenges students and empowers them to interact within the community.

The fact that Rowdeford is so close to Devizes is very significant with respect to medical emergencies – we have a number of students who have medical diagnoses that indicate that they may require immediate treatment and have care plans and risk assessments that meet all of their needs.

Rowdeford School is very adaptive – it has extensive experience of students with life limiting medical needs and affords all students the same opportunities and experiences. The school has successfully adapted its Duke of Edinburgh activities to ensure that everyone can participate. This is just one example of a number of instances where the school has ensured that equal access is available for all.

Finally, Rowdeford has an amazing team and everyone is keen to learn new skills and to work with other experts and new team members. It is highly supportive and encourages sharing and supporting with an SLT that strongly feels that the Health and Safety of all, both students and teachers, is of utmost importance.

Thank you very much for your attention with in this matter.
Kind regards

[6.1.10 Staff member, Rowdeford School \(27.01.19\)](#)

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you, following the consultation meeting at Rowdeford School yesterday. I am the SENCO at Rowdeford School, and have worked here for approximately 17 years. I am passionate about the school, the site, the staff I work with and the incredible children I work for.

Rowdeford's rural setting has been mentioned a great deal, and there is no denying that the school is rural. However, the school has much to offer because of this and the setting is in no way a barrier to us engaging with, and being part of our wider local community. When our students leave the school site, on the many trips we organise, they are fully engaged with the community. They take part in trips, competitions, activities alongside mainstream peers. They are actively involved in activities, showing how young people with disabilities are empowered and able to demonstrate personal autonomy. The value of 'being the best I can be' is a golden thread that is in all we do in the school. We carry this forward into the local community and act as ambassadors for all young people with visible and less visible disabilities.

I have the privilege of being the tutor for a class called Willow, which is the tutor base for 9 of our most vulnerable young people within the school. I am devoted to ensuring that these young people are included in all aspects of community life, and we each of our terms is based around a trip or visit. For example this term our topic is 'Having Fun and making friends'. We are practising our life skills and learning to play together in school, with trips planned to visit a local cafe and a local park in Devizes. This is just one example of how we adapt our curriculum, giving it a life skills focus and make good use of our community links.

One of the barriers we have to accessing our community would be the pavement and the road outside the school, and any improvements to this would be incredible. However, you will be amazed to the lengths we go to to ensure we break down the barriers, ensuring that we continue to get out and about.

In terms of change, I have seen the school double in size already during my time here. We have changed our designation to include young people with Severe Learning Difficulties just a year ago. Around 15 years ago, we were able to offer Wiltshire's only secondary specialist provision for ASD and the Prospect Centre was build and developed. The work that took place, demonstrates our 'can do' attitude, our team work, our ability to request advice and act on this, our ability to upskill and learn new skills, our ability to welcome new students with a wide variety of needs, and our ability to include them and value them in our school. This should be considered by yourselves, and to consider allowing Rowdeford School to grow and develop further into Wiltshire's centre of expertise for young people with SEND. We have the drive to grow, we have the compassion to care and we have the humility to know that we do not have all the answers, and want to work with others to ensure we get the very best outcomes for all young people in Wiltshire.

Yours sincerely

[6.1.11 Ken Barker, PE/Dance Coordinator, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Director, Commissioner, Councillor,

I am a teacher at Rowdeford School, and have been working at the school for the past three years. My role is as PE/Dance coordinator, however I have taught a variety of subjects within the school.

I am writing to express my thoughts regarding the consultation around the provision of SEN within Wiltshire, specifically involving Rowdeford, St Nicks, and Larkrise. As I am a teacher at Rowdeford, I am extremely concerned regarding the possible closure of our school, and indeed not having a school within the mazing grounds that Rowdeford has.

Rowdeford is located in a rural part of the county, however is close to Devizes, and we run many engaging trips throughout the county for our entire student body. These trips are not just about getting our students out into the community but indeed are about are students actively involving themselves within the communities within Wiltshire. Examples of this are the variety of sporting activities that we take students to, through the Mid Wilts sports organisation. These have included New Age Curling, Boccia, Football, Swimming, Trampolining, Tag rugby, Table cricket competitions. Through these activities our students

have actively been engaged with students throughout Wiltshire both SEN and mainstream. Gaining valuable life skills and experience in the process. We indeed have been one of the founders along with the Mid Wilts school organizer in a Special Schools Sporting Organisation – this would allow a variety of sporting opportunities between all the SEN schools throughout the region allowing all diversities of needs to access sports in an environment that includes students outside their school.

We have had all our students involved within sporting competitions regardless of their needs; this has ranged from medium to severe learning difficulties as well as disabilities. In terms of our more able students we are currently, the only SEN school within Wiltshire to have had a number of our students trained up to be Sports Leaders. These students actively help promote sport within the school by organising and running events at break times, but also go out to competitions and help officiate and run them. Recently our sports leaders were invited to help officiate at the schools county finals of New Age Kurling that was hosted at Dauntsey School.

Throughout the school and over the time I have been here the school has continually adapted to the needs of the students that we have. With the change in our classification to SLD. We have the expertise to integrate fully, students with all needs, and this has been done successfully throughout my time here. To have a school that is in such a wonderful environment is a positive impact on all the students here at Rowdeford and I think it should be an opportunity for any SEN students to be educated and experience such a rich and fulfilling environment to be educated in.

To me this idea of closing three schools, or any schools is not necessarily the right way to think about things. I think the merger of the three schools into one school that draws on the expertise of all the staff, in an environment that can only enrich the lives of students that are fortunate enough to be educated within it. Rowdeford's school mission statement 'Is to be at the forefront of Special education needs' we have an opportunity to create this under the 1 school proposal, and give the amazing benefits to a wider variety of SEN students around the county.

Already Rowdeford School has a number of students that may require urgent medical attention at times. These needs are more than able to be met again by the support teams we have in school, first aiders we have, Devizes ambulance service just up the road, and if necessary the Wiltshire Air ambulance based also in Devizes.

In short yes our school is located in a rural environment, however we are fully ENGAGED within communities around the county, and always have the safety and wellbeing of our students in the forefront of everything we do.

I very much hope that Rowdeford School continues to be, and that the amalgamation of the three schools onto the site is regarded as an opportunity to give the very best care, education, experiences and support to all our SEN students and families within the region.

Kind regards,
Mr Ken Barker
Head of PE and Dance

Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

As a teacher at Rowdeford School, I would like to make the following points for consideration as part of the Local Authority Special Schools Consultation.

I support the proposal, tabled at the cabinet meeting, on the 27th November 2018, that one big school be created on the Rowdeford site. However, I would suggest that a merger of the three schools, rather than their closure, on the Rowdeford site and under the respected name **Rowdeford School** would be more effective and efficient.

It is great that Directors, Commissioners and Councillors have recognised the value of and need to maintain a school on the Rowdeford site for future generations of young people with SEND. It is exciting and cost efficient that the proposals indicate that it will remain a part of Wiltshire Special School provision in the future. Similarly, it is encouraging that Wiltshire Council will be investing a significant amount of money, £20M, to provide for the future of SEND in the county. The staff, parents and governors at Rowdeford believe in the Local authorities' vision, and are excited to support the local authority with their proposal to create a centre of excellence for Special Educational Needs on the Rowdeford site.

As you will be aware, one of Rowdeford School's special strength is its outdoor provision and how it is used to develop community links, with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county; it has the potential to lead on a National level. This kind of outdoor provision could never be replicated if it was lost. Outdoor Learning is so important to students with SEND because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Working outdoors helps students to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence, they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Research shows that it also has a positive impact on mental health and well-being. Having this facility surrounding, and integral to the new school, will allow all SEND students in the county to benefit from this amazing resource, cutting the County's current bill for alternative education and out of county placements. Maintaining a school at Rowdeford safeguards this unique resource for the future.

Rowdeford School is highly regarded both locally and in the wider community. The school has been commended by Ofsted and has been graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for the last ten years. Our work with Eco Schools and Values Based Education mean that other schools from all over the country, have sent staff here to find out how we do it! For example, in this academic year staff came from a special school in Kent for a fact-finding day. Many trips out to places like Devizes or Chippenham using either school transport or public buses (there is a bus stop at the end of the drive for a route between Chippenham and Devizes, sometimes via Calne) take place over the year. These provide valuable lessons in life skills for the students, as well as raising the profile of students with SEND and their abilities and needs with local people and the general public.

Geographically, Rowdeford School is the very well placed to serve most parts of the county, providing easy access for the North, East, West and Centre of the county. It is within a ten-minute drive of Devizes, Calne and Melksham and fifteen to twenty minutes' drive of

Chippenham and Trowbridge. Maintaining a school at Rowdeford also makes it possible to serve a large part of the South of the county; it is within a forty-five minute drive of many population areas within the south, including Salisbury and Amesbury. This makes Rowdeford an ideal central location for a complex needs school and a hub for outside agencies. Its semi-rural location, close to Devizes, delivers the best of both worlds, that is, links to big towns and rural, peaceful, well-used substantial grounds, traffic free roads and space to continue to expand in the future. This could not be achieved in an urban environment. If a medical emergency were to occur, we are close to the Devizes Ambulance Station, and if needs be, have space for the emergency helicopter to land to take a casualty further afield in the shortest possible timeframe. Surely Julia's House (the children's hospice), Canon's House (respite/short breaks for children with a range of difficulties) and Bradbury Manor (a care home for people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities) would not all be located on the edge of Devizes if access to medical expertise and facilities were an issue?

I believe that the Rowdeford School estate has the space to provide the development that the Local Authority are seeking; enhancement of the site will easily occur without interrupting the day-to-day running of the school. The current proposal will provide a centre of excellence, for the long term, that will provide an integrated system of education and care, without losing the exceptional outdoor space that has enhanced the curriculum for thousands of students over the years. Furthermore, Rowdeford is the option that will "future proof" the Wiltshire SEND offer moving forward, as the opportunities to expand on the site, pre- and post-2023 are significant.

I would urge you to recognise that Rowdeford School's consultancy service delivers high quality training for local Schools, Colleges and Universities to understand better the needs of children and young adults with SEND. The school has already established numerous links with mainstream Primary and Secondary, and Special Schools. Rowdeford School already delivers alternative provision via their Plus programme (now accessed by approximately 45 students a week) and specialist SEND training and support to mainstream staff. Rowdeford School has the capability and the established links, to provide the in-reach and outreach model that the county needs.

The provision at Rowdeford School is amazing; the magic of Rowdeford must be retained throughout any planned developments. The ethos of Rowdeford School, its values based curriculum and the outdoor learning it promotes must be preserved. I support the current one-school solution, on the Rowdeford site; however, it appears contradictory to shut Rowdeford School, only to open another school on the same site, when the school has such a fantastic reputation. The school is already set to grow with a larger than expected cohort joining the school in September 2019. This natural growth can be extended to accommodate the development planned. Growth, not closure, of Rowdeford School will help us to preserve the ethos and magic of the school, ensuring that it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.

The school has always worked closely with the Local Authority; recently providing an extension to its designation to support the growth of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). More recently, it has been involved in developing resource base provision in partner primaries and a solutions-focused approach to increased provision for students requiring reception-age

placements in September 2019. Next year we are already going to grow by 33%; Rowdeford will be providing education for approximately 180 students from September 2019.

Rowdeford School has a remarkable and dedicated staff team that have the energy, enthusiasm and vision to manage lessons in outdoor spaces, utilising animal and woodland areas. Staff are keen to work here, being prepared to travel long distances and to move from distant areas in order to work here. Alongside this, the school has an estates manager with woodland and animal management experience. Staff are also highly competent in delivering lessons to students who are grouped both chronologically and based on need. The school already has established links with an excellent MAT and is part of a Teaching Schools Alliance. Rowdeford School has an excellent reputation and is well placed to achieve an 'Outstanding' grade at its next Ofsted inspection. Growth of Rowdeford School will help us to avoid losing specialist staff, preserving all of our expertise and fantastic practice, ensuring it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.

Our annual student and parent surveys show that students feel safe here, and that their parents agree. There are many strong processes and procedures in place to avoid absconsions, and in fact, students are taught to use certain parts of the outside as an area to go to to calm down and benefit from. The taxi journey that all students take is perceived as a joy by the students; an enjoyable time to develop social skills in a safe environment and a time in which to notice the beautiful Wiltshire countryside as it changes throughout the year.

It must be recognised that to make the new school on the Rowdeford site work, work should be done to improve the condition of the public footpaths outside so that ambulant students and wheelchair users can safely travel along them to facilities in Bromham and Rowde.

I urge you to ensure that Rowdeford School is retained and that its Values based curriculum, outstanding practice and Outdoor Learning is shared for the benefit of all students in Wiltshire. I sincerely believe that the future of SEND provision is at Rowdeford, under the Rowdeford umbrella, and with the Local Authority we have the vision and drive to make this a reality.

Yours faithfully
Kate Walling (Mrs)
Rowdeford School

6.1.13 Georgina Turner, Art Coordinator, Rowdeford School (27.02.19)

Dear specialschools@wiltshire.gov.uk

I am the Art Coordinator at Rowdeford School and I would like to raise the following points regarding the consideration of the future of Special Education at the Rowdeford site.

- Rowdeford has well-established links with our immediate community and beyond. Our students go on many trips which enable them to engage with their peers and the community as a whole. These include life skills experiences, creative workshops and projects linked to sustainability and environmental awareness projects. Our students truly are ambassadors for young people with SEND and we receive lots of positive feedback about their conduct and outlook.

- Rowdeford is a rural site providing a unique environment which cannot be replicated in an urban area. The benefits of outdoor spaces on mental health and wellbeing are well documented and are even more relevant when considering learners with SEND. As mentioned above, our georgic location does not impede our community involvement. Indeed, we make more effort to create community links which enhance our students' learning and allow them to integrate fully with the villages and towns surrounding the school.
- Our artistic cohort regularly exhibits in local spaces (including Rowde Village Hall) and we were a part of the Poly-Olbion project which toured nationally. Exhibiting in this way provides a fantastic opportunity for our learners and outside communities to share their artistic expression.
- We can, with the expansion of the school, ensure that we provide spaces and technology to meet the needs of all learners. We already have an ambitious Accessibility Plan which we are following to enable safe access to all areas of the site. This can be further built upon to re-enforce our community links- for example improvement of the footpaths into Rowde and Bromham and decreasing the speed limit outside the school gate. The addition of a café or similar would further provide opportunity for the local community to benefit from our ethos and values.
- Alongside the physical expansion of the site, we are keen to expand our knowledge so that we can continue to provide exemplary specialist education to all learners. This would of course involve drawing on the expertise of external agencies, medical experts and staff who will hopefully join us from the other Specialist Schools.

Thank you. I hope you will consider these points.

Best wishes

Georgia Turner

[6.1.14 John Craze, Outdoor Learning Devlpt Coordinator, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Councillor/Cabinet Member

Re: Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

Following the recent consultation evening at Rowdeford School I felt it was important to outline the way that we access and use both the local and greater community to benefit learning and also how the school benefits from its community links. Part of my role at Rowdeford is that of the EVC, (Educational Visits Coordinator) and I therefore have oversight of how regularly and for what reason we leave our school site.

Attached is a summary of visits from the last two terms of the last academic year. It demonstrates the regularity and diversity of the educational and community experiences we provide for our students.

There is so much to report so I have summarised some of what we do;

Art

In the last four years our students art work has featured in both local and national exhibitions. Rowde Village Hall, The Flower Show, The Pound Art Centre, Corsham, The Holborne

Museum, Bath and The Poly Olbion Exhibition which toured the country and visited Devizes. Pupils artwork features in the exhibits and the pupils also visit the locations, take part in workshops and meet local artists.

PE

Our PE Department have been central to setting up a special schools sporting alliance as part of the Mid Wilts School Games Programme. Rowdeford School was often the only special school represented at tournaments and students wanted more opportunities to connect with other schools and compete. This year the school have taken students to target sports tournaments such as New Age Curling and Boccia, football, Tag Rugby, table cricket and trampolining at Lavington, Devizes and Dauntseys Schools. We use Devizes Leisure Centre for swimming classes up to three times a week which is just a ten minute drive from the school.

DT

We have the only specialist Design Technology facility in the three school and our subject specialist has developed this resource previously working with George Ward School. In recent years he has worked with Larkrise enabling their students and staff to access the facilities to complete single project days.

Drama

Shakespeare Schools Festival, Wyvern Theatre, Swindon – each year a drama group get the opportunity to perform at the festival, they visit the theatre and complete dress rehearsals before the big show in front of members of the public. Drama groups have also performed at the Wharf Theatre in Devizes

Willow Class represent our most vulnerable learners, their curriculum programme works towards a community centred visit each term. Last term they developed the skills needed to visit Pizza Express in Devizes, a short drive from the site. This term they will be visiting Hillworth Park in Devizes and learning how to stay safe in a community park area.

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – three different year groups entered the bee and honey related competitions and classes which took place in the Corn Exchange in Devizes. Several of our students won prizes and featured in the local media.

St Mary's Church Devizes – we have a long standing relationship with the church and help adopt and decorate their Christmas trees each year.

Carol Festivals at Bromham and Rowde Churches – These take place every year for KS3 and 4. We have good relationships with both parishes and the Reverends regularly attend the school on occasions such as the Harvest Festival. We donate our harvest to Devizes Food Bank. We also support the food bank as our DofE students visit their twice a term to pack food relief boxes. We regularly walk in both parishes and have conducted litter picks in their community sports fields.

DofE and Plus Programme

Both groups of learners have volunteered in the local community at the Jubilee Woods completing conservation work for the Canal and Rivers Trust. This relationship is extended with an annual residential trip on the canal on one of the trusts specialist barges. The school has worked hard with the county footpaths officer in re-establishing and improving local

footpaths that lead away from the site. Volunteers from RWB Academy helped put in new kissing gates in 2016. These footpaths connect the school with the local area and enable our groups to experience the rural, countryside surroundings. We are able to access the whole of the Kennet and Avon Canal, the North Wilts Downs, the White Horse Way, The Wansdyke and Roundway Hill. Our practice walk goes from the school to Blackland Lakes on the outskirts of Calne. This demonstrates how close the communities are geographically. For our assessed silver expeditions we travel to the Quantock Hills in Somerset. Over the last three years I have supported St Nics, Exeter House and Springfields in the development of their DofE provision. Both Exeter House and St Nics use our site and the local walking opportunities for their bronze expeditions. This year a wheel chair user from St Nics was able to stay under canvas in our yurt but still have the necessary support required to enable him to complete the expedition.

In addition to the DofE programme all pupils from YR8 – 11 take part in the sponsored wheel and walk every September. The walk follows the Kennet and Avon Canal from Semington to Devizes. Local businesses along the route support the school and we raise a significant amount each year to give to our chosen charity.

The school site also provides a facility to the local community and this is something we are developing further in our SIP. Several local clubs or businesses currently or have hired out our facilities, including Devizes Judo Club and Julia's House. We have volunteers from RWB Academy every year and have worked with the local branches of Lloyds Bank. Our school is well linked and represented by the Friends of Rowdeford and Rowdeford Charity Trust organisations in the local community. Each year the RCT Garden Fair receives hundreds of visitors and raises thousands of pounds to support the school.

This week I am meeting with the local Parkrun Ambassador to facilitate the creation of a Parkrun for Devizes at Rowdeford School. We already have a committee of enthusiastic people who want to make this happen. This will provide further links with our local community and demonstrates the close relationship we have with the surrounding town and residential areas.

I hope this brief summary has demonstrated that we are not an isolated rural school but we are in fact an outstanding school on the outskirts of Devizes that is very much a part of the local and wider community. We make the most of our position by providing a diversity of important and beneficial learning opportunities that will help prepare our students for life after school and into college or the work place.

Yours faithfully,

John Craze, Outdoor Learning Development Coordinator

Type	Establishment	ID	Name	Start	Destination	External Providers	Primary Purpose
Other	Rowdeford School	23448	Drews Pond	16/04/2018	Drews Pond	Drews Pond	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23534	Hillworth Park	18/04/2018	Hillworth park	Hillworth park	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23536	Heavens Gate				Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23055	Egg Theatre Bath 2018				English/Drama
Other	Rowdeford School	23677	Barbary Castle				Personal, Social and Emotional
Residential, Adventurous (Staff)	Rowdeford School	23686	DofE Practice Expedition				Duke of Edinburgh
Other	Rowdeford School	23678	west kennet long barrow			1 ONOJ barrow	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23679	lydiard park				Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23680	cherhill monument	30/04/2018	8XY	8XY	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23683	Hope nature centre	03/05/2018	Hope Nature Centre (BA14 9QD)	Hope Nature Centre (BA14 9QD)	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23657	Bristol Hippodrome Yr7	04/05/2018	Bristol Hippodrome (BS1 4UZ)	Bristol Hippodrome (BS1 4UZ)	English/Drama
Residential	Rowdeford School	22595	canal trip 2018	08/05/2018	The Bruce Trust (RG17 9YY)	The Bruce Trust (RG17 9YY)	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23966	Bus trip to Chippenham	08/05/2018	Chippenham Town Centre	Chippenham Town Centre	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	23984	Devizes Bus Trip Year 10	08/05/2018	devizes town centre	devizes town centre	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	23985	Life Skills Day trip to Bath	08/05/2018	Chippenham Train station Bath Spa (BA1 1JP) Odeon Cinema (BA1 2BX) SouthGate Retail Centre (Chippenham Train station Bath Spa (BA1 1JP) Odeon Cinema (BA1 2BX) SouthGate Retail Centre (Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24059	Odeon cinema trowbridge	09/05/2018	Odeon Cinema (BA1 2BX)	Odeon Cinema (BA1 2BX)	Personal, Social and Emotional
Residential, Adventurous (Staff)	Rowdeford School	24142	DofE Exped Second Practice Camp -	09/05/2018	Not Applicable- Rowdeford School	Not Applicable	Duke of Edinburgh
Other	Rowdeford School	24170	8MB Swimming Devizes	09/05/2018	Devizes Leisure Centre	Devizes Leisure Centre	PE
Other	Rowdeford School	23980	Y11 Horticulture visit to Posies With Pride	10/05/2018	Posies with Pride	Posies with Pride	Science
Other	Rowdeford School	24098	Wilts and Berks canal Towpath Project	10/05/2018	Wilts and Berks Canal	Wilts and Berks Canal	Personal, Social and Emotional
Other	Rowdeford School	24219	10S trip to Pound Arts	11/05/2018	The Pound Arts Centre	The Pound Arts Centre	English/Drama

Other venues that have been used in previous terms that hold an LOTC Quality Badge are;
The Corinium Museum
Life Skills Centre Bristol
The GWR Steam Museum
Wiltshire Outdoor Learning Team
Paulton Park

Runways End HCC Outdoor Learning Centre will be used for next years YR8 residential. Chateau Beaumont is under consideration for a French Trip in 2019/20. The quality badge status is one of the reasons we are looking at this venue following a poor experience at PGL Le Pre

Other	Rowdeford School	23981	Year 10 Horticulture visit to Posies With Pride	14/05/2018	Posies with Pride	Posies with Pride	Science
Other	Rowdeford School	24269	Victoria Park Bath	14/05/2018	Royal Victoria Park (BA12NQ)	Royal Victoria Park (BA12NQ)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24244	Paris Smith College Visit	15/05/2018	Wiltshire College Chippenham (SN15 3QD)	Wiltshire College Chippenham (SN15 3QD)	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	23685	West woods	17/05/2018	West Woods	West Woods	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24222	Wharf Theatre Y11	17/05/2018	Wharf Theatre (SN10 1EB)	Wharf Theatre (SN10 1EB)	English/Drama
Other	Rowdeford School	24271	Sheerwater lake walk	21/05/2018	Sheerwater lake	Sheerwater lake	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Residential, Adventurous (Staff)	Rowdeford School	24309	DofE Quantocks Expedition	22/05/2018	Quantock View Camping Field (TA4 3FF)	Quantock View Camping Field (TA4 3FF)	Duke of Edinburgh
					Quantock Orchard Caravan Park (TA4 4AW)- Both of the above. QUantock View on the first night	Quantock Orchard Caravan Park (TA4 4AW)	
Other	Rowdeford School	24272	Alton Barnes	24/05/2018	Alton Barnes White Horse	Alton Barnes White Horse	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	23843	SS Great Britain and Za Za Bazaar	05/06/2018	SS Great Britain (BS16TY) Za Za Bazaar (BS15UH)	SS Great Britain (BS16TY) Za Za Bazaar (BS15UH)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24884	Fairfield Transition Visit	06/06/2018	Fairfield Farm College (BA13 4DL)	Fairfield Farm College (BA13 4DL)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25119	skittles	11/06/2018	Bromham Social Centre (SN15 2JB)	Bromham Social Centre (SN15 2JB)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24994	Bingo in Bromham	12/06/2018	Bromham Social Centre (SN15 2JB)	Bromham Social Centre (SN15 2JB)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24561	Longleat (KDO)2018	13/06/2018	Longleat Safari Park & Adventure Park (BA12 7ND)	Longleat Safari Park & Adventure Park (BA12 7ND)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24763	vue cinema trowbridge	13/06/2018	Vue Cinema (BA14 8TQ)	Vue Cinema (BA14 8TQ)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24997	Alton Barnes picnic tea and walk	18/06/2018	Alton Barnes White Horse	Alton Barnes White Horse	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25351	Fairfield visit	18/06/2018	Fairfield Farm College (BA13 4DL)	Fairfield Farm College (BA13 4DL)	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25353	Poplar College Transition visit	19/06/2018	Poplars Sixth Form (SN15 3QH)	Poplars Sixth Form (SN15 3QH)	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24764	Poulshot Vintage Cars	20/06/2018	The Green (SN10 1BT)	The Green (SN10 1BT)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25016	Walk in Avebury	21/06/2018	Avebury Stones (SN8 1BF)	Avebury Stones (SN8 1BF)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25017	Trowbridge park and hungry horse	25/06/2018	Trowbridge Park (BA14 8AH) Hungry Horse	Trowbridge Park (BA14 8AH) Hungry Horse	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25539	Lackham Transition	25/06/2018	Lackham College (SN15 2NY)	Lackham College (SN15 2NY)	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25397	Christie Miller Bowling PDY11	26/06/2018	Christie Miller Sports Centre (SN12 6QU)	Christie Miller Sports Centre (SN12 6QU)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Other	Rowdeford School	25019	Avoncliffe walk	28/06/2018	Bradford on Avon	Bradford on Avon	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford	25573	Prize Giving 2018	29/06/2018	Bromham Social Centre (SN15 2JZ)	Bromham Social Centre (SN15 2JZ)	Reward
Other	Rowdeford School	25022	Hillworth Park	02/07/2018	Hillworth Park	Hillworth Park	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25560	PP Longleat	02/07/2018	Longleat (BA12 7Nw)	Longleat (BA12 7Nw)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25561	PP Longleat Tuesday	03/07/2018	Longleat (BA12 7Nw)	Longleat (BA12 7Nw)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	24768	Swimming and McDonalds	04/07/2018	Oasis Leisure Centre (SN2 1EP) McDonalds Restaurants	Oasis Leisure Centre (SN2 1EP) McDonalds Restaurants	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25564	PP Longleat Wednesday	04/07/2018	Longleat (BA12 7Nw)	Longleat (BA12 7Nw)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25882	life skills day-bowling and cafe	04/07/2018	Christie Miller Sports Centre (SN12 6QU) Whitehall Garden Centre (SN15 2LZ)	Christie Miller Sports Centre (SN12 6QU) Whitehall Garden Centre (SN15 2LZ)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25023	christie miller bowling	05/07/2018	Christie Miller Sports Centre (SN12 6QU)	Christie Miller Sports Centre (SN12 6QU)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25955	Canal and Rivers Trust, Jubilee Woods and Towpath	05/07/2018	Jubilee Woodland / Caen Hill (SN10 4HE)	Jubilee Woodland / Caen Hill (SN10 4HE)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Residential,	Rowdeford	26004	Yr10 Overnight School Camp	09/07/2018	Not Applicable- Rowdeford School	Not Applicable	Duke of Edinburgh
Other	Rowdeford	26045	Roundway Walk - Monday	09/07/2018	None (None)	None (None)	PE
Other	Rowdeford School	26089	Victoria Park Bath	09/07/2018	Victoria Park	Victoria Park	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford	26047	Roundway Walk - Tuesday	10/07/2018	None (None)	None (None)	PE
Other	Rowdeford	26048	Roundway Walk - Wednesday	11/07/2018	None (None)	None (None)	PE
Residential, Adventurous	Rowdeford School	25302	Pencelli 2018	16/07/2018	Flax Fenell Outdoor Education Centre (LD3 7LJ)	Flax Fenell Outdoor Education Centre (LD3 7LJ)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford	25844	Yr7 Activity Week Walk	16/07/2018	Caen Hill	Caen Hill	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25846	Yr10 Activity Week Walk	17/07/2018	Clinghall Woods	Clinghall Woods	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford School	25936	Trinity School play	17/07/2018	The Trinity School	The Trinity School	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford	26132	Hawk Conservancy 2018	17/07/2018	Hawk Conservancy Trust	Hawk Conservancy Trust	Environmental
Other	Rowdeford	26005	Y10 Lydiard Park Activities	18/07/2018	Lydiard Park	Lydiard Park	PE
Other	Rowdeford School	26114	Day trip to Devizes	18/07/2018	Devizes Museum (SN10)	Devizes Museum (SN10)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford	26192	Yr 9 Swimming Trip	18/07/2018	Devizes Leisure Centre	Devizes Leisure Centre	PE
Other	Rowdeford School	25781	Cotswold Wildlife Park Yr7	19/07/2018	Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens (OX18 4NR)	Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens (OX18 4NR)	Science
Other	Rowdeford	25847	Yr9 Roundway Walk	19/07/2018	Roundway Hill	Roundway Hill	Personal Development
Other	Rowdeford School	26268	YR9 Caen Hill Flight Walk	19/07/2018	Caen Hill	Caen Hill	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Other	Rowdeford	25831	We the curious	20/07/2018	We The Curious (BS1 5DB)	We The Curious (BS1 5DB)	Science
Adventurous	Rowdeford School	25779	Jungle Parc Merit Trip 23.7.18	23/07/2018	Jungle Parc (SM5 3PA)	Jungle Parc (SM5 3PA)	Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

As you are aware, Wiltshire Local Authority have been debating the future of SEND provision across the county for some time. A current focus for the Local Authority is the three complex needs schools in the north of the county. This includes Rowdeford, Larkrise (Trowbridge) and St. Nicholas (Chippenham).

The current proposal is that all schools would close to make way for one big school on the Rowdeford site. As a teacher at Rowdeford School I support the proposal for the one-school solution to be based on the Rowdeford site. This site cannot be lost for the young people of Wiltshire, it is essential to maintain a school here for the future generations of young people with SEND.

Investment and new infrastructure is well needed, so I am pleased that Wiltshire Council will be investing a significant amount of money, £20M, to provide for the future of SEND in the county. At Rowdeford we are all excited to support the local authority with their proposal to create a centre of excellence for Special Educational Needs on the Rowdeford site.

Rowdeford School's unique strength is its outdoor provision and the learning that goes on in the outdoor environment. This resource is used to develop community links, with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county, and we have the potential to lead on a National level. This kind of outdoor provision could never be replicated if it was lost. Outdoor Learning is so important to students with SEND because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Working outdoors helps students to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence, they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Research shows that it also has a positive impact on mental health and well-being. Having this facility surrounding, and integral to the new school, will allow all SEND students in the county to benefit from this amazing resource, cutting the counties current bill for alternative education and out of county placements. The advantages of the impact on positive wellbeing is well needed in this age of austerity- CAMHS are suffering from budget cuts, and prevention is better than cure.

Rowdeford School is highly regarded both locally and in the wider community, by parents and pupils. The school has been commended by Ofsted and has been graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for the last ten years.

Rowdeford School is the best-placed site to serve most parts of the county, providing easy access to all areas of the county. Rowdeford is an ideal central location for a complex needs school and a hub for outside agencies. Its semi-rural location, within 5 minutes of Devizes, delivers the best of both worlds, big town links whilst boasting substantial grounds, traffic free roads and space to continue to expand in the future. This could not be achieved in an urban environment.

We have already developed many ways engage with community whilst continuing to benefit from our great rural location. We are a few minutes from a large town and provide the pupils with the skills to engage fully with our local community. We also access trips and visits to the wider area.

The Rowdeford School estate has the space to provide the development that the Local Authority are seeking, and still have lots of space left for our essential outdoor learning. We also have space to develop without interrupting the day-to-day running of the school. The current proposal will provide a centre of excellence, for the long term, that will provide an integrated system of education and care, and we will still have the exceptional outdoor space that has enhanced the curriculum for thousands of students over the years.

Rowdeford School's consultancy service delivers high quality training for local Schools, Colleges and Universities to understand better the needs of children and young adults with SEND. The school has already established numerous links with mainstream Primary and Secondary, and Special Schools. Rowdeford School already delivers alternative provision via their Plus programme (now accessed by approximately 45 students a week) and specialist SEND training and support to mainstream staff. Rowdeford School has the capability and the established links, to provide the in-reach and outreach model that the county needs.

The provision at Rowdeford School is amazing; the magic of Rowdeford must be retained throughout any planned developments. The ethos of Rowdeford School, its values based curriculum and the outdoor learning it promotes must be preserved.

I support the current one-school solution, on the Rowdeford site; but do not shut Rowdeford School. Why would we shut this school, and then open another school on the same site, when this school has such a fantastic reputation?

We are already set to grow with a larger than expected cohort joining the school in September 2019. We have developed and grown many times in the past and continue to move forward-recently changing designation. We and are flexible and adaptable.

The natural growth that we expect can be extended to accommodate the development planned. Growth, not closure, of Rowdeford School will help us to preserve the ethos and magic of the school, ensuring that it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.

I am part of a remarkable and dedicated staff team that have the energy, enthusiasm and vision to manage lessons in outdoor spaces, utilising animal and woodland areas across the curriculum. As a staff we are highly competent in delivering lessons to a wider variety of pupils with differing needs. We are a team, and learn from and lean on each other. We look forward to working with colleagues that are more skilled in other areas than we are. We love to learn, and to help others learn.

Rowdeford School needs to grow to avoid losing our specialist staff, preserving all of our expertise and fantastic practice, and providing a base for all the other staff that will work with us here to provide the best education for the pupils.

Please ensure that Rowdeford School is retained. We must keep our key strengths and build on this with the expertise and strength of others.

Yours faithfully
Charlotte Read

[6.1.16 Staff member, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Councillor/Cabinet Member

Re: LA Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

Wiltshire Local Authority have been debating the future of SEND provision across the county. A current focus is the three complex needs schools in the north of the county. This includes **Rowdeford (Rowde)**, Larkrise (Trowbridge) and St. Nicholas (Chippenham).

The proposal was that all three schools would close to make way for one big school on the Rowdeford site. **Rowdeford School supports the proposal for the one-school solution on the Rowdeford site.**

I am pleased that the need to **maintain a school on the Rowdeford site** has been recognised for future generations of young people with SEND. The staff, parents and governors at Rowdeford believe in the Local authorities' vision, and are excited to support the local authority with their proposal to create a centre of excellence for Special Educational Needs on the Rowdeford site.

Rowdeford School's unique strength is its outdoor provision and how it is used to provide active and positive experiences which build independence and ensures we engage with our community. **This kind of outdoor provision could never be replicated if it was lost.** Outdoor Learning is so important to students with SEND because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Working outdoors helps students to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence, they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Research shows that it also has a positive impact on mental health and well-being. Having this facility surrounding, and integral to the new school, will allow all SEND students in the county to benefit from this amazing resource.

Rowdeford School is highly regarded both locally and in the wider community. The school has been commended by Ofsted and has been graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for the last ten years.

Rowdeford will need to grow and develop its experience and expertise in pupils with PMLD but we are school for change, we have historically already doubled in size and made provision for pupils with SLD and will be providing for reception aged pupils in the near future. As a teaching body we have always been open to change, are flexible and are forward thinking. It is my belief that PMLD pupils have the right to be educated in the same amazing environment as all pupils at Rowdeford, they would be an integral part of the school treated inclusively and not excluded. We already have pupils with life-limiting conditions and those who need emergency care, we are vvery adaptive to these pupils needs.

Rowdeford School is the **best-placed site to serve most parts of the county**, providing easy access for the North, East, West and Centre of the county. Rowdeford an ideal central location for a complex needs school and a hub for outside agencies. Its semi-rural location, within 5 minutes of Devizes, delivers the best of both worlds, big town links whilst boasting substantial grounds, traffic free roads and space to continue to expand in the future. This could not be achieved in an urban environment.

We see **Rowdeford as the option that will “Future proof” the Wiltshire SEND offer** moving forward, as the opportunities to expand on the site, pre and post-2023 are significant.

Rowdeford School’s consultancy service delivers high quality training for local Schools, Colleges and Universities to understand better the needs of children and young adults with SEND. The school has already established numerous links with mainstream Primary and Secondary, and Special Schools. Rowdeford School already delivers alternative provision via their Plus programme (now accessed by approximately 45 students a week) and specialist SEND training and support to mainstream staff. Rowdeford also has excellent links and reputation with outside agencies. Travel time has been mentioned as a concern for some, however it is my experience that being in a semi-rural location can actually reduce anxiety and travel time despite being longer distance. I choose to travel from Swindon to work at Rowdeford because I love working within this amazing environment with such an excellent group of colleagues. It takes the same time to travel the 25 mile journey from Swindon to Rowdeford as it would to travel the 3 miles across Swindon as there is very little traffic and journeying through the fields and trees is a lovely way to start or end the day.

The provision at Rowdeford School is amazing; **the magic of Rowdeford** must be retained throughout any planned developments. I support the current one-school solution, on the Rowdeford site; however, it appears contradictory to shut Rowdeford School, only to open another school on the same site, when the school has such a fantastic reputation. **Growth, not closure, of Rowdeford School will help us to preserve the ethos and magic of the school, ensuring that it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.**

The school has always **worked closely with the Local Authority**; recently providing an extension to its designation to support the growth of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). More recently, it has been involved in developing resource base provision in partner primaries and a solutions-focused approach to increased provision for students requiring reception-age placements in September 2019. Next year we are already going to grow by 33%; Rowdeford will be providing education for approximately 180 students from September 2019.

Rowdeford School has a **remarkable and dedicated staff team** that have the energy, enthusiasm and vision to manage lessons in outdoor spaces, utilising animal and woodland areas. Staff are also highly competent in delivering lessons to students who are grouped both chronologically and based on need. **Rowdeford School has an excellent reputation and is well placed to achieve an ‘Outstanding’ grade at its next Ofsted inspection. Growth of Rowdeford School will help us to avoid losing specialist staff, preserving all of our expertise and fantastic practice, ensuring it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.**

Please join me to **ensure that Rowdeford School is retained and that it's outstanding practice and Outdoor Learning** is shared for the benefit of all students in Wiltshire. I sincerely believe that the **future of SEND provision is at Rowdeford**, and with the Local Authority we have the vision and drive to make this a reality.

Yours faithfully

[6.1.17 Vanessa Allen, Teacher, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

To whom it may concern:

I write in support the decision to use the Rowdeford site as the new centre for excellence and SEN.

Having worked in a wide variety of settings, including other SEN settings, I am confident that Rowdeford is the ideal location for the new development; it is in a unique rural position within quick and easy access of Devizes and so offers the best of both worlds. The woodlands, farm animals, outdoor learning centre, river and spacious site give our students the best opportunities to explore the world around them whilst learning in a way that suits them best. The effects of a calming, natural environment have been well documented.

Because of our rural position we work harder than a lot of schools to ensure that we have strong links with the community and that our students interact on a regular basis with 'the wider world'. Our Citizenship programme of study also ensures that our pupils feel that they are taking an active and useful part in their society.

For many years the school has proved that it is flexible in its approach to inclusion; PMLD students have always been an integral part of the school community, the priority being to focus on their ability rather than disability. They are embraced and accepted by our students who understand our school values, which include respect and kindness. The school is forward thinking and has doubled its size effectively, proving that we have the experience to remain open and do the same in the near future.

Our students leave us as happy, confident young people who have high levels of self-worth; Rowdeford is a location that promotes and nurtures this.

I trust that you will continue to support the decision to keep Rowdeford open and merge the three excellent schools at our site.

Vanessa Allen

[6.1.18 Terri Chard, Deputy Head Teacher, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Councillor/Cabinet Member

Re: Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

I am writing in my support of the proposal to site the new Centre of Excellence at Rowdeford School. I would like for the proposal to be adapted to recognise that for improved continuity of service and to ensure smooth transition, that Rowdeford should remain open.

Rowdeford has proved over the years to be flexible enough to double in numbers over the last 10 years. Recently will have seen a further increase in PAN in 2019/20 and a change in designation.

The flexibility of staff will be the difference between this venture being a success and becoming a true Centre of Excellence. I am concerned that if the proposal is adopted without this change, than retention of current Rowdeford staff will be difficult.

Rowdeford is fully staffed and has never had any difficulties with recruitment. This is an amazing school in a great environment that promotes staff mental health and well-being. Personally I took an £10,000 pay cut in order to work in such an inspiring setting.

I believe the Rowdeford Site has got a good mix between site security and aesthetics. I have worked in Mainstream schools with 10ft high perimeter fencing surrounding the school. The net outcome is that students and staff feel like they are living and working in a prison. I also believe that these physical barriers give a false sense of security to students and do not teach them how to keep themselves safe. At Rowdeford, we spend time teaching students about road safety and how to keep themselves safe on the site. Parents and students unanimously state that their children is safe and feels safe within the school

At Rowdeford school we have a number of students with conditions that often constitute medical emergencies eg epilepsy, severe nut allergies, tracheotomies etc. On average, it takes 3 minutes for an ambulance to arrive from Devizes. The school is used to merging health and education together to provide a wrap around service. We already have Virgin care staff based at the school to support our young people and this would only grow in the new proposal.

Yours faithfully
Terri Chard

[6.1.19 Staff member, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Directors, Commissioners and Councillors overseeing the consultation of Specialist Schools in North Wiltshire,

I am the (job role) at Rowdeford School. I have been in this role just over 18 months. I commute over an hour from (x) in Dorset to attend work every day. I am writing in support of the proposal to keep Rowdeford School open and to expand the one school site as we move towards 2023.

One of Rowdeford School's unique strengths is its outdoor provision and how it is used to develop community links, with other stakeholders, both within and outside the county. Outdoor Learning is so important because it opens doors to rewarding and sustainable futures in the community and workplaces for young people with special needs. Working outdoors helps students to learn more about themselves and as they grow in confidence, they learn to set goals and tackle challenges calmly, learning to be more positive. Students also learn how to look after themselves and stay safe so that they can be an active part of their local communities.

We are committed to delivering a mainstream support programme (Plus Programme) that recognises the need for smooth, calm and secure transition between educational environments, in addition to supporting pupils in their mainstream school life and as they prepare for college. Our Plus Programme is a fully staffed suite of outdoor courses designed to offer learning experiences and qualifications that emphasise the development of social communication, alongside functional skills, better preparing pupils for the challenge of change and the diversity of the community in which they live and learn.

The Plus Programme is just one part of the many great educational provisions currently at the school and it provides a strong link with 12 secondary mainstream schools and 5 Primary Schools in the North Wiltshire Area. With the capacity to grow this in the future. We currently have a waiting list for our Key Stage 3 provision and are already looking to expanding this provision in the near future. The Rowdeford mission is to be at the forefront of specialist education; providing excellent learning in inspirational environments and developing core values, communication and independence. The Plus Programme is just one example of how Rowdeford does this and will continue to do this in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment.
Kind regards

[6.1.20 Nick Fletcher, Teacher and Staff Governor, Rowdeford School \(28.02.19\)](#)

Dear Councillor/Cabinet Member

Re: Local Authority Special School Consultation – Rowdeford School

In response to your consultation, debating the future of SEND provision across the county and particularly the schools provision for North Wiltshire, (including Rowdeford Rowde) I want to demonstrate my support for the proposal of a one school solution at the existing Rowdeford site and make the following comments.

As a teacher and staff governor at Rowdeford, I am passionate about the future of both SEND provision and the school environment and community in which I work. I was therefore delighted that Directors, Commissioners and Councillors envisaged a future that not only includes, but also further develops the school. It is my belief that the significant investment earmarked for SEND school provision allows for a further development of Rowdeford to create a community hub, integrating our students into a vibrant Wiltshire where everybody matters. I would add that we are uniquely and centrally placed within the county and that the right investment and development will allow us to invite the community to join us and be a part of our daily routines. Co-operation is an underpinning value of the school and a centre of excellence at our site is a resource that we are excited to develop in collaboration and share.

Another unique feature of the Rowdeford site is the opportunity to develop outdoor learning opportunities. We already offer a curriculum that incorporates our outdoor facilities into all areas of learning. Additionally our space allows us to deliver specific courses, such as the Duke of Edinburgh award; Land based studies qualifications and our own tree awards curriculum. The importance of such courses cannot be understated and they are part of a desirable offer that we extend to primary and secondary schools across Wiltshire, through our Plus Programme. This outward facing programme of study offers mainstream students,

struggling to access their curriculum the chance to develop social and communication skills and engage with confidence in their community. The loss of outdoor space on the scale of the Rowdeford estate would be immutable. Furthermore, the negative affect of such a lost opportunity to develop the learning and outdoor experience of all Wiltshire residents would be immeasurable. Outdoor Learning is so valuable to students, particularly those with SEND, because it helps them learn more about themselves, developing self-esteem confidence and a sense of self in relation to space. I offer this as further evidence that the Local Authority is correct in its initial decision and I assume has considered these huge benefits.

That the Local Authority recognises our potential is clear at this stage of the consultation, but I feel it is important to reiterate how well suited our school is to expansion and development. We have a loyal and committed board of governors, parent body and charity trust who have worked over many years to develop our school community. In both physical and ideological terms, we have grown together and changed as SEND has changed within the county. In my opinion, these strong relationships demonstrate a flexible community mind-set, which is open and welcoming. It is further evidence of Rowdeford's suitability for the delivery of the future vision of SEND in Wiltshire. Our school is about more than the buildings, epitomised by those long-standing relationships we have nurtured. The opportunity to repay that loyalty through a growth in our services – perhaps the development of a community farm and café, perhaps through arts spaces and regularly attended performance events, made possible by our expansion is exciting. Particularly because at its heart we would be realising the education of so many students with diverse needs, enhancing their quality of life and equipping them with the appropriate skills for their independent futures. We are also keen to invite along anybody who wants to join us for some or that entire journey.

My final comment is perhaps related to the most important voice of all, that of the pupils. Throughout the process so far, we have kept our pupils informed and involved regarding the consultation. The concepts are difficult and changing; our school council body has taken ideas from meetings and shared them in class. Additionally, the pupils have met with members of the council and represented their thoughts with clarity and maturity. Last year pupils were keen to represent what they loved about the school to a television reporter and this year, music students have embraced their Rowdeford identity: you will receive their statement and contribution sent to you separately. Overall, their feeling is one of Excitement mixed with uncertainty. Pupils I have spoken with hate any notion that the school might close, but love the idea of making new friends and of developing facilities in areas of the curriculum that they currently enjoy. Many of the children at Rowdeford like the idea that we may have younger children to help and work with and some would be keen on the idea of staying beyond 16. In other words, they have plans and aspirations that go beyond their own horizons, because they want to share the things they love about Rowdeford – the animals, the woods, the music and fun with as many people as possible. From a body of students who overall find that level of communication complex and confusing, I find that message impressively empathic. It would seem that they are urging for growth, not closure, of Rowdeford School, ensuring that it the council retains it ideologically as well as physically for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.

Yours faithfully
Nick Fletcher
Teacher and Staff Governor

6.1.21 Staff member, Rowdeford School (28.02.19)

Dear Sirs,

Concerning the consultation, I want to make the following points:

I agree with your proposal but want to raise how Rowdeford already holds strong community links. Teachers, other staff and every single student at the school actively use the community buildings of Rowde, the church, the local shop and the Rowdy Cow cafe, being prime examples. The local bus service, which incidentally runs right past the school, is regularly used for 'Learning Outside the Classroom' experiences, particularly in the town of Devizes. These connections are by no means passive: everyone at Rowdeford School actively engages with the community.

Recently, during work experience (offered to all Year 11 pupils, regardless of their learning needs and difficulties) the HFT Day Care centre in Rowde, provided an amazing learning experience for many of our students. Again, this highlights the visible community links available to Rowdeford School.

For those with concerns about medical emergencies, I have personal first-hand experience of needing to access the ambulance service for a pupil at the school. There was no delay in the services attending to the needs of this pupil with a potentially, life-threatening condition.

An amazing team of people work across the whole site. They are all willing to, not only share their expertise, but they will also openly welcome any advice or sharing of skills from other educational experts. Outside agencies also have strong links with the school: referrals are regular occurrences.

Rather than close the site and re-open as a completely new entity I would like to see the merger of three schools, to reflect the amazing work, and dedication of all staff at all of the three sites.

6.1.22 Zoe Back, Life Skills Coordinator, Rowdeford School (28.02.19)

Dear Director/Commissioner/Councillor

I would like to take this opportunity to present my thoughts and experiences about Rowdeford School and the future of our school. I am the Life-skills Co-ordinator and have been since 2017. Having taught in SEN environments since 2002 in Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham and Melksham I visited this school and was blown away by what I saw. The first opportunity that came available, I applied and fortunately got a job here.

What I have discovered since being here is that children relish being outside, making the most of Rowdeford's unique and special landscape. They are always well prepped and guided in these many spaces meaning they are confident to explore safely. They are provided with outside opportunities on a daily basis that develop their confidence and support them to take

risks which enrich their personal development and prepare our students for life after Rowdeford.

Many of our students have challenging behaviour, some of which can make them feel like escaping their environment. Our setting allows these children to safely escape their environment and meet their sensory need by accessing the many sensory opportunities such as our woods, garden, animals, trim trail and climbing frames. Without these wide open and sensory environments these students may not be able to cope in a classroom as well as they currently do. I strongly believe that this amazing space could enhance the lives of many more young people in years to come.

Within my curriculum area expertise of Life skills, there are many opportunities within the curriculum that explicitly mean engaging with our community. Students are encouraged and supported to use public transport to access Devizes, Chippenham and Bath. They learn the skills in class about being safe and appropriate behaviour for being out and about then put it in to practise at least 3 times in KS4. They access local shops, local sports centres, garden centres, supermarkets, shops and parks.

I personally feel that certain adaptations would be needed for a one school plan;

- we would need another access point for school so that the many taxis needed to bring students to school can access school in 2 different ways,
- address speed limits and width of pavement outside of the school to further encourage local engagement both children in to community and community in to Rowdeford
- engage all 3 schools in joint planning for future to share all expertise and not lose plethora of knowledge and staff retention,

I believe that there are some very exciting opportunities and enterprises that can be developed with the future cohort that a one school plan offers:

1. Offer a laundry service to local pubs and restaurants
2. Advertise our boarding facility to foreign students/ summer schemes / the residential element of the National Citizenship service Rowdeford students change beds etc.
3. Use fruit/ veg/ flowers/ produce to regularly sell at Devizes Thursday market with students selling
4. Garden cafe- built in a sustainable and eco-friendly way in orchard, maybe built with Rowdeford wood
5. Park run- students could be involved with some admin around this
6. Fully inclusive Woodland nursery- toddler group that access woods with helpers that are Rowdeford students

Yours Faithfully

Zoe Back

Rowdeford Teacher, Life Skills Co-ordinator

6.1.23 Staff member, Rowdeford School (28.02.19)

Dear Councillor/Cabinet Member

Growing Rowdeford School, not closing Rowdeford School, will mean that young people with special educational needs within Wiltshire receive exceptional provision and are given the education that will enable them to take their rightful place in and for society.

Rowdeford's Values Based Ethos, which is part of the International Values Based Education movement, is something that takes many years to develop and embed. (Please see www.valuesbasededucation.com). Rowdeford School is an exemplar school that other schools are advised to visit to observe Values Based Education in action. At Rowdeford students learn even more than academic and life skills, they learn to flourish as the human beings the society of the future so desperately needs. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities face many challenges, not least to take their rightful place in society to make it inclusive and better because of their involvement. Rowdeford students take with them 6 core values that they learn to embody during their time at Rowdeford. These are cooperation, responsibility, integrity, resilience, respect and kindness. The curriculum, role modelling, ethos and community links that make this possible have been developed over many years. Growing Rowdeford will mean more students will benefit from this incredible experience. Closing Rowdeford will lose so much of what has been gained.

Rowdeford has the most phenomenal site: a walled garden where students grow food and flowers, a large woodland, animal areas, a willow walk, an orchard where students gather fruit, expansive fields, views of world class countryside... and much more. The way that students benefit from this is even more than the sum of its parts. Students develop mental wellbeing by being immersed in natural beauty and experiencing their environment mindfully. Students develop their academic, social and life skills through carefully planned activities in the outdoors that enables much richer learning than a classroom environment alone can achieve. Learning happens when something changes in the long term memory; taking part in deep, memorable and inspiring activities in the outdoors makes this possible even for students who find learning very difficult. This provision takes more than just a site, it takes the expertise, dedication and experience that Rowdeford has. To close Rowdeford would lose so much of this. To enable Rowdeford to grow will mean that many young people with diverse and complex special educational needs and disabilities will benefit from this exceptional and unique combination of the magic of a site and the magic of a team who has made the site truly work for and with people with special educational needs. It will be more than a tragedy if this was lost now; the implications would ripple far into the future.

That Rowdeford has such an amazing site is a good fortune, that it is so well placed to serve most parts of the county is remarkable. It is easily reachable for students, families and outside agencies. Being outside of a town means it avoids the congestion problem of so many sites and yet it is in easy reach of Devizes, Calne, Trowbridge and Chippenham. If the one school solution is the desired option, then a site that is both reachable and exceptional must be the place to be. Rowdeford also has the space to grow the 21st century provision young people with special educational needs and disabilities need and deserve.

Rowdeford School already has a far reaching training and consultancy service that this year alone has trained hundreds of delegates. This service is highly regarded and ensures that the essential messages and strategies for educating people with special educational needs reaches students beyond its school gates, helping to provide excellence throughout the county and beyond. Rowdeford School also educates and supports vulnerable students from other schools who attend its Plus Programme. Its sphere of influence is a powerful force for good. Closure risks losing this extraordinary influence that makes a tangible difference to countless young people with special educational needs.

The decision about whether to close Rowdeford School or enable it to grow has enormous ramifications into the future, far beyond the duration of those of us caught up in contributing to this decision. It is a legacy for future generations of young people and their families troubled and blessed by the realities of special educational needs. It is our collective duty to ensure the magic of Rowdeford School's site, ethos and expertise, that has taken generations to develop, remains. Growing Rowdeford School will mean that young people with special educational needs within Wiltshire receive exceptional provision and are given the education that will enable them to take their rightful place in and for society.

Rowdeford School must be part of future SEND provision and has the vision and drive to grow and meet the needs of more young people.

Yours faithfully,

[6.1.24 Teresa Ollerhead, Admin Officer, Rowdeford School \(28.02.19\)](#)

Good morning,

Following on from the consultation meeting held at Rowdeford; I felt compelled to write again.

One question raised as a concern for parents of children with very extreme medical conditions and how we would manage in an emergency as they feel we are somewhat remote, we have called for an ambulance on a few occasions and they have arrived within minutes. A child with a severe medical condition would most likely need to be transferred to a specialist hospital - we are just as close here at Rowdeford to all the main hospitals but have the added advantage of a helicopter being able to land right on our site because of the open spaces we already have, meaning a much quicker response from the emergency services.

In response to a question raised on how we feel we could work with the 2 other special schools we are currently sharing knowledge of our practices with the other schools.

Only last week 2 members of the admin team from one of the other special schools came to see how we do the annual review process with a view to be able to streamline-their own process. We have been invited to go to their school to see how best we can share knowledge. Being one school here at Rowdeford would mean we can build on this and learn from each other to make school a success.

Please consider all the wonderful unique facilities we have and keep a school on the Rowdeford site for the benefit of students, staff and the local community.

Best wishes
Teresa Ollerhead
Admin officer

6.1.25 Liz Clarkson, HR & Finance Admin Officer, Rowdeford School (01.03.19)

Good afternoon,

Further to the Consultation meeting at Rowdeford School on Tuesday 26th I would like to add, I have on more than one occasion called an ambulance for students at Rowdeford School. We have never been in a position where the ambulance has been delayed due to our location. I would also like to add that in a very serious emergency due to the nature of the site the air ambulance would have plenty of space to land successfully.

Kind regards
Liz Clarkson
HR & Finance Admin Officer

6.1.26 Rosie Berry, Former Governor, Rowdeford School (01.03.19)

I write to you today as a former Governor of Rowdeford School (20 years, of which 10 as Chairman), a Trustee of Rowdeford Charity Trust (5 years) and a member of the Rowdeford Garden Fair Committee (ongoing).

As you already know, I was delighted to learn at the end of last November that the LA has recognised the need to keep a school on the Rowdeford site and that Wiltshire Council will be investing £20m to provide for the future of SEND in the north of the county.

The outdoor provision already available at Rowdeford is second to none and is so very important to special needs pupils. I would mention here that the annual Garden Fair will continue to be part of the Wiltshire social calendar through to 2023, raising in excess of £10,000 each year – a further £50,000 towards outdoor learning!

The **magic of Rowdeford** must be retained throughout any planned developments. The ethos of Rowdeford School, its values based curriculum and the outdoor learning it promotes must be preserved. I am strongly opposed to the need for this school to close in 2023; it appears to me to be contradictory to shut Rowdeford School, only to open another on the same site, when the current school has such a fantastic reputation.

Rowdeford School is already set to grow with a larger than expected cohort as from September 2019 and this natural growth can be extended to accommodate the development planned. This will help preserve the **magic** and ethos of the school and ensure that it is retained for the benefit of all complex needs students in the future.

Finally, the hard working, dedicated and highly qualified specialist staff are an essential part of the whole process and they need to be retained at all costs in order to preserve their expertise and excellent practice for the future.

I am closing in repeating my hope that the ethos of Rowdeford School, its values based curriculum and 'Outstanding' practice, and the outdoor learning it promotes are retained through the **growth of the present school** and not the closure and potential loss of its special magic.

Yours sincerely,

Rosie Berry

[6.1.27 Staff member, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

Dear Sir/Madam

Please consider for the consultation:

I am a (job role) at Rowdeford School. I joined the staff team in September 2017 in a temporary role and now hold a permanent position as I felt so inspired and passionate about what was being achieved at Rowdeford that I wanted to continue to be a part of what was being achieved. I would like you to consider the positive impact that the staff have on the young people they educate, as they prepare them for life beyond their schooling, and enable them to thrive.

Having worked in special education previously, I was aware of how education settings differ and left my previous school feeling disillusioned by what could be achieved in special education. I adore working at Rowdeford, working with a committed staff team who have the children at the heart of all they do. It is testament to the commitment of these staff that so many of the employees have worked at the school for such long periods of time, many serving for 10 years and beyond. The ethos within the school makes for a wonderful learning environment where children feel safe to be who they are.

In my role as (job role) I have enjoyed having the facility of a beautiful walled garden to encourage children to grow their own fruit and vegetables, pick them, cook and eat them, this simply wasn't possible in my last school which had no outside space for such provision.

I adore the final stage of my commute to work, when I travel through the village of Rowde, free of traffic congestion, and drive up the spectacular drive, bordered with beautiful flowers and inspiration - this is the same view the children see in their taxi's on their commutes.

I feel passionately that a school like Rowdeford can be inspirational and remain at the forefront of specialist education, leading where others follow.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards

[6.1.28 Staff member, Rowdeford School \(27.02.19\)](#)

I begin this email with what may seem like a bias opinion only because I have first-hand experience of how well Rowdeford school is in caring for the children with special needs,

These children are cared for and loved by Teachers, TAs, MDSAS, kitchen staff, and Site Team even office staff and for many it's the only support and offer of care that they get due to an unstructured home life,

This school is NEEDED and the children NEED this school.

I ask you to put yourself in their shoes for one day, where would you like to be at the end of the day to feel your cared for and have a safe place where people don't Give up on you...

Please give these children the help and support and show you care by not taking away that help and support that helps them be part of this world that society says they should fit into.

6.1.29 Teri Chard, Deputy Head Teacher, Rowdeford School (28.02.19)

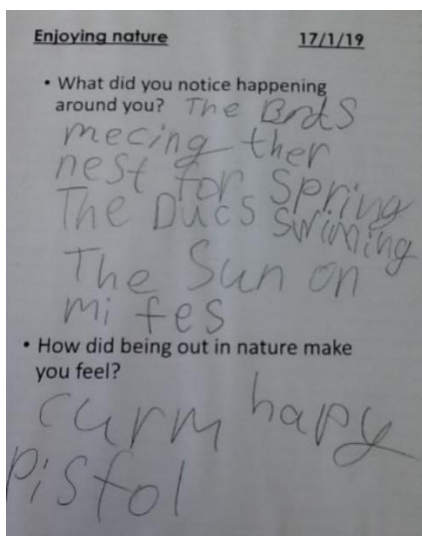
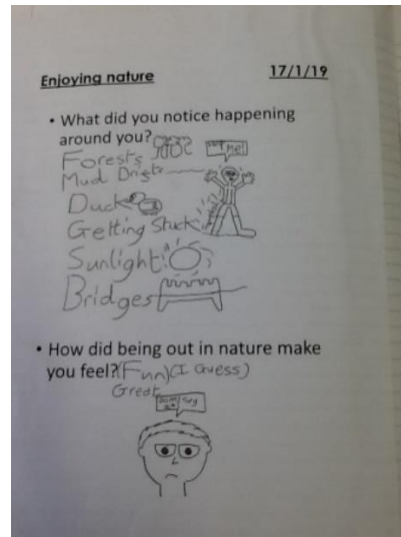
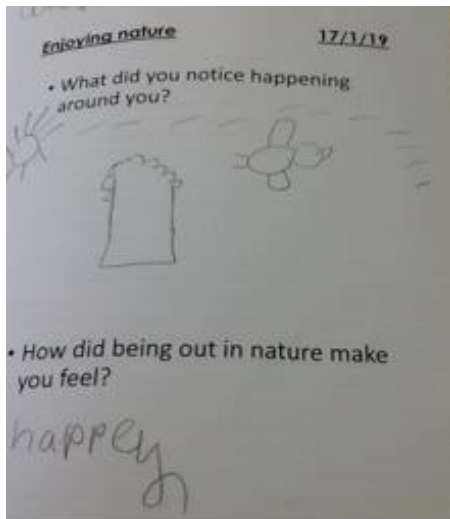
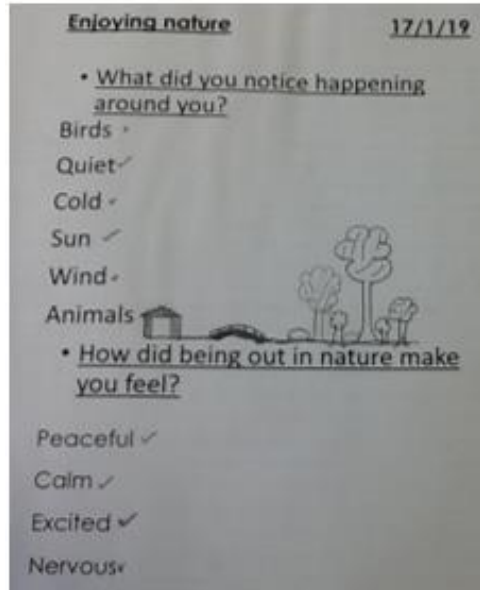
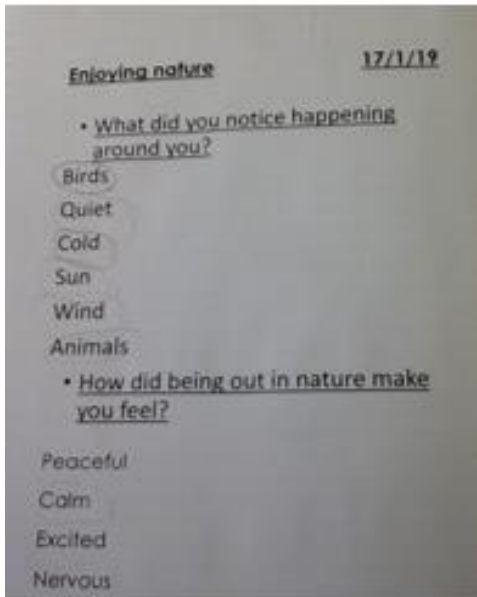
I would like to submit some further evidence. I have attached pictures of work from a group of Yr 8 students after one of their Learning Outside the Classroom lesson.

These are students with varying conditions including; autism, selective mutism, Duchennes MD, ADHD, including a wheelchair user. Some of these students are in Local authority care and most have suffered previous childhood trauma.

This particular lesson was on enjoying nature and being outside. They were taken on a ramble and then asked to just stop, feel the sun on the face and live for the here and now. A Mindfulness technique recognised to improve mental health and reduce damage caused by the stress hormone; cortisol.

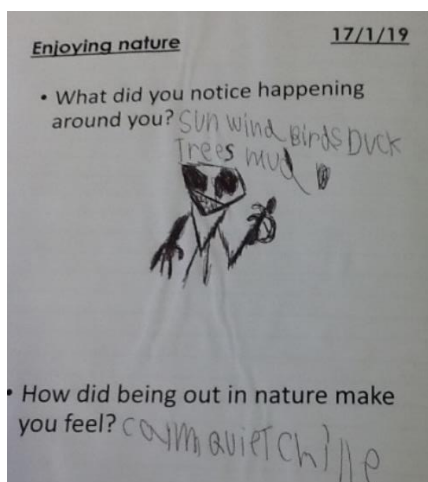
I believe that the Rowdeford site is what makes the experiences our children have unique. By basing the new school at Rowdeford, and using Rowdeford staff who have experience at using nature as a therapeutic tool, the new school really would be a HUB for excellence and an inspiring model that could be recognised on a Nationally stage.

T.L Chard
Deputy Headteacher

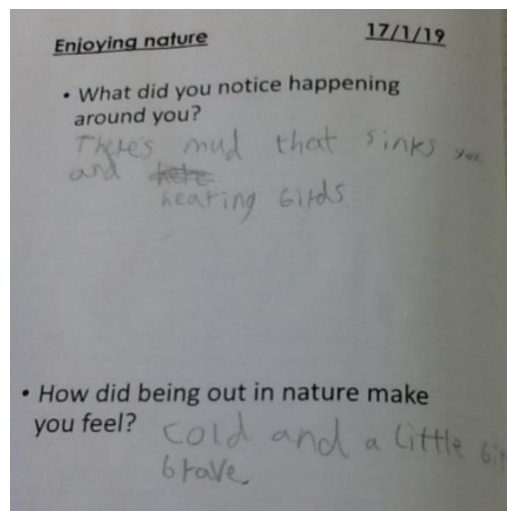


The birds making their nest for the spring.
 The ducks swimming.
 The sun on my face

Calm, happy, Peaceful



Sun, wind, birds, ducks, trees, mud
Calm, quiet, chilled



There's mud that sinks you and nesting birds
Cold and a little bit brave

6.1.30 Teri Chard, Deputy Head Teacher, Rowdeford School (27.02.19)

Dear Counsellors,

I have already emailed my full response to the consultation, but following the meeting at Rowdeford School last night, I would like to add the following.

I am hugely concerned about the possibility of the consultation process being extended. I believe that there is a significant impact for all those stakeholders involved; students, parents and staff. I have witness the emotional toll that not having a final decision has had on the students at our school. Although anxious students and parents are being supported by staff, those same staff are also in fear of losing their jobs. This has had a notably effect on the mental health of both the staff and student body.

I am concerned that the Legal challenge posted by the other two schools will only prolong this situation which is not too the benefit of anyone, especially not the current children at the three schools concern or the future parents and children that are being left without a secure future.

I implore the Council to ensure that the consultation finishes in a timely manner. Allowing us to return our focus onto what really matters; getting the best SEND provision for all Wiltshire children and their families.

Terri Chard
Deputy Headteacher
Rowdeford School

6.1.31 Jo Darlington, TA to the Plus Programme (28.02.19)

Dear Consultation Panel

Further to the meeting on Tuesday, which was chaired by Alan Stubbersfield, I write to summarize the points that I raised as a Plus Programme TA and a qualified Chartered Surveyor. I have also attached the document that I sent in my email on the 10th February 2019, which has some additional information that was not raised at the meeting.

I would be very grateful if you could acknowledge the following points, which will have been recorded at the meeting:

- Rowdeford has many existing strong community links; the Plus Programme alone has students who visit on a daily basis from many local secondary schools, work with local wildlife groups/the Canal Trust; use the local area for walks/farm visits /wildlife surveys; local businesses for refreshments and cooking ingredients. This is just a snapshot of one ancillary part of Rowdeford School – the main school has even stronger links with the local community (including FORS), local businesses, places of worship, museums, theaters, art establishments, voluntary organizations to name just a few. The school is constantly forging new links too, with events such as the existing Garden Fair and future events such as the Park Run.
- The importance of learning outside the classroom (LoTC) for all SEND children cannot be marginalized – you can bring the necessary build environment to Rowdeford, but you cannot replace the rural facilities and LoTC opportunities this school has.
- Future opportunities at Rowdeford are exponential. A larger school with the proposed funding and built facilities will allow diversification into many other areas, including opportunities such the garden center and work alongside WALT raised at the meeting. Expansion to include enterprises such as these would generate income and vocational training for the students.
- The consultation process must consider the longer term; Rowdeford School offers the best sustainable solution.
- Staff will travel to Rowdeford, which is in the most central position. Furthermore a coordinated travel plan to one school, based around the existing excellent school at Rowdeford, could be extended to offer staff travel opportunities; especially those looking after the more dependent students. A rural setting and animals allow students to reduce their anxiety; such a setting consequently increases the wellbeing of staff, not only by reducing student anxiety but also by allowing the staff opportunities for mindfulness in a wonderful environment.

These points and the ones attached are clear evidence in favour of one school based around the existing Rowdeford School Site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further clarification or queries.

Kind regards

Jo Darlington, TA to the Plus Programme

6.2 Emails received from Parents/Carers and General Public

6.2.1 (13.01.19)

Dear Wiltshire Council,

My son attends Larkrise in Trowbridge. I agree the school is not big enough however your vision is NOT the vision of the staff, parents and other professionals. To move the children from the area would be detrimental to their development, here in their home town they're learning those life skills.

What use is learning how to catch a bus out in the Devizes area? And then have no idea how to apply that skill in the home town you live in?

This has not been thought out, it is not in the best interest of the children, it's about Councillor Laura Mayes and her team of "Yes" people doing exactly what they want with absolutely no regard for the people she is supposed to be serving.

Would you ship all the local primary school children out into the sticks? No! So why pick on the most vulnerable.

I'm really concerned about the post 16 education, there is no definable answer here, what exactly is proposed? At Larkrise my son could stay there until he was 19, they could prepare him for adulthood in the community he actually lives in.

What about the links with Larkise Farm?

The local sports centre? My son needs to know how to access the facilities in the town he lives in.

You are institutionalising our children, this is not the Victorian Times! Wiltshire Council were aware the majority voted against a one school option, why have you gone against the wishes of the people who voted?

It seems to be you are breaking your own inclusion policy, because of money.

Wiltshire Council's motto.....

Where Nobody matters.

Regards

6.2.2 (14.01.19)

I do not know if this is the correct forum or approach but having reading the DfE guidance for proposers and decision makers on "Opening and closing of maintained schools" dated November 2018 I am some what confused.

Please can it be clarified and confirmed

If, when and how

the section 16(1) of the EIA 2006 statutory consultation on closures of community special schools as outline in appendix A (page 27) took place?

While I attended a meeting discussing options for Wiltshire SEND provision, as a parent I cannot recollect any reference to this being specific or statutory consultation on the closure of St. Nicholas school which is listed with Ofsted as a Community Special School.

I actually came away from the meeting I attended feeling the parental concerns and unease of removing provisions from Chippenham had been understood and acknowledged. And while I felt the closure of St Nicholas was possible, if this were to occur the relocation would most likely be to a larger site in Chippenham.

My assumption following that meet had been for funding reason 2 of the 3 existing locations would be retained while the third would relocate within its immediate vicinity or grow to address the real need for additional capacity in county.

Which in no way represents the proposed reality.

Regards.

6.2.3 (16.01.19)

I've read the proposals and it is clearly an absolutely ridiculous, thoughtless plan that has no benefits for the children or their families.

These are already vulnerable children and they need to be close to their families, ideally educated in/close to the towns where they live. Building one large school and making everyone travel is an abominable idea. The money for the new build and subsequent travel should be saved and invested into the existing schools.

If the council truly have the best interests of the children at the heart of the plans for their future education then they need to listen to the parents, the majority of whom are desperate not to move their children's school life away from where they live.

I would be terribly and desperately upset as a child and as a parent to have to travel every day, potentially, long distances. Our healthy children with normal learning needs are exhausted by the hours of a regular school day and they generally get the privilege of having a school very close to their home. How exactly does having additional needs make the commute easier? Clearly it makes it more difficult. You are in effect ostracising these children and their families, punishing them for needing a different type of education. If we throw in the 'discrimination' word, does this make you listen?

Consider, if it were you, would you really want to be forced into a job for 14 years with a lengthy journey to work? I certainly would not.

Is the aim to drive these children out of school and be home educated to save money? Then that's exactly how it appears. It's a cruel, thoughtless plan that benefits only your budgets.

Please pay heed. If you don't have school age children, you really ought not to be deciding on their fate. Listen to the parents. Please.

6.2.4 (17.01.19)

Dear Sir/Madame

It feels like the approach of combining the pre-consultation on the new school with the statutory notice of closure of the existing is detrimental to the quality of response to both. And particularly means the closure proposal includes several displacement options but does not provide a committed proposal for pupils including my daughter attending one of the closing schools. Is it not expected that we should be able to consider and comment on the amalgamation proposal as a whole at the same time.

Given the cabinet vote had no mandate to consult on school closure and stated that the closure notices would be subsequent to consultation on the new school, this was my expectation and understanding of the mandate given. The following is submitted with incomplete facts and information. I must protest that I am being required to comment at this time on the quality of the closure proposals with incomplete facts, in the assumption that this will not be rectified I will comment based on a seeming out of process and inadequate proposal.

Before commenting on the closures and opening of the schools I believe some clarity need to be sought as one huge concern I have is the obscuring and misalignment of specific groups views.

Transport needs to be compared to a plan that retains all 3 North Wiltshire school with additional capacity at Rowdeford to allow North Wiltshire children to be school in North Wiltshire with South Wiltshire children schooled in South Wiltshire.

This is a big plan with a huge scope. Unlike South Wiltshire with 1 principle settlement supporting Wiltshire's needs, North Wiltshire has two principal settlements which lack at least 1 key amenity, a major hospital., this very fact is at the heart of a number but by no means all of the objections and concerns already raised. Particularly for parents of PMLD students.

Before considering the new consolidated school a significant number of distinctly different groups of interested parties need to be identified. As a first pass for my use I have the following (and this is not exhaustive as some parents or prospective parents may fit into more than one grouping).

The groups of pupils/parents requiring primary and secondary SEND provisions at the existing 3 schools

Trowbridge principle settlement parents and prospective parents

Chippenham principle settlement parents and prospective parents

Trowbridge principle settlement catchment parents and prospective parents

Chippenham principle settlement catchment parents and prospective parents
Devizes area catchment and locations with reduce point to point travel after the new school opens parents and prospective parents
Swindon/Bath principle settlement catchment parents and prospective parents,
example Cricklade

Larkrise primary children parents
St Nics primary children parents
Out of county primary children parents

Larkrise secondary children parents
St Nics secondary children parents
Rowdeford secondary children parents
Out of county children parents

each grouping needing to be identified and their distinct issues, preferences, even rights and expectation in the outcomes established.

For parental engagement it seems fair that trip to school which is further or requires more legs/costs than accessing the 2 principle settlement additional mileage or costs incurred reaching the Rowdeford location should be reimbursed for every parent for the whole life of the school.

Within a grouping there will be varying degrees of support or objections to the proposal, based on the individual parents, or parties understanding of the risks, costs, issues, benefits, and rewards the school may provide, either personally or to the type or types of children attending the school. There may even be conflicts between personal benefit or lose and the best interests of society.

I do ask how the new school will be delivered as and maintained as a Centre of Excellence without increased per pupil funding relative to today.

I believe the most vocal objections come from 2 groups

Trowbridge principle settlement catchment parents
Chippenham principle settlement catchment parents
And the strongest parent support for the proposal will be from
Devizes area catchment and locations with reduce point to point travel.

As has been said there is no black and white here many views have merit. The establishment of a well design school at Rowdeford to supplement the current local and county provision is not a controversial issue. The closure and relocation of Trowbridge and Chippenham school provision to Rowdeford is.

As is the associated creation of a warehouse school.

350 pupils

500+ car parking space for staff and parents for whole school events, with 100-200 Blue badge spaces.

30-50 bus park

2 * 600-700 seater halls combining to 1200 seats for whole school events
50 classrooms based on 6-8 pupils a class
200-300 members of staff based on teacher, TA and others

This is not a small village school, this is a large business, which will be intimidating to parents and pupils alike. We'll never be able to know the staff and it could often feel like the school is not supporting but usurping us.

The problem is the plan is too big
a single primary school and secondary school provision to cover 600 sq miles, providing no viable in county choice for a significant subset of children.
Placed in the wrong location to align to inclusion and sustainability expectation once opened.

Given each school closure proposal should have included
"Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how the proposed arrangements will mitigate against increased car use."

Which is almost if not entirely omitted, given the transport mix between taxis and bus now and going forward could change and could even include significant increases for current Rowdeford students

And in general

"Proposers and decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account and that the proposal will not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups."

"They should bear in mind that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes."

"A proposal should also be considered on the basis of how it will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school."

Retaining principal settlement schools can align or doesn't move away from these targets, in controlling travel costs and journey times for pupils and parents, there is no obvious way accessibility for disadvantaged groups can be provided and maintained in or for a rural location, without ongoing perpetual guarantees enshrined in the charter and fabric of the school, that do not demean the recipients.

By the council only submission this is going to have significant cost and time implications to 20% of parents who will no longer live in the town the school is base in, this assumes the council isn't stating Rowdeford is in Devizes. These 20% of parents could be forced to run second cars or frequently use taxis which may not have been previously the case.

To a further significant number of Larkrise and St. Nics parents the new location will introduce additional time and costs in visiting, supporting the school and their child.

Along these lines to assist in scaling the issue it would be helpful to have anonymous data for the absence as absolute and percentages for children on roll from the 3 schools tabulated by school for

1. Medical/illness absence
2. Appointments
3. Children delivered or collected during the school day
4. Parental visit to school for

Meeting with school staff

Meeting with health professionals

PCP and other LA administration type meetings

Other meetings.

The belief is for Larkrise and St Nicholas parents there are significant numbers of meetings particularly for the PMLD children Rowdeford doesn't current support, therefore I struggling to see how on any level the requirement to mitigate against car usage for closure of Trowbridge and Chippenham provision can be achieved particularly assuming travel arrangements for current Rowdeford children are discounted and that the new primary and secondary school capacity at Rowdeford for Devizes and North East Wiltshire are not used to attempt to offset the harm done to the North and West of the county.

6.2.5 (18.01.19)

I already had much of this written prior to the issuing of the closure proposal for closure consultation.

While this is long and may in places be slightly repetitive it is developed over a period of weeks since realising WCC was despite parental feedback against and expectations proposing a single school for North Wilts by a greater margin that is requiring UK central government to attempt to deliver Brexit.

I am hoping it can be used to improve the quality and outcome of the consultation to ensure WCC are providing a plan fit for the future. And that the consultation ensures the plan is safe for the child, the parents and tax payers. Therefore the outcome need to be

A proposal which is fit for purpose

A proposal which will deliver on its intended benefits

A proposal which aligns to all government legislation

A proposal which endeavour to aligned to all government and professional best practices. Including but not limited to aspects like travel times, reduction in car usage, impact on all types of parents, school and class sizes, integration, community inclusion, faculties and resources.

A proposal that aligns and can deliver on current pupils true EHCP requirement

A proposal that is factual accurate to the real world.

A proposal that will resource and finance the school to enable it to become and maintain itself as a national centre of Excellence into the future as is in WCC aspirations for the plan

A proposal that encompasses the need of future generations EHCP

A proposal that is robust to challenged and associated costs available through legal and arbitration processes

A proposal that addresses all conceived transition issues around staffing, resourcing, upheaval and integration from the date of agreement, acceptance or even before through the next 6-8 years until the school is an established stable going concern.

A proposal that provides certainty to parent already with children at the 3 in scope school, including these children will be provided good quality education from a stable staff base, without increased staff churning and similar retention ratios from each school going into the new provision.

A proposal that will not be detrimental to existing pupils, new pupils with EHCP entering education in the next 4 -5 years before this additional capacity becomes available.

A proposal that demonstrates how it will support SEND within mainstream schools while not disrupting or harming pupils on roll at the warehouse school.

A proposal that guarantees current and new parents and pupils that the intrinsic expectation of attending existing schools will be maintained on migration to the new provision.

A proposal that doesn't fail any individual or group of pupils over the next 4-7 years.

A proposal where assumption and expectation in parental response have been model, and therefore take up and cost risks modelling and aligns to expectation.

A proposal that ensures that Rowdeford will not haemorrhage student numbers due to pupil churn due to parental concerns the new school will be too big, lack the current special qualities and therefore no longer worth the journey times to attend, and put pressure on WCC to place these children in local mainstream or out of county or independent secondary provisions.

A proposal which is not expose WCC to judicial review or legal actions.

A proposal which addresses concerns and issues with attendance and presence

A proposal which addresses adequately health considerations to mitigate against all harm, and maintain access and time at and in education relative to a 3 school approach.

A proposal which only includes commitments does not contain un-costed aspirations, expectations or promises.

A proposal which defines increase at the pupil level relative to current and avoids making grand sounding deliverables which are lower or substantially the same as today.

A proposal which joins up all aspects of Education, Health and Care needs of pupils.

To address the risks and responses of the parents through the legal processes available to them the consultation and subsequent proposal need to be

Seen to be open, adequate, transparent and fair seeking and obtain the views of all current and prospective parents, and aligning responses with the child's and parental needs.

Considering, addressing and aligning the proposal to the true needs and requirements based on evidence not expectations.

Issue to current or prospective parents of St Nics, Larkrise or Rowdeford

SLR - School Size

SLR - Class size concern

SLR - lost of parental Choice - particularly if there is a breakdown in trust between school and parent.

SLR - Post 16

SLR - Capacity to Learn - what if the school is wrong for any individuals student

SL - Travel

SL - Health

SL - Local Community

R - Building site noise disruption,

R - Change in character and culture

If there is not clear distinction between the parental and prospective parent views on the closure and change for each school then given the huge difference in impact and outcome for the different sites it would appear impossible for a decision maker to realistically attribute the wants, needs and aspirations of the different parents and could lead to an unsafe decision. Which could ultimately require WCC to revoke school closures and/or accept costs orders of magnitude larger than budgeted or anticipated.

For example has and will the physiological affect of moving children to the new site and out of "their town" been consider, will potential harm including grief and loss be reviewed by education physiologists and physiologists before closures are implemented.

As I read it even in the one school option provision within Trowbridge and Chippenham were recommended by the task force.

And to some degree it seems the parental unrest surfacing is the result of flaws highlighted in the task force report regarding pursuing the 1 school option.

Transport routing as well as I assume parental expectation are national guidelines will be followed and these could be further refined and enforced within EHCP due to medical, continence and wheelchair needs restricting speeds or routes and door to door durations, this in addition to the medical training and Certification requirements in carrying medically vulnerable children. This could require parental access to tracking technologies to gain trust restrictions are been adhered to.

Given the deficits in the current transport provision in terms of adheres to maximum times on transport what will be done now and in the future to ensure maximum guidelines are not being breached.

It is worth note that St. Nicholas school is less than 7 minutes off the Motorway and therefore teaching staff current appears to live along the M4 corridor. Whether these same members of staff would be happy to negotiate through Chippenham out to a Rowdeford is a matter of speculation.

Retaining any staff from Larkrise and St. Nicholas is a matter of speculation due to the additional time and costs. Particularly without reliable cheap regular public transport to the school.

Given throwing public money can't be the approach, how will parent and staff access to the site be provided and how will the new Rowdeford School recruit and retain the toted top quality staff.

I actually went to a school outside a village 7 miles from the nearest town, and while it was a community in and of itself, it was isolated from other communities. I could say educationally I benefited socially I suffered. The same appears likely to apply here, and depending on the individual needs it could be they could be well or badly met by the proposed school and location.

If this transpires to be a bad plan, and there are uncontrollable costs, or harm to educational or health who will be liable to the public and the courts and who will be picking up the bills. Particularly what happens if this single school prove unsafe and is closed by government.

How will the proposal address choices, how will it ensure it aligns to all applicable EHCP pupils in North Wilts.

Given the parental outrage of the plan as demonstrated in the statements, questions and demonstrations before the cabinet vote, how will the proposal demonstrate to these parents along with impartial judges or observers that it is truly well formed and fit for purpose, has consulted widely and used the consultation to define/refine the proposals to a point that they are safe for the current children, will support future generations, not going to cause unrest, disruption or distress, generate unintended consequence in term of children being home educated or requiring out of county or independent boarding or day education.

How will it demonstrate adherence to every aspect of government regulation and guidance to ensure there is no grounds for parents or others to mount legal challenges. Given I personally do not believe my primary school aged child transport has adhered to today best practice guidelines, how will any promises be enshrined and kept, and at who's expense.

Community use of the Chippenham hydro pool and Larkrise equivalent appear to require addressing in the proposal, therefore how will usage of the existing or equivalent Chippenham and Trowbridge based resources be preserved.

Have Wiltshire confirmed the legal situation with both particularly given the public donations used to build the St Nicholas pool within the last 10 years.

Whether there are any legal duties, it does seem there may be morally duties to maintain similar or enhance access to the public to a HydroPool in Chippenham and/or return money's donated.

To restated parents could vote with their feet and haemorrhage money out of this oversized school and out of county. or pursue home educating. Both routes would be indicative of a failure of the authority to listen and deliver appropriate provision

As I have read it All decisions on proposals to open or close a maintained school must be made with regard to the factors outlined in this guidance and follow the statutory process.

- Consultations should be carried out in term time to allow the maximum numbers of people to see and respond to statutory proposals.
- The decision-maker will need to be satisfied that any consultation carried out was appropriate, fair and open, and that the proposer has given full consideration to all the responses received.
- The decision-maker must consider the views of those affected by a proposal or who have an interest in it, including cross-LA border interests. The decision-maker should not simply take account of the number of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).
- In determining proposals decision-makers must ensure that the guidance on schools causing concern (intervening in falling, underperforming and coasting schools) has been considered where necessary.

Therefore prospective parents and those who will still have a child at the respective school when the schools close need to be identified and greater weight given to their views. Views of other current parents still holding significant value particularly if their views are general or relating to the impacts before the new school is established or during transition.

Regards

6.2.6 (20.01.19)

I find it unbelievable that you expect children with severe complex requirements to spend so long travelling to and from school. Have you ever spent time with these children? Have you even witnessed the journey they take now, let alone adding more time to this trip? Until you do, you have no right to be making these decisions on behalf of these children.

6.2.7 (27.01.19)

To who this may concern

As far as I'm concerned for people that's taking everything into account. I personally don't think you have. For I have 2 children that your planning to take away from a brilliant school. To then place into a school at a dangerous road. No matter the speed limits. How are they meant to access anything such as shops. I think really it's going to the olden days where autism people want to hide them away and that's what is clearly happening. My 2 and all these wonderful children deserve much better. If money is to upto date this new building I don't know why it can't be used to upgrade these wonderful schools. Which as far as I'm concerned they don't need upgrading St Nicholas school has great size groups and now thats going to change where there will be far more children. Many will get stressed and possibly ill because of it. I think the priority is way wrong. But then like I said it's going back to the olden days where

schools of special needs are hidden away from rest of the world. If you want to upgrade st Nicholas school stop the mum and baby swimming at their hydrotherapy pool as I'm finding that unfair for these children. So I importantly dont think you have put these children themselves into account.

(a very unhappy mum)

6.2.8 (04.02.19)

To whom it may concern

I can not comment on this current issue as it quite simply does not affect me (I do not live in the area mentioned, I live in Salisbury).

However, if you want to ask me a question about Salisbury schools provisions for children with special needs, then I will gladly tell you that more resources and funds are urgently required. Almost every consultation I have with my sons school begins with mention of why they can't do something instead of why they can do something. I am made to feel guilty about taking up precious time and resources for the education of my son.

6.2.9 (04.02.19)

Good Evening,

I have completed the survey but would like to add a couple of extra thoughts.

Once a child is deemed to be SEND then that doesn't always help with their self image or encourage them to feel good about themselves. I would prefer the money to be spent on providing support for all schools especially in providing training and support for teachers in mainstream schools to support the children. My daughter has attachment disorder and benefits for being around fellow students in a mainstream school. When she is an adult she will need to learn to thrive in society and not be seen as 'special'. I understand that this can sometimes mean disruption for other students and would be better to provide ways of minimising that with perhaps some focused classes in the main stream schools rather than separate the children out. It is also good for children without SEND to be with others who may not find life so easy. I believe the inclusion goes both ways and feel strongly about it.

Kind regards

6.2.10 (04.02.19)

Hi after reading your email I think its a wonderful plan but with one draw back and that is many children and older teenagers have NOT been statemented just been kept back a year and have been struggling ever since what will happen to those , One of my sons has repeatedly been refused a statement by Wiltshire Education he has been let down he is in a Hampshire special needs College with his older brother who has a statement and Hampshire gave Phillip this Statement not your self both of my sons experienced bulling in mainstream and this has caused so many problems for them both , I just hope other Wiltshire children and teenagers are given the help they need with in the plans you have drawn up , these are the thoughts of so many carers and parents I have spoken to in the last day or to , my sons are happy where they are and will be staying at the college in Hampshire for the next 2years has all the help they need is given with delay and they both are helped and encouraged . Thank you for contacting me about these plans I hope you find my comments helpful, kind regards

6.2.11 (07.02.19)

Dear Councillors,

I have completed the online survey and I have objected to the proposal in its current form, and I wanted to qualify that objection, as the online survey did not really allow for such.

My own daughter, (name of child), attended the Chippenham school some years ago. So I do have personal knowledge of the journey that families go through when they are faced with a child who requires support of this nature.

My main concern is that whilst the location of the new school meets the Council's criteria in terms of space, location etc., it will have the unintended consequence of removing and separating the pupils from the general routine of daily life in Chippenham. This regular and routine exposure and interaction with the community, is an intangible but essential benefit for everyone, and is in my view, responsible for the greater understanding and acceptance of special needs children, which is hugely beneficial to society as a whole, and especially to these children as they transition through life to become adults. Simply: they are seen, heard and accepted. It would be a great tragedy if these proposed Centres of Excellence, were to become places to visit, and not places in society.

Yours faithfully,

6.2.12 (08.02.19)

I am a parent of an 8yr old girl who has attended Larkrise School since she started school at the age of 4. The reason I moved to Wiltshire was because a lack of choice available elsewhere in the country meant I had no choice in my child's education and choice of school unless I wanted to condemn her to school day spent travelling 20 miles one way to school and the same journey back.

It seems this was a bad decision on my misguided part. The school I chose for (name of child) my daughter is now to be closed. It seems my move to the Wiltshire area has proved to be my downfall. The home we have just spent our entire life savings on making into a safe, secure environment for (name of child) is no longer viable with her school in Trowbridge (we live in Warminster by the way) due for closure. Now we are told she must go to a place called Rowde? Near Devizes? So (name of child)'s journey time has increased from an 8-mile journey to an 18 mile journey. Double it and that's 36 miles every day back and forward to school.

The very thing I never wanted my daughter to have to endure I'm told will happen because it's in everyone's best interest. The best interest of (name of child)? No definitely not. The best interest for her family? No absolutely not! Im one of the strange breed of people who doesn't drive therefore will never be able to travel to the Super school as there is no discernible public transport for me to use, unlike Trowbridge where I can take a train and short walk and be at Larkrise school for meetings and reviews when needed. The best interest of (name of child)'s education and welfare? No not at all,taking her out of the school that she has known all of her life so far. The teachers staff and surroundings that are all part of her day will be gone. Already she has to wake at 6.45am so we have enough time to prepare for school,breakfast,dressing,toileting. At What unearthly hour would she need to wake up to prepare to be transported to Rowde? And then there's the extra hours every single day of my

child's life that she will spend on transport instead of with me or getting the required sleep that children with special needs desperately require. Yes that's correct (name of child) has special needs, she is non verbal and severely autistic! Do any of you so called experts live the life of a child or carer like (name of child) and I do?

I don't support your plan of a super school of excellence! You talk of standards and achievement. You talk of a centre of excellence as if our children are commodities you can use like pawns in your game of Council politics and money saving. This will be the biggest mistake Wiltshire Council will make and I'm sure I'm not alone in saying I will not accept that you are making the right decision. What about our rights as parents to choose where our children go to school? Expand Larkrise expand St Nicholas. Build a new special school, give parents of special needs children more choices not no choice but to be forced and bullied into your view of a centre of excellence at a Super school. Super size Super expensive and Super over budget. Change your tired old slogan and tell the truth about what it will really mean for children like (name of child). (Name of child) has no voice and she can't tell you what it's like to spend hours on transport when you are tired and the bus is so noisy and overcrowded that she comes home in tears. Yet this is what you want to inflict on her. She will definitely have a much longer journey time which will undoubtedly mean a bigger bus with more pick ups and more delays. She will be sent away to Rowde, a place none of us have ever wanted to visit, a place unknown and farther away from her home. Remember there are 13 children living in Warminster attending Larkrise as I write this statement.

I do not support this decision, I do not want to see Larkrise school closed. I do not want my rights to choose taken away from me. Listen to what is being said. I also want a reply to this statement.

Your Sincerely

6.2.13 (09.02.19)

Dear Sir or Madam,

My son is in year 4 in a mainstream primary school. He is EHCP supported with a 1 to 1 TA. He is developmentally delayed and will need a specialist provision for his secondary placement.

His Autism and ADHD diagnosis makes him very easily distracted and his limited mobility means it takes a long time for him to move round his current school.

That along with the current relaxed atmosphere and wider focus of the school has left us considering the current Rowdeford school as the ideal placement for him.

I am extremely concerned about the size of the new school development at Rowdeford, I do not believe my son will be able to safely and efficiently manage himself around a campus of that scale and the distance and distractions will stop him from engaging with the learning experience that a school should offer.

What placements are Wiltshire Council considering for children who need a small focused learning environment in order to thrive?

We obviously need to consider our options in the next few years, but feel we may be forced to homeschool, as the current plan does not appear to give a choice of learning environment that is suitable for our son.

I would be extremely grateful if the consultation could consider children that need that small scale relaxed school atmosphere and the damage the council are doing to our childrens health, development and education by removing the current Rowdeford setting and other small scale sites (e.g. St Nick's) from the choices available, in order manage budget.

Are the council satisfied with the number of children's futures that are being risked to balance the books.

Yours Sincerely

6.2.14 (10.02.19)

Dear Lady Scott

FINAL CONSULTATION ON SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN WILTSHIRE

The purpose of this letter is to request your support for Rowdeford School in the current formal consultation on special school provision in North Wiltshire.

The initial Local Authority consultation resulted in a proposal last November that all three existing schools in North Wiltshire would close to make way for one new school on the Rowdeford site. This would be for approximately 350 students aged 3 to 16. Current buildings would be used, as appropriate, with 'new build' on fields at the back of the site. The proposal for special schools in Wiltshire would invest £20m in a new centre of excellence for pupils with special needs and disabilities. This would be developed at Rowdeford School near Devizes to match the excellent facilities provided for the South of Wiltshire at Exeter House, Salisbury. The final consultation is now in progress and ends on 1 March 2019. It could reverse the initial decision.

The Rowdeford School site is an exceptional resource, evidenced by almost 11,000 responses to the School's petition during the initial consultation phase and overwhelming support received throughout the pre-consultation period. The School provides outstanding facilities and is blessed with ample and varied space which will enable it to grow and accommodate the necessary increase in numbers both now and in the future. It is uniquely placed in a rural environment whilst retaining very close links to local communities. In addition, Rowdeford School incorporates an incomparable outdoor environment that includes substantial woodland, fields, orchards, gardens, a farm animal area and a very recently built Outdoor Learning study centre.

I respectfully request your support for the Rowdeford School solution to the provision of special needs education in North Wiltshire. Could you please lend your support to this amazing special needs school.

Yours sincerely

6.2.15 (11.02.19)

Dear Wiltshire Council

I am writing to you as a Trowbridge resident, a parent of a Larkrise student and a lecturer in Post-16 education.

Having read through your proposal for closing local special schools and relocating them to a large site at Rowdeford I am stating my strong opposition to this plan.

Community links and integration are crucial to our children. These need to be useful, relevant, meaningful and, most importantly of all, as natural as possible in their local environments. Your comment about community links being provided by the occasional visit to the cafe by local residents is, quite frankly, embarrassing and shows a staggering lack of understanding of what inclusion really means.

However, my two main areas of contention are parental choice and Post-16 provision.

Notwithstanding catchment areas every mainstream child will have a choice of at least 2 schools, my own son had a choice of 3. Your plan would remove all choice from families. There could be any number of reasons why a parent would not wish to send their child to this school and you, as their local authority would be offering them no alternative whatsoever. This is blatant discrimination against children with disabilities and their families.

As for Post-16 provision. You have no concrete plans at all of what you will offer these students. At the meeting on Thursday evening at Larkrise school, when asked about post-16 provision, Judith Westcott said that you were 'in discussion with various charities and private providers'. In other words, you haven't got a clue what is going to happen to these children once they reach 16. How, as parents are we supposed to engage in a consultation process when even you don't know what is going to happen?

This matter is also highly discriminatory. Every mainstream student is entitled to either stay on at school or attend a college in their locality. Why are our children being denied the same? If anything, our children need to be in education longer to assist their transition to adulthood in a place, and with people they know and trust.

Your plan, such as it is, seems to be to drop these young people back into their communities when they are 16 having been denied the opportunity of building links and relationships over time and get some charities to pick up the pieces. Our children should not be subject to charitable intervention at this crucial time in their lives, they should have the same opportunities as their mainstream siblings and peers and be supported properly through the education system.

This plan is backward looking, insular and short-sighted. Many parents have wonderful ideas about how provision could be improved and expanded and, with meaningful collaboration you could construct a proposal that is inclusive and ambitious.

Yours sincerely

6.2.16 (12.02.19)

Dear Mr Gibbons

Re: Proposal for Special Schools in North Wiltshire

Whilst I acknowledge the need for additional SEN places for pupils in Wiltshire I am writing to you to register my complete opposition to the proposal to close Larkrise and St Nicholas schools and to replace them with a new 'super school'. My reasons are as follows:

- Any potential savings due to 'economies of scale' will be outweighed by additional transport costs which would include replacing and expanding the ailing fleet of transport buses currently in use as well as additional passenger transport staff costs. How can this be a given as a reason for closure of two successful schools? Especially when parents at a meeting last summer with the Interim Director of Education were advised by Alan Stubbersfield that 'money was not the issue'. The moral implications of forcing children to travel not just out of their own community but to a site which has no real community hub should not be overlooked. Remember that the pupils of both schools make regular trips in their local communities which are vital to their future development and that members of those communities come in to school as well.
- The proposal document also states that land in Trowbridge that was considered as a possible site for an expanded Larkrise would not be suitable? Please could you advise as to why then Wiltshire Council is considering and has encouraged plans by a developer to build a new mainstream Primary school in Elm Grove Trowbridge, within a very short distance of at least three thriving mainstream schools?
- The decision to base the proposed new school in a very rural location discriminates against children with severe and complex learning difficulties. Wiltshire Council's own planning statement for the planning application for new classrooms at Larkrise from October 2017 stated that if the plans for the new classrooms were not taken forward: "there are a number of possible unpalatable and high cost outcomes: **That the LA is not able to meet its legal commitment within the Children and Families Act 2014 to provide for the assessed needs of these children with SEND in the local area. This will lead to unacceptably longer journeys for the children which will put significant pressure on an already overstretched transport budget, but more importantly result in very young children having long tiring days which will impact on their wellbeing and learning capacity.**" The proposed new school plan would do exactly that!

- The lack of any provision for post 16 education is also concerning. Some pupils could be faced with transitioning to the new school for perhaps a year before having to face yet more change in a post 16 setting. This would be very traumatic for many of the children.
- The daily lives of the children this will affect are difficult already, how can Wiltshire Council really believe that forcing children to make longer journeys to an unfamiliar and overwhelmingly large place can be of any possible benefit to our young people? If a parent needs to collect an unwell child, attend a medical clinic in school or perhaps drop off their child off at school as the Passenger Transport bus has had a mechanical breakdown, then journey times are currently relatively short. This will not be the case at the Rowdeford site. Please remember that the parents of the children at Larkrise and St Nicholas Schools have jobs, other children and other responsibilities. There cannot be one member of staff, parent or other stakeholder who would say that this proposal is a good idea.

In conclusion: Please reconsider this solution to the need for additional special education provision in Wiltshire. We need to keep the provision local, we need to preserve our childrens' place in our local community for the benefit of all, and as many other parents have already stated - our children cannot speak for themselves and so we have to shout for them. Please listen to the parents and dedicated professionals who know and understand the young people that this will effect. My own son will have transitioned to post 16 education before the new provision is set to open but if this had happened to him when he was younger it would have had a catastrophic effect on his learning and wellbeing. Remember these decisions will effect children, their wider families and the specialist teaching and support staff at Larkrise and St Nicholas. Have the courage to do the right thing and seek a local vision for special education in Wiltshire.

Yours sincerely
Parent of a Larkrise pupil

6.2.17 (13.02.19)

To whom it may concern:

I am appalled at the stupidity of the proposal to centralise the special schools and the deprivation of hydrotherapy in the community.

Special schools need to be small as:

- 1 The students need to travel as little as possible as most have medical conditions which make it difficult for them to travel in a vehicle. The shorter the journey the better they can make use of the school day and the easier the staff find them to educate.
- 2 The students usually find people are a cause of stress and one reason why they cannot be included in mainstream education, where there are many people. St Nick's is as big as they can cope with, and too big for the comfort of some.

- 3 St Nick's is placed where students can access a bungalow where those that are able can learn to start learning independent living skills. This important development opportunity will be lost.
- 4 St Nick's is in a suburban community where the students regularly come into contact with the public, a very useful life skill for them.
- 5 St Nick's is placed near Morrison's supermarket where the students can be taken to acclimatise them to larger numbers of people and shopping, an important life skill.
- 6 Most Special Needs people benefit hugely from using a hydrotherapy, both the able bodied with mental challenges and the physically disabled. Many cannot function on a day to day basis without such provision and in a larger facility they will no doubt have less access to this necessary facility.

So closing the 4 small schools is going to cost the Council Tax paying community huge ongoing bills for home education and day care which no doubt comes out of someone else's budget and so does not signify to those in favour of this idiotic proposal.

The Starfish Pool:

The Community needs St Nick's School to remain open as the community raised £770,000 for the hydrotherapy pool. It is their pool which, misguidedly we now see, was given into the care of the Council. The saving to the Council and the NHS that the pool generates is incalculable. I use the pool twice a week to keep me mobile and living independently. If I did not have use of this facility I would be by now having to be supported by the Council and NHS as a disabled person, soon to be wheelchair bound. I have met scores of people who have a similar stories to tell.

It is essential for rehabilitation after: Strokes, heart attacks, arthritis, trauma to bones and soft tissue, stress related conditions, depression, as well as adults with life-long disabilities. The suffering of the individuals who will be deprived of this pool is obviously of no interest to the people in favour of this proposal, and again the cost of increasing the number of people who become dependant on financial support must be coming out of another budget than that controlled by those who support this motion.

In conclusion, this scheme is not fit for purpose. From 2023 there will be a raft of costs arising from its unsuitability which Wiltshire Tax Payers cannot afford. The suffering of individuals both children and adults will be far more than the myopic people in charge of this proposal have realised.

What should happen:

Larkrise needs to be replaced, I understand a nearby piece of land has been identified so that there will be a smooth transition to the new building. The previous school would be sold off to mitigate some of the build costs.

A new small school (maybe more?) needs to be built to cope with the students who currently have to be bused out of county.

All the schools need a hydrotherapy pool.

The remainder of the £20 million can be put to good use, refurbishing the other schools, perhaps?

Yours faithfully

6.2.18 (13.02.19)

Hi there

Speaking from personal experience. I know a new school is needed. Larkrise is too small now to accommodate the up and coming children with special needs. Also its facilities are outdated.

I am not keen on the school being built in Rowde. This present site is quite isolated. The children at Larkrise can easily access the town of Trowbridge. Walk to the park. Walk to the local Tesco Express and feel part of the community. Also it's a fair way to travel for children with complex special needs and serious health issues.

I don't suppose anyone at County Hall making these decisions has personal experience of a child with special needs? You need to think the bigger picture. The impact this will have not just on the child but on the whole family. Especially if there are other children in the household going to mainstream school.

There must be a site more local to build a super duper new SEN school. There seems to be plenty of land for houses in Trowbridge so why not a school?

Please do your best for our children.
Regards

6.2.19 (15.02.19)

I am emailing about my concern about the super school. I had attended the consultation in July at Rowdeford. The information from those consultations is baffling and concerning.

My concerns are, that at no point was it agreed by anyone in the room a super school would work or was wanted, and also the closure of local schools i.e. Larkrise and St Nicholas. I do understand that they are running out of space.

Surely, to close schools and transport children out of area, or longer on transport, larger school classes, children with more complex difficulties and behaviours all together, uncertainty for children/parents as information is very sparse. I have also heard that at Rowdeford, from September there will be Porta Cabin type buildings for the new school academic year intake of reception children? Again as a parent we have not been consulted or informed.

I feel as a parent, Rowdeford cannot express their concern due to fear of the closure of the school.

My SON is due to leave 2020 and it would seem there is very little provision post 16 either. Considering education/training age is now 18 I do not understand why Rowdeford do not have this provision. After all the raised age for education is not a new thing.

6.2.20 (18.02.19)

I think that we need several special needs schools in each of the areas but they need to be better resourced. If we were needing to build a new primary school in an area it would be out of the question to build it miles away from the community for mainstream children, but for our most vulnerable this is acceptable. Each of our special schools offers something different. I have children at Rowdeford and St Nicks.

Rowdeford has a very good reputation and is a fabulous school which is well led and has proved to be an excellent educational provision for two children I have attending there.

St Nicks is bursting at the seams and needs a new site which will allow them to grow and have outside space like, Rowdeford but it needs to be in Chippenham. The young person we have there has struggled when class size increased, and the make up of the class had children who shouldn't have been in this education provision. This had a great impact on the education attainment and psychological effect on our child. This year has been much better and she is once again happy in school.

If the huge school accommodating all the schools is built at Rowdeford the amount of transport buses using the site will be enormous and that is just for the children arriving/leaving. It isn't just a line of young people to get on the bus. Each child needs help, support and guidance or wheeled onto the bus. This takes an enormous amount of time. The parking for the staff alone will be huge. How will parents be able to access the school if they don't have transport? How will they be able to collect a child who is ill? The children will be overwhelmed by the amount of people to use, teach and support. The children won't be known by everyone as they are now.

My opinion is that we need 3 schools in the areas they already serve but able to take larger numbers and better resourced.

6.2.21 (21.02.19)

Wiltshire Council's proposals for the closure of 2 Special needs schools and the building of a larger facility at Rowdeford is not only badly thought out, it has been done with a callous lack of consultation. The public and in particular the feelings of the parents have been snubbed.

When the paper about the proposals arrived at Warminster Area Board, a town which has 13 young people being transported to these schools, the Chair ruled that the Board would not make any representation to Wiltshire council about the proposals. They were asked to take the feelings from the meeting to Wiltshire Council. The Chair's ruling was on the basis that he did not feel that it was appropriate. That simple statement makes a mockery of Area Boards as an organ to facilitate better Council democracy.

All children have a right to maximise their own potential and to do that with a minimum of discomfort, at schools providing the education and companionship they need. The schools should be as close as possible to where they live as travel can be challenging for children with special needs, and worrying for their parents. The scheme is boasted as providing a "centre of excellence" and is claimed not to be a cost cutting exercise. It is clearly not a centre for excellence as most of the children will have to travel further than they do at present. It also offends our intelligence to suggest that the scheme is not intended as a cost cutting exercise. We are well aware that the government has instructed all councils that they must cut expenditure on this vital and necessary area of education.

Please convey to Councillors that the resentment caused by them taking such an important decision, without proper consultation, will be considerable. We can only hope that they will have the sense and decency to call for a delay in this scheme to enable proper consultations to be held. I hope they will encourage the local Area Boards to discuss the proposals in detail with local people and in particular parents. It will be extremely unfair if parents are forced to fund the expense of a Judicial Review, and it will not be forgotten. There is a strong case that the law has not been followed with due diligence and it is very likely that the parents would win a legal battle. Please do not force them through that ordeal.

Yours Faithfully

[6.2.22 \(23.02.19\)](#)

I absolutely do not support your proposal. You are liars saying we know about the Council plans to close Larkrise school for the past 3 years! 3 months is more accurate! Disgraceful, you are destroying our children's school lives by rail roading ahead with your cost cutting exercise at the expense of our children. What about their rights and the right not to spend hours every day stuck on school transport! For my child the journey on transport and the length of the journey is paramount as to how she is feeling when she arrives home and travels to school. We live in Warminster and will not be forced into sending her to the middle of nowhere to the school you tell us is our only choice! Disgusting that you think it's acceptable, that we have no choice where our child is educated simply because she has Special needs! We will not be part of this, listen to what parents are telling you! It is unthinkable that Wiltshire Council is using our children as an excuse to close schools and save money then go wildly over budget (yes that's right) building their so called expert view of what our children want for their future schooling in a place they have no connection with (unless you are one of the chosen ones who happen to live close to Rowde).

I do not support you and can I tell you ever since this information was leaked out (again despicable behaviour) our lives have been hanging in limbo wondering how we can possibly

cope with our daughter being shipped daily from Warminster to Rowde and home again knowing we have failed in our role as parents allowing this to happen?

6.2.23 (23.02.19)

To whom it may concern

I would like the council to consider the following points regarding the special schools consultation:

- In December 2017 there were consultation events which made no mention of closing schools and merely asked what good provision looked like.
- The pre statutory consultation from May 2018 did not make it clear that closing schools was an option; in fact one of the documents produced by the council states that 'this is not about closing schools'
- The proposal to build one school at Rowde, despite 71% of parents consulted being opposed to school closures, was formed and was leaked to the local news on 9 November 2018.
- The reasons for closure as given in ' PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN NORTH WILTSHIRE PURSUANT TO A STATUTORY NOTICE PUBLISHED ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2019' are primarily financial, numbers of pupils and transport congestion. There is also the idea that a 'Centre of Excellence' would be able to provide 'high quality support and advice to mainstream schools.' This already happens at Larkrise. You do not need a Centre of Excellence for this to happen.
- It is not morally acceptable to place 350 children in a building away from their communities where they, (and the local communities), would have their learning significantly enhanced. In addition, they would be accepted and become part of their communities; this will be taken away if they were to be bused out to what can only be seen as an institution. Local communities would be devoid of children with special needs in its daily functions.
- It may cost more to create 2 new schools but the council has an obligation to provide what is morally right
- The ' PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN NORTH WILTSHIRE PURSUANT TO A STATUTORY NOTICE PUBLISHED ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2019' also states under 'Ethos and Religious Character' that *'Its ethos would be the provision of high quality learning which will give pupils the best start for adulthood and being active citizens in their communities.'* The children will not be 'active citizens in their communities' because they would be taken out of those communities. It would not be appropriate for the children to be bused into school and for the only way to access their communities would be to get on a bus again. Many of the children currently walk or are pushed in wheelchairs or specialist buggies out into their communities to enhance their learning and this is of special value to both them and the local communities. It is also very easy for people from all areas of the local community to pop into school to further enhance learning. This would not be feasible at a school in Rowde.
- It would appear that the council are pre-empting the proposal as they are reportedly going to place children with a September 2019 admission, in mobiles at the Rowdeford

site. This in itself will be discriminatory unless the council have identified individual needs and addressed any issues regarding hoisting, personal care and medical needs. Are parents aware of this?

- The ' PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN NORTH WILTSHIRE PURSUANT TO A STATUTORY NOTICE PUBLISHED ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2019' also states that the new school would cater for pupils aged 3 – 16 and that 'post-16 education will be available at Wiltshire College' and other private sector providers'. There will need to be considerable spending in this area to fulfil this statement as currently not all pupils with profound and complex needs are catered for.
- In the on-line video conversation I saw between Councillor Laura Mayes and Stuart Hall from the WPCC, the conversation regarding post 16 provision was revealing and disturbing. Laura Mayes says that they will be able to *'really tailor something that is right for that child as they're getting to the age when they should be back in their communities'*. So, there is the acceptance that they would be taking the child out of their community and putting them in the 'centre of excellence' from 3 – 16. We currently work on the children being part of their communities regardless of their age. The idea that at 16, the children will just integrate seamlessly back into their communities is shockingly alarming and shows a lack of understanding of the needs of children with special needs. The council's proposal will mean the children are excluded from their communities and the community will be excluded from them. Until they are 16! That is not acceptable.
- The report from Wiltshire Council Cabinet 27 November 2018 states that *'New Post 16 special school provision would allow a focus on Preparing for Adulthood outcomes (employment, independent living, health and community) for young people with SEND. At 16, learners would move to transition hubs close to their own local communities. There would be key hubs in Chippenham and Trowbridge.....This would mean less travel for young people and the chance to start building their adult life locally from the age of 16'*. I think this probably says a lot about the contradictions of the councils thinking. The new school should not be located out of the children's local community from the start.
- Laura Mayes stated that *'parents have shaped where we've got to so far'*. This is quite difficult to believe as I feel that if the council had really taken on board what the parents were saying, the only proposal put forward would not be for one large school, or 'centre of excellence' as the council refer to it. It would be for new school in their local community.
- Laura Mayes says *'what we realised was when we wanted to just have one centre of excellence in each area that it was very important that both sites were very accessible to people from all round the area and Rowde, being close to Devizes, is in a very central location, making it easy for people coming from both the north and the west'*. This is simply not true. Parents and carers would not be able to take their child to school or pick the child up at the end of the day, attend meetings, appointments or events unless they had transport. Access by public transport is a major issue yet the council has made no mention of this. It is shockingly discriminating. Public transport buses to Rowde drop off at the Cross Keys or at Caen Hill, both requiring a considerable walk to get to the Rowdeford site. This is not acceptable.

- There will be staff, who currently work at Larkrise, who will not be able to get to and from work because they currently walk and have no transport. When this question was posed at the consultation on 7th Feb 2019, Alan Stubbersfield said that Wiltshire council will support staff. This is a very vague statement and I feel that identified problems are being brushed under the carpet.
- Laura Mayes talked about the provision at Three Ways school in Bath. The facilities may be outstanding but there can be no real comparison with the council's proposed vision as Three Ways is in a city, within a community – the children can come out of the school and walk to a shop etc. They have not been taken out of their community.
- Laura Mayes also talked about early years providers in specialist centres... *'what the centre of excellence will be able to do is to work with these organisations to give these children the support that they need to ensure that they've got the best start before they even get to a special school'*. I (& colleagues) have always done this! I visit the local specialist centre, I organise times for the parents / carers to visit my class and indeed I make the transition as seamless as possible. It feels as if the council has not done enough thorough research regarding all the amazing work the special schools already do. Things like this are happening now; it is the norm.
- In the report from 'Wiltshire Council Cabinet 27 November 2018' it states that *'Rowde is an active community close to Devizes with good bus routes and access to good community facilities. The new school will be able to build on and add to this community potentially with its own café, gardens and community events'*. To me this feels like more isolation. It feels like the 'centre of excellence' would be more of an institution of years gone by, isolated from the community. Rowde is a small village and while Devizes is relatively close, it is not within walking distance and it is not the children's community. It wouldn't be part of the bigger picture of life because of its location. In addition, the community and their parents will be isolated from the children. The proposed new school would not be remotely easy to access using public transport. In addition, if a parent had to travel with their child in a wheelchair/specialist buggy it would be nigh impossible. Parents would be excluded from the 'community' of the school due to its location. This cannot be morally right. It feels like discrimination.
- In the councils, 'A Vision for Special Education in Wiltshire', they state
 - o *'this is not about saving money'*
 - o *'it will promise a better education, better life chances, and better outcomes'*.

This has to be questioned. How can exclusion from their local community and the community they are likely to spend their adult life in be 'better outcomes'. What does the council mean.
- The vision also 'assures' a variety of things which I find quite bewildering – such as *'strong community links – with cafes, community gardens and public playing fields'*. The Vision also assures *'hydro pools, sensory rooms, physio, speech and language therapy..'* Does the council know this? It feels as if they are not being very honest with their assurances and that many of them are unrealistic and have no real basis on facts. Do they actually realise that Larkrise has a hydro pool, a sensory studio, the services of a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a therapy assistant, a speech and

language therapist, a learning disability nurse, a dietician, specialist nurses, etc. This is the norm. One doesn't need a centre of excellence to provide this.

- In the 'PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN NORTH WILTSHIRE PURSUANT TO A STATUTORY NOTICE PUBLISHED ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2019', the council states that the school at Rowde has *'quick access from local ambulance stations and onwards to major hospitals if needed. It will also offer Virgin Care (our current community health provider) consulting, office and therapy rooms. This will mean that there can be full time nursing provision as well as other therapeutic support, reducing the need for hospitalisation and parents to travel to the school to support medical concerns.'* These statements are very concerning.
 - The ambulance station is about 6 minutes from Rowdeford school; currently the ambulance stations are 2 minutes from Larkrise and St Nicholas schools.
 - Has the council had consultations with Virgin Care regarding full time nursing provision at the proposed new school? Who would pay for this? Who would line manage this?
 - Nursing provision would not automatically reduce the need for hospitalisation or parent/s to be present. For example if a child had a seizure requiring rescue medication, that child would need to go home afterwards (depending on care plan, which might state hospital), i.e. they would need to be picked up from school.
 - Without transport this would be extremely difficult or nigh impossible for some parents/carers. They would not be able to travel home on a school bus. Getting to and from the school using public transport would not be feasible for parents & carers without transport.
 - If the para medics need to be called they prefer the parent to be with the child and to travel to hospital with them. This will be extremely difficult if the school is at Rowdeford and the parent has no transport.
 - Children at Larkrise school are supported by Virgin Care who provide physiotherapy, SaLT & OT support. Some children also come under the Continuing Care Team and have a dedicated nurse.
- Has the council researched journey times for all children who would attend the proposed new school at Rowde? In the 'PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN NORTH WILTSHIRE PURSUANT TO A STATUTORY NOTICE PUBLISHED ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2019' the council mentions the DFE guidance for *'reasonable journeys'* and note that while they will *'try to ensure that every child has a journey within these limits.....this may not be possible for every child.'* In the same document the council *'hope'* that they *'will reduce the amount of time in congested town traffic at peak time'* and *'be able to reduce the number of pick-ups'*. What does 'reduce the number of pick-ups' mean exactly. Does this mean that the council propose central pick up points? This would not be reasonable and would be practically impossible for most. The report also says that *'We will be creating transport plans for every child/young person with particular regard for the support they may need for medical, behaviour and /or sensory needs.'* This is a very loaded statement as many of our pupils will need a transport plan, with some requiring a trained 1:1 PA. Has the council considered ALL of the implications of such an undertaking?

- Has the council researched the status in our society of children, young people and adults with special educational needs? -
 - o There is much evidence to support the view that they are among the most marginalised, socially excluded, segregated and disenfranchised in our communities
 - o They lack friends, are impoverished, are highly or totally dependent on families and as they age, need to be provided for in specialist residential homes

There are two approaches to this problem:

1. Increase support for **inclusive practice** and educate children locally ensuring they are known in the community. (and collaboration with main stream schools as appropriate and some pupils attending a Resource Base). By ensuring children and young people are seen and known in their local communities means that people will look out for them and know how to interact with them.
2. Remove children and young people to a rural setting. Away from their communities.

I sincerely hope that the council will reconsider their proposal in light of the strength of the opposition against it. Yes, new schools are needed but they should be in the children's local communities not isolated in a rural setting that would segregate not only the children and their families and friends but also their communities. This is not morally acceptable and is discriminatory to say the least.

Yours sincerely

6.2.24 (25.02.19)

This proposal lacks compassion for the unfortunate children and their parents.

This proposal, called a 'vision' is accompanied with inappropriate hyperbole.

I suspect that the underlying motive for the closure of some special needs centres is to be able to sell off the sites. I suspect that this proposal to close some schools and centralise on one location may involve disproportionate transport costs.

I ask for more sympathy and thought to go into your considerations.

Sincerely,

6.2.25 (25.02.19)

The following email exchange seems to imply not every student has had a risk assessment. Which is at odds with the statement below made in the Q&As.

What about transportation to the new school?

We aim to have one coordinated system for transport to make pupils' journeys as smooth as possible. **Every child who goes on transport has a risk assessment** and this will continue to be the case.

From: "Hunter, Heidi" <Heidi.Hunter@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Date: 10 January 2019 at 15:25:58 GMT
To:
Cc: "Lee, Victoria" <Victoria.Lee@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Emergency Medication on transport
Thank you for your email

I have been in conversation with Victoria regarding your request of additional medical support for your daughter.

Victoria has said that she can arrange for the current Passenger Assistant to be asked if she would like to accept the additional responsibility and to attend the training needed to continue to support (name of child). This is not a mandatory requirement for our Passenger Assistants to undertake this training so we may have to enquire with others if she is not completely happy to proceed.

Regarding your request for (name of child) to remain on transport whilst these new arrangements are made. Victoria has gained agreement from the Head of Service for Passenger Transport that he is happy for (name of child) to continue on the transport with the expectation that in case of an emergency the Passenger Assistant will dial 999. We will need by return of email your agreement that you are happy with that arrangement.

When we have received the updated care plan/flow chart, we will then compile a suitable Risk Assessment to reflect her additional needs on the vehicle. **Only students with a higher level of need have a Risk Assessment completed before going onto the transport.** When (name of child) joined transport this was not the case, that she met those requirements, so has **previously not had an individual Risk Assessment.** I will of course send you a copy of the Risk Assessment when it has been completed.

I look forward to hearing from you and have copied in Victoria so that she is aware of your response too.

Kind Regards
Heidi Hunter
SEND Transport Co-ordinator
Children's Service, Wiltshire Council

-----Original Message-----
From:
Sent: 08 January 2019 18:08
To: Hunter, Heidi <Heidi.Hunter@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Cc: Lee, Victoria <Victoria.Lee@wiltshire.gov.uk>; clarecarter05@aol.com
Subject: Re: Emergency Medication on transport

Heidi

There are times as a family we have no choice. We do tend to drop her in and pick up

on bad days but this gives her a shorter day as has to be done around her sisters school day. Therefore impacting on her education.

Currently on days she is well enough she goes by transport but it is always a risk being epileptic. Especially when friends who are at the same school, including new starters, have the emergency cover with them, it seems unfair.

And therefore she is and will continue to use transport, unless or until this is denied her.

We have a current flow chart which was modified at the end of last year but this is now being updated again and we can supply this once it has been completed.

When was a risk assessment for transport last undertaken? Could we have a copy?

Regards.

On 8 Jan 2019, at 15:21, Hunter, Heidi <Heidi.Hunter@wiltshire.gov.uk> wrote:

Thank you for your email and sorry to hear that (name of child)'s seizure activity has become more problematic.

For a PA to be trained to potentially administer emergency medication you will need to provide us with a care plan/flow chart that has been reviewed since (name of child) has had a change in her medical needs on the vehicle. When we have received this, the PA coordinator team will explore the options for a PA and what training is needed. I am assuming that for the time being (name of child) will not be travelling on transport whilst new arrangements are being made to ensure her safe journey to and from school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Kind Regards

Heidi Hunter

SEND Transport Co-ordinator

Children's Service, Wiltshire Council

-----Original Message-----

From:]

Sent: 08 January 2019 13:40

To: Lee, Victoria <Victoria.Lee@wiltshire.gov.uk>; Hunter, Heidi <Heidi.Hunter@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Cc: clarecarter05@aol.com

Subject: Emergency Medication on transport

Victoria/Heidi

Ros Way gave us you email addresses.

We would like to confirm how our daughter (name of child) can have her emergency meds travel with her to and from school with a PA who is trained and authorised to administer them.

Separately given what is being discussed regarding school closures and site relocation I would like to have a copy of the risk assessment held on her for transport, and confirm

transportation restrictions, requirement and how these addresses her medical, education and well being risks.

Our daughter is an epileptic and at the end of last term and over Christmas has had higher seizure activity than normal. Given the length of time in transport and associated risks and fatigue this causes the general consensus was she needed to avoid using transport for the last couple of weeks of term.

And even in this mode to help her cope she had curtailed education and school days. Which if she had been on transport for around an hour coming home from school would have led to more time out of education missing days and a significant increase in her risk to health from seizures.

The risks being compounded by the fact her emergency meds do not currently travel with her. Hence our request.

Regards

6.2.26 (25.02.19)

The notes from the Consultation in Corsham I attended seem to be somewhat incomplete.

I know My wife and I had a discussion at the Health desk which include from the WCC representative stating that professional were spending 60-90% of their day travelling and was making the assertion that the proposal would improve their availability although this hasn't been stated to my knowledge elsewhere and no information was provided as to the reason for these figures or the expected improve.

Also notes on the whole room discussion appears to be absent which I know included the raising of a number of frustrations including how commenting during the closure representation phase was being impaired by the lack of clarity on the new school proposal/specification.

Regards

6.2.27 (25.02.19)

Dear Councillor

The attached letter composed and written by our 8 year daughter regarding her older sister is in her own words and gets to the heart of the issues with the North Wiltshire SEND consolidation plan better than we could. We ask that you please read it.

While the process leading to and the statutory proposal published 9th January is subject to legal scrutiny. It still feels important that issues with the plan are understood and addressed, given the level of discontent from within key stakeholder groups (which we are) and the wider community given the support the legal action has achieved.

We ask therefore that before any cabinet votes on the SEN school consolidation plan and school closures the council has independent publicly available impartial legal guidance on the compatibility of any proposal with the councils obligations, to the affected families, their disabled children and the environment.

A plan that looks financially sound may turn out to be anything but if it fails legal duties to stakeholders. In this case including many of the most vulnerable children in Wiltshire and their families.

Thank you



Dear councillor,

My sister [redacted] goes to St Nicholas School
in Chippenham. I don't approve of her going to
Rowde because

1. I won't see her that much
2. she needs to be local
3. most people need to see children in wheelchairs
as people STILL stare at her. It's not good!
4. she needs to be safe as she is from her

hospital.

please listen to us

From

[redacted]
aged 8 years.

6.2.28 (26.02.19)

Dear Councillor,

Tomorrow I will be presenting the full council with a petition to Save St Nicholas Special School in Chippenham, currently signed by more than 7,500 Wiltshire residents.

I wrote and organised this petition in response to the outcome of the summer consultation, published 12 November, and ahead of the Cabinet Meeting on 27 November 2018 in which they voted on the future of special education in Wiltshire. Our school and community were shocked, frustrated and saddened to hear for the first time that Wiltshire Council planned to close our school, and we wanted to ensure our voices were heard, louder than the 71% of stakeholders who voted for the three school option in the summer's consultation and were ignored.

For many parents, including myself, the problem of the amalgamated school in Rowde comes down to our children being segregated from their community. For others, it's the risk to their child's health being so far from the nearest A&E department, while some are concerned that the longer journey to school will be yet another barrier to learning for children who already find

it difficult to access education. Finally, others don't think their child will cope with such a large school setting.

Research shows time and again that INCLUSION is the strongest factor in improving outcomes for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). While we don't have a truly inclusive education system, keeping schools in main communities comes close. For instance, I was looking forward to the day when I could drop my daughter off at Hardenhuish Secondary school, which is right next door to her brother's school, St Nicholas, in Chippenham. What's more, Hardenhuish hosts sports days and other events for St Nicholas students. My son would be able to interact and enjoy activities with his sister as well as with his mainstream peers who he knows from outside school. Being able to learn life skills within his community, one that is part of his daily routine, rather than some strange village he only visits during the school day, will play a big part in his ability to gain some semblance of independence. As hard as this is to say, it is unlikely he will ever leave home, and someday the state will have to support him when his dad and I are gone.

Now, some might say that the current schools aren't in local communities, but of the 65 students currently enrolled at St Nicholas, 55 of them live closer to St Nicholas than to Rowdeford, and 22 live within Chippenham itself (according to school data). My family and I live in Calne, but consider Chippenham to be part of our community as it's where we spend most of our leisure time, so it is where our son feels comfortable in familiar surroundings.

Tomorrow, I implore you to consider the strength of feeling surrounding this controversial plan to build one mega school in a rural location. You may have seen our campaign to Keep Special Schools Local in the local papers, on TV and across social media. We have gained an incredible amount of support and momentum, including raising more than £11,000 towards our legal costs within 10 days.

We very much want to work with the council as this isn't just about the future of our children but of future generations. We recognise the financial constraints the Local Authority faces, while still having to meet its statutory duties. What's more, a £20 million investment is a lot of money and together, Wiltshire Council and stakeholders must ensure it is spent as wisely as possible.

Perhaps a compromise can be reached by making appropriate amendments to the current proposal, such as:

- **Installing an ambulance station on the one-school site to help mitigate health risks for children with serious health and life-limiting conditions**
- **Creating a 'Centre of Excellence' in Rowde, but keeping both St Nicholas in Chippenham and Larkrise in Trowbridge as satellite sites**
- **Widening the A342 to make access to the one school safer for mini-buses travelling to the site and having to contend with HGVs headed to the Hills site in Calne and Biomass plant in Bromham**
- **Installing wide pavements from the school site to the village of Rowde so that students can walk or be pushed in their wheelchairs in order to access the village**
- **Dual enrolment with a mainstream school so that students can integrate with their peers in their local community on a regular basis, where appropriate**
- **A PROMISE/GUARANTEE that all passenger transport times will not exceed 45 minutes**

While these ideas are not inclusive, they could go some way towards alleviating parents' worst fears and mitigating some of the problems caused by the one-site option, making it difficult for stakeholders to disagree with the proposal.

I hope that we will have your support in recommending the Cabinet considers the level of feeling felt by Wiltshire residents surrounding the future of special education, and some or all of the above amendments, for when they make their decision at the end of March.

Please feel free to get in contact if you have any questions or would like further details.

Many thanks and best wishes,

[6.2.29 \(26.02.19\)](#)

Hi

I completed the online consultation but ran out of room for comments.

Feedback

I do not support the new proposal.

My son is thriving in a resource base with the inclusion and social interaction he has from his mainstream peers. I feel consideration hasn't been made for SEN children who are in the middle. Children who will be too delayed for mainstream secondary school but are happy, well behaved, progressing yet vulnerable. I worry how my son will continue to make progress in an environment with severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities as he learns a great deal from his peers. I'm fortunate enough that I work part time and our school is minutes from our home, I do the school run every day but I won't be able to continue to work and travel to Rowde daily. Why should vulnerable SEN children have to travel such a distance and have to rely on transport for an education? If I had to give up my job then that's taking money away that we put into private therapies for my son as Virgin care is so poor in Wiltshire.

My son has epilepsy and has emergency meds, to think he would be even further away from a main hospital is very worrying.

Also, what happens when the new super school is at full capacity and the 3 current schools have been closed, where will children go then?

I have lots of concerns with the new proposal.

[6.2.30 \(27.02.19\)](#)

Hello,

I believe the schools are extremely important in Wiltshire and am very proud of the teachers and pupils at them and would like to see the government and council supporting them and maintaining them. They are a valuable asset to this country.

I know there's proposed changes and consultations and I hope you chose to do the right thing

I may not have made it clear as I thought it was obvious, that what I mean by the right thing is NOT closing the existing services and schools

6.2.31 (27.02.19)

Dear Councillors

We're writing in regards of the proposed closure of our son's SEN school, St Nicholas School in Chippenham to be replaced by a larger school near Rowde. This would be devastating for our son and his peers.

(Name of child) has a rare genetic syndrome, severe learning difficulties and autism. He is nearly 8 years old and completely non verbal and still wears nappies etc. As he gets older he is increasingly difficult to take out and about to parks/shops etc as he gets very distressed.

There are two places he is most comfortable and happy 1. home and 2. St Nicholas School. He absolutely loves his school and skips in in the morning. He loves the routine, the building (yes, there is actually something about the building that he loves, he is actually far less comfortable in other similar schools/public buildings!) and the staff and children.

The staff at St Nicholas work very hard to ensure (name of child) and his classmates are out in the community visiting parks and shops which makes it much easier for us to visit as a family. This is so important as he grows up.

As with all the children in Chippenham, (name of child) and his peers in particular need the following to help them do well

1. To be part of the community near to where they live - to visit local parks, shops, churches and other mainstream schools. They need to be familiar with their local surroundings through school, but also to be seen in the community where they live by the other people/children who live there. This will not be the case for the proposed school near Rowde.

2. Small school environments, small classes, small familiar buildings. Many of our children prefer quieter environments - they cannot speak but they will certainly show their distress through their behaviours. I am very concerned at the size of the proposed school.

3. Minimal school commutes. We have just 6 months ago moved around the corner from St Nicholas School with the aim that soon (name of child) will be able to walk with us to his school (he currently still uses a buggy/wheelchair although he can walk). The new proposal means that he will have to travel by bus. I believe the travel time with stops will be significantly extended by the need to pick up other children making this journey around an hour. To be

honest this is the last thing he needs at the beginning and end of the day. Also it seems extremely unfair that disabled children are put through this when their able bodied peers are not required to travel these distances to school (we have applied for his brother to attend Sheldon School next year - he will be about 1 minute's walk away).

4. Easy/quick access to emergency medical care and hospitals. Several children in my son's class have epilepsy and require urgent medical attention. I am very concerned about the distance of the proposed school to both an ambulance station and local hospitals. This is a serious safety issue.

The proposals for a new large SEN school in Rowde will not meet these needs being out of town, a larger environment and requiring longer commutes. In addition **it goes against recommendations from Wiltshire Council's Children's Select Committee report** which states "**It would not be appropriate to combine all three schools into one site**" (see Recommendation 2):

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=145771>

I also have another couple of observations:

- Given the population sizes and building work going on in both Chippenham and Trowbridge, both of these towns warrant a special school of their own. There are several sites in Chippenham with new houses and supermarkets - it seems unbelievable that a new SEN school couldn't be accommodated here.
- The proposal document appeared very biased to the single school solution. The majority of parents requested a three school solution, with only a minority opting for a single school. However this appeared to be ignored as the three school option wasn't even costed, but simply deemed too expensive. This hardly seems appropriate or fair given the considerable support for this. It feels that insufficient investigation into various options were given and simply the cheapest option was selected.
- Three Ways school in Bath is often cited as a great example of a single school that was developed to replace a number of other SEN schools. However, this is in an urban location near to amenities and a hospital, so is in a very different situation to the current Wiltshire proposal.

A petition has been put together which gained over 5000 signatures in just a few days (now at 7629) showing the value of the school to the community:

<https://www.change.org/p/save-st-nicholas-special-needs-school>

Michelle Donelan MP and Andrew Murrison MP are also both supporting the campaign against the proposals. Andrew Murrison also walked alongside hundreds of us parents at the march through Trowbridge to Save Wiltshire special schools as he understands our concerns with the new proposals, particularly around travel times.

Given all of the above, we are very much against the proposal for a single school near Rowde and sincerely hope you will reconsider this.

Yours Sincerely

6.2.32 (27.02.19)

Hi there,

I am a Wiltshire resident with family links to Rowdeford School.

Having read the proposals I feel that expanding the Rowdeford site would offer the best continued provision for SEND children.

I hope that the consultation will consider carefully the implications of closing all three schools and leaving students and parents in a state of uncertainty. Closing all three schools would also have a massive impact on staff retention, and I think that we need to focus on keeping existing staff and encouraging them to share their specialist knowledge.

Thank you

6.2.33 (28.02.19)

Hi

I wanted to contact you about the proposal to close Larkrise.

My daughter is 7 and has been at Larkrise since January 2018. I will say it is the happiest we have all been since she was born. She loves school, no more anxiety and she's made so much progress. For us, we know she is safe, settled, loved and thriving plus the support we get from the staff at the school is priceless.

My daughter is profoundly disabled. On paper. She can't talk, walk, move independently, feed herself or use the toilet. She has no hand use, suffers from seizures and needs constant 1-2-1 care 24 hours a day. Our life is exhausting and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. But now she has Larkrise we get some respite and we get support. We can take her to school and breath a little. For she is more than a profoundly disabled child, she has so much more to give and enjoy.

Before finding Larkrise our daughter was part time at a mainstream school. The reason for this is that in our area there are no suitable schools for a child like my daughter. We live in Shepton Mallet and the schools we can choose from at Critchill and three ways. Critchill sadly doesn't fit our daughter, her class is all boys, the classroom is plain and understimulating, plus the flow of the day there wouldn't suit her at all. Her anxiety would be through the roof. We would LOVE Critchill to be suitable as it's just 8 miles from our house. Three ways is 24 miles from home - a long drive for me each day. But more importantly three ways is a superschool. We have visited twice and both times it was overwhelming and too big. I've no doubt the teachers there are amazing but the space is just too big. Children like my daughter just get lost in these large spaces and due to their disabilities they can't access all the 'amazing resources' as changing chairs, moving down long corridors to different spaces is too much for them and takes too long. There was no way that our daughter could of coped at a large school like three ways.

Then we found Larkrise and it was like all our prayers were answered. It's a school with a heart. It feels like a proper school. It's not an institution or a specialist setting. It's a school for

children to flourish and learn, where they are loved and believed in. Where they feel safe. And that cannot be replaced.

Larkrise is 18 miles from my house and each day I spend around 4 hours in the car on the school run. This IS NOT ideal, some days it's too much for me and my daughter but we keep going as right now we have no other school to send our daughter too. If she doesn't go to Larkrise I would have to keep her at home and how long that would last before my mental and physical health declined???

The families that are already at Larkrise should not be being put through this. Having a child with additional needs is like living in constant fear. You don't know what is around the corner and regular life is something you no longer know. We don't even know how long we will have our daughter, each day is precious.

So when heads of councils etc come along and say that they are building a centre of excellence and try to sell it like this is a good thing it's not only an insult but it's incredibly hurtful and worrying. Us parents have massive daily challenges, do you think we need this as well? Don't you think our kids suffer enough without being moved to a school that for those most vulnerable will be an absolute nightmare? These children need somewhere that is like a second home, to feel safe and secure. A huge school is intimidating even for the most neurological typical child, but for my daughter? She wouldn't cope.

As for trying to sell it with state of the art physio etc, my daughter is nowhere near needing state of the art anything!!! She needs gentle, quiet days, where she gets to explore the world at her very slow pace. Her teachers can help her stretch and get stronger, she has all she needs right in that classroom. Her world needs to be small otherwise it's too overwhelming and she totally shuts down.

So I beg you, I plead. Please reconsider your plans. These children don't need an all singing all dancing school. We are going backwards, not forwards.

My son loves my daughters school. He says 'she's at a real school' now and that's true. Imagine if she was bused to school every day, he would never get chance to be part of her school day. He loves going into her classroom, he needs her to be included too.

Please don't institutionalise our children. Those days should be firmly in the past.

Yours hopefully

[6.2.34 \(28.02.19\)](#)

Dear Laura Mayes,

My youngest daughter (name of child) is 9 and attends Larkrise School in Trowbridge. I am alarmed about Wiltshire Council's proposal to close the school and build a new 'Super School' in Rowde.

It is not so much the travel to school distance although this will have a very negative impact on many of our children and the cost both financially and environmentally would be huge. It is that our children will be sent to a school in the middle of nowhere. Larkrise children access their local community in Trowbridge everyday. They visit the supermarkets, cafes, library, swimming pool, parks, cinema and museum. They learn road safety and visit the fire station and local residential homes. The local community get to know them and look out for them. This all helps to break down prejudices and gives local people especially the children a better understanding of our differences. None of this will be possible in Rowde.

On a personal level, my daughter (name of child) has profound and multiple learning and physical disabilities and relies on others to do everything for her. She also has complex medical needs including severe epilepsy. We live less than 5 minutes walk from Larkrise School. My eldest daughter attends Paxcroft Primary school which is next door to Larkrise. I take and pick (name of child) up from school each day, I push her in her wheelchair. We meet local residents including many children on this journey and most will smile and say hello to (name of child). When (name of child) started at Larkrise we thought she would be there until age 19. It was a bit of stability in our not very stable lives. I have built up an incredibly close relationship with (name of child)'s teacher and teaching assistants. They are my support network. They know (name of child) as well if not better than me so I am often asking their advice and running things past them. They have helped me many a time when I am having a bad day and I have cried on them a number of occasions! I can get to Larkrise within minutes when (name of child) is unwell or if there is an emergency. This happens weekly sometimes daily. If the school was in Rowde I would find this impossible. I do not drive and would have to rely on public transport to get there, which would involve two buses. Ambulances would be called to school much more often! My husband and I are struggling to see how we could send (name of child) to a school so far away and remote. We would seriously have to consider requesting a personal budget from the Local Authority and home school her. This would not be in (name of child)'s or my best interest but may be our only option. Having spoken to other parents we are not alone in this thinking.

I cannot think of a single positive for the new 'Super school' I am struggling to understand the logic in the proposal. In fact it goes against their own Childrens Select Committee's report dated 19 June 2018 which states in its summary 'It would not be appropriate to combine all three schools on to one site'. Wiltshire Council state they need an extra 220 special needs places. The new school will be built for 350. If you total up the current children at Larkrise, St Nicholas and Rowdeford you have close to 300, so where are these extra places? It could be full before it even opens! Even if you take away those 16-19 year olds you would still fall short. We have been told that post 16 aged children from Trowbridge will go to Wiltshire College. This environment would not be suitable for the majority of our children especially children with PMLD like (name of child). The Council state that many Wiltshire children have to go out of county to get the provision they require. I do know that this is true but you will find that a lot of these children are high functioning autistic children. The new school will not cater for these children and so they will continue to go out of County. I am also unsure how the school will be staffed. Many of our staff are very local, some do not drive. Some are only employed for 1.5 hours a day at lunchtimes. They will not be prepared or able to travel to the new school no matter how much they love their job. Years of experience will be lost. The new school goes against the councils own School Places Strategy 2017-2022 which states 'schools should be located at the heart of their local communities to promote social inclusion. 50% of children at

Larkrise live in Trowbridge the rest in the towns and villages of West Wiltshire so surely they should be educated there. Trowbridge is the County town, the commercial hub of West Wiltshire. Many of the supported housing and supported employment projects are located in the town. This is where the majority of our children will end up living as adults so it is extremely important that they get to know it as children and feel they belong here.

I am an active member of the Save our Schools campaign. We would love to be working with the Council not against them to find a solution that suits everyone. We have engaged lots of parents, members of the local community and professionals and we feel you should be using this knowledge, experience, energy and passion to help you. We have lots of ideas just ask!

Yours sincerely

6.2.35 (28.02.19)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in regard to the Special School Consultation currently running in Wiltshire, namely the proposal to erect one amalgamated school in the countryside in 2023 and close the three existing special schools of St Nicholas in Chippenham, Larkrise in Trowbridge, and Rowdeford at Rowde.

I am a key stakeholder as I am a parent of a five-year-old child at St Nicholas school and I would like to state for the record that I wholeheartedly OPPOSE these plans for the reasons I will outline below.

Social inclusion

When I consider all of the merits of the single-option school, the main factor that leads me to believe that it is the wrong solution for children with SEND is that my son (and his friends) will be ripped away from his community, one that we as a family, and his school, have worked hard to ensure he can access and be a part of.

Research shows time and again that INCLUSION is the strongest factor in improving outcomes for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). While we don't have a truly inclusive education system, keeping schools in our main communities comes close. For instance, I was looking forward to the day when I could drop my daughter off at Hardenhuish Secondary school, which is right next door to her brother's school. Also, Hardenhuish hosts sports days and other events for St Nicholas students. My daughter would gain some semblance of normality, while my son would be able to interact and enjoy activities with his sister as well as his mainstream peers who he knows from outside school. Being able to learn life skills within his community, one that is part of his daily routine, will play a big part in his ability to gain any sort of independence. I can clearly see how hard St Nicholas school has worked to forge strong links with the Chippenham community, and how much the community values the school in its town, from supermarkets and Emery Gate, to Pit Stop raising money for us with their living Christmas trees each year and the manager at the café at John Coles Park running a scavenger hunt for students each spring.

Building a 'super-school' outside a small village does not meet the council's aim of community engagement; the proposal states that it will address the need for better community links with 'local' schools, but how will a rural school build better links with Hardenhuish, the school literally right next door to St Nicholas, where my daughter, her friends and his peers who all know my son and value him, will attend secondary school and is my son's 'local' school? I think the council doesn't understand the definition of 'community'; I'm sure there is a lovely community in Rowde village, but it is not OUR community, where we have friends and a support network, where we spend our leisure time, and the town in which my son will grow up and live as an adult.

Some might argue that the current schools aren't in every local community, and the Council claim that 80% of children are bussed in and are not local, but this is misleading as Trowbridge and Chippenham are major centres for shopping, leisure and employment and the schools are located in these strategic growth areas in the North of Wiltshire. Of the 65 students currently enrolled at St Nicholas, 55 of them live closer to St Nicholas than to Rowdeford, and 22 live within Chippenham itself (according to school data). My family and I live in Calne, but we consider Chippenham our community as it's where we spend most of our leisure time; it's where our son feels comfortable as he is in familiar surroundings, and therefore so do we.

This proposal will bring back institutionalisation. It will segregate young people with the most severe disabilities from their communities and reduce their options for participation, presence and making relationships and friendships. This could be seen as a human rights issue. Baroness Scott may have found sending her disabled child away to be educated worked 25 years ago, but times have changed – we want our children, disabled or not, to be seen and valued by their communities, and at present, they are. We hear awful stories in the news about vulnerable young people being bullied by other young people, both emotionally and physically, and I fear that if we isolate and prevent typical children from interacting with our SEND children, these crimes will only be set to rise as Wiltshire will move away from acceptance, tolerance and understanding.

The claim that the new school will act as a 'centre of excellence' to promote inclusive practice is aspirational only, since no evidence is provided that local schools would be better supported through outreach from a centralised hub, rather than by increased collaboration between existing schools based within their communities.

Money

If the mega school is about cost-savings and economies of scale, consider this:

The Ofsted Annual Report from 2016/17 shows that 94% of state-funded special schools received a good or outstanding rating, compared with 90% of primary schools. So if this IS about saving money and economies of scale and improving outcomes, why is the council not proposing to amalgamate three underperforming and inefficient primary schools, with able-bodied neurotypical children who are much more able to cope with a large-scale site, long bus journeys and being far from their communities and hospitals? It would be extremely difficult to convince these parents that this is ok, so why do it to us? It feels very much because children with special needs are seen as an easy option.

I note in the Interim Report of the SEND School Provision Task Group they state 'A widely noted problem from the SEND schools regarding EHCP's were instances of children entering SEND schools on bandings lower than that which accurately reflected the levels of their need. This meant that they were not receiving the appropriate levels of funding required. Examples included receiving a child who was funded at a band two, who in fact required the needs of a band three or four.'

This is very much the case for my son. He met ALL of the criteria for Band 3 and some of Band 4, but was awarded upper Band 2 by the council. If a majority of children at St Nicholas fell into a similar predicament over a range of several years, this would cause the school to run at a deficit. So it is therefore not the school's fault that it will run at a deficit in the coming years, but the Local Authority's. This strong evidence has been ignored in the Proposal.

The Proposal states that St Nick's is no longer fit for purpose and is over capacity. Again, this is the fault of the Local Authority, which maintains the school. Due to increased demand for SEND places, the Local Authority had a responsibility to act quickly to ensure it was meeting its duty; instead, they have chosen to ask schools, including St Nick's, to take on more and more pupils and to reduce its facilities (ie library) in order to accommodate more students. The blame cannot be laid at the school when they were only trying to help and work with the LA to meet its increasing demand on special places.

The council has provided some costings for different options but these are not robust. I have also not had an answer about where this money is coming from. £20 million is the projected cost, but yet the one-school option is still only an idea and any suggestions of what it could offer are met with enthusiasm, but this money will only stretch so far. I wonder if we couldn't look to other counties and what they are doing (not just Three Ways), such as in Oxford who are building another special school for £9 million. Could we not build another special school in a high-needs area and thereby alleviating pressure on the current schools, and divvy up the remaining money so that the current schools can be updated?

Architects often do not consult the end user, and as the Council has shown a lack of engagement with parents, families and staff, I wonder if the school will actually meet the needs of those it's meant to serve.

Travel and health risks

The theory is that healthcare professionals from VirginCare could work from the centre of excellence, rather than spending 30% of their time travelling (as mentioned during a consultation meeting); however, the Council is then just transferring this travel burden onto children as young as 4 years old! Why should 350+ children and young people be bussed into a central hub, when a few handfuls of adults can travel between sites? And if the centralised school is to indeed offer outreach opportunities, surely they will be travelling more? The focus of the proposal should be the quality of care to the child, not the healthcare professionals' travel times.

Which leads me to another major concern my family and I have: long transport times. We know this will be the case, as it is currently. The proposal uses the AA route planner, without taking into account multiple stops to collect/drop off children with different needs; it takes 10

minutes to get my son from our front door to being settled in the bus before they can set off (on the rare occasions he has got transport to school). Factor in a child who needs wheelchair access, and another 9 children to collect and the journey suddenly becomes 1.5hrs for what is normally 25 minutes for us. This is why I drive my son to school (after dropping off his sister at her school which is en route) and he only gets the bus home as otherwise, it's too long of a day for him and another barrier to learning.

We also worry that long journeys will affect his health; falling asleep in the car is a main trigger for his seizures and we often have to pull over to check he is ok and breathing. There is no point having an amazing school in the countryside if he has multiple seizures on the way there and back, which can cause brain damage and seriously affect his life chances. And because Rowde is in the opposite direction to his sister's school, he would have to travel on the bus both directions. Just this possibility has impacted my 8-year-old daughter who says 'But I don't want him to go to school there. I won't ever see him because he will spend so much time on the bus, and I love my little brother and like playing with him!' She attends dance classes in Chippenham and the logistics of managing her clubs or extracurricular activities with my son's school transport will be even trickier to manage if he were at school in Rowde.

We also have to consider the risks of being so far away from an A&E department, should he have a prolonged seizure, as well as GWH where (name of child) has routine hospital appts during the school day. It's currently 23 minutes to GWH from St Nick's, and there is an ambulance station around the corner to the school, while it would take nearly double the amount of time to drive from Rowde to GWH. Add to that the narrow and winding roads for an ambulance to access the school, and an emergency could prove dire. I just don't know if that's a risk I am willing take.

But I am concerned for those parents who don't drive, who won't be able to attend school events, parents' evenings, or even collect their children when they are ill, given such a remote location and the lack of public transport. What also of support staff who can currently walk to school and many of whom have disabled adult children of their own to work around? And what of the huge increase of traffic along a narrow road, frequented by HGVs headed to the Hills Recycling Centre or the Biomass Plant in Bromham? We heard the full council debate the impact of climate change should we choose to do nothing about it, and yet it looks as if the Council has an opportunity to look at the environmental impact this increase of traffic will have and come up with a more thoughtful solution.

Outreach vs Inreach

The Proposal offers to have specially trained staff that can be outsourced from the centre of excellence, to train staff at mainstream schools in order to support children with SEND in mainstream classrooms. However, it is not so much the lack of specialist training that mainstream schools require, but smaller ratios! Which costs money! I can't tell you how many parents I know whose children could access mainstream curriculum if given 1-1 support, but mainstream schools do not have this within their budgets; one might say 'the money follows the child' but then why do mainstream schools then say the money is used to pay for a Teaching Assistant to help the whole class and not just the student with an EHCP? And the money follows the child from the year before, so it often leaves mainstream schools unable to budget adequately. As the Interim Report of the SEND School Provision Task Group explains,

many parents have found that mainstream schools are reluctant to take on children with SEND because of the impact their different progress has on league tables. This is another problem the Council must address if it ever wants to see more children with SEND in mainstream classrooms.

Flawed evidence

Three Ways school in BaNES is cited by both the WPC and Cllr Mayes as an aspirational model because it is an amalgamated school, currently rated Outstanding by OfSTED. Yet this 'evidence' is flawed as it caters to just 220 pupils, much smaller than the 350+ planned for Wiltshire, with physical and sensory needs; it does not teach pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Severe Learning Difficulties and complex needs. It should also be noted that it is located in a much more urban environment and close to the community than the proposed site for Wiltshire. So this is not a fair comparison. Another example the council may have looked to is Severdale Academy in Shropshire, but while it caters to the entire range of special needs, it only has a Good Ofsted rating, and again is located closer to an urban environment, and therefore inclusion. This school also has trouble with staff retention, relying on a high-turnover of expensive agency staff, which is a detriment to children who need individual learning plans and staff who know them, the strategies that work, and are recognised rather than a constant stream of unfamiliar faces. I wonder how the Council plans to retain current staff and ensure they are 'appropriately paid' (p.39 of the report to Cabinet, Nov 2018), when support staff nearly double that of specialist staff?

It is also suggested that many Wiltshire families who currently send their children to Three Ways in BaNES will be more likely to choose the Rowde super school as it is 'in county', however there is no evidence to support this, and could very well have the opposite effect, with those of us with children with medical needs searching for a school closer to a hospital with specialist facilities and an A&E department.

This proposal drastically reduces parental choice. 71% of those who responded to the survey last summer voted to develop three schools, and the SEND task group recommended against building a super school and instead keeping schools in strategic towns, so why aren't stakeholders and experts being listened to and acted upon? The consultation findings also note that most respondents stated they preferred Rowde if a new school was built (which it would as they have more students!), but the Council draws a false correlation between this and respondents wanting it to be the site of a super school. It doesn't consider that perhaps respondents wanted specialist primary provision to be available at Rowde in ADDITION to the current schools in order to offer families more choice. The online survey in the summer was biased towards the one-school option, with many questions geared around it but not for the others, and misleading in its language as it left the 'one school' option open for interpretation.

The background of this proposal is a report commissioned in 2017 from an external consultant, John Wood. The data that informs the proposal is taken largely from this report (albeit selectively). However, the recommendations of the Wood Report differ considerably from the Special Schools Proposal. Wood proposed expanding provision in the south, and expanding collaboration between special and mainstream schools in the north of the county. He did not suggest closing popular local schools.

As I understand it, we are currently in the Representation phase for the one-school proposal, but in the formal Consultation period for the three school closures. Many of us parents have numerous and detailed questions regarding how either of these plans will work, yet even our initial questions submitted by the Council's deadline before the 27 November Cabinet meeting remain unanswered (or in the case of one question I asked regarding current transport costs and projected costs for the new school, I was told they would be 'about the same' which is NOT an appropriate answer!). This demonstrates a clear lack of engagement by the Council with key stakeholders to inform the future of specialist provision in Wiltshire. Even when I asked how the Council plans to engage with parents going forward, I'm told that this will be something new school will be responsible for. As the school will legally have to become an academy, it feels very much that the Council wants to wash its hands of SEND children.

Other objections:

The impact on the local economies of Chippenham and Trowbridge has not been explored, and in fact has been disregarded as it's not a 'rural' environment. However, as economic advantages are foreseen for the area around Rowdeford (jobs at the school, new café, etc), it is obvious that their gain is others' loss.

Failure to sufficiently explore the alternatives – The viability of retaining 3 enhanced schools with executive management has not been evaluated by the Council, including shorter travel costs and times (perhaps those out of county could be persuaded back if there were more spaces and more options in North Wiltshire?).

The proposal says it will cater from 3 years old, but does not explain how; will this impact or be in addition to the services provided by District Inclusion Centres? Local Preschools?

The proposal is very vague about what post-16 provision will look like. Considering the law change to cater up to 25 years of age, how is the proposal a 'Vision for Special Needs Education' when it seems to drop off at 16? Stating that Wiltshire College will be able to pick up where the school leaves off is inappropriate and obvious ignorance to what young people with SEND require.

The £20 million figure has been floated around without pinning down what exactly it will pay for, but crucially it is mentioned in the proposal that this money will go toward TWO centres of excellence, one in the north and one in the south (Exeter House in Salisbury). How will this money be split exactly? And how does the Council envision making this reduced figure stretch to cover a purpose-built school for 350+ children who require specialist (and expensive) facilities?

Perhaps a compromise can be reached by making appropriate amendments to the current proposal, such as:

- Installing an ambulance station on the one-school site to help mitigate health risks for children with serious health and life-limiting conditions
- Creating a 'Centre of Excellence' in Rowde, but keeping both St Nicholas in Chippenham and Larkrise in Trowbridge as satellite sites

- Widening the A342 to make access to the one school safer for mini-buses travelling to the site and having to contend with HGVs headed to the Hills site in Calne and Biomass plant in Bromham
- Installing wide pavements from the school site to the village of Rowde so that students can walk or be pushed in their wheelchairs in order to access the village (including making all shops, pubs etc in Rowde wheelchair accessible)
- Dual enrolment with a mainstream school so that students can integrate with their peers in their local community on a regular basis, where appropriate
- A PROMISE/GUARANTEE that all passenger transport times will not exceed 45 minutes

While these ideas are not inclusive, they could go some way towards mitigating some of the problems caused by the one-site option, making it difficult for stakeholders to disagree with the proposal.

There are so many questions, so many flaws, and so much evidence to the contrary that make this current proposal untenable. I sincerely hope that you will heed the advice of parents, especially those of us who are campaigning with a determined strength only those of us who have had our lives shattered and built them again can, and work with us to reach a compromise that works for the majority in Wiltshire. We are not 20-somethings with a naïve view of the world; many of us are highly educated and have/had professional careers before we had children with disabilities that they did not ask for. We are normal parents faced with extraordinary circumstances and we have learned to take on the most insurmountable of challenges head on, garnering support, knowledge and experience along the way in order to do what is best for our children. Please use this passion and powerful force to your advantage!

We can be allies to shape the future of SEND in our county and be an example to the rest of the country. Let's work together on this.

With sincere thanks,

[6.2.36 \(01.03.19\)](#)

Sir or Madame

To be clear as a parent of a medically vulnerable child attending St. Nicholas I OPPOSE the proposal.

In this email I am attempting to comment on areas of concern to me. As At the conclusion of the consultation today I hope that views have been gathered that will allow the decision makers to make an informed and safe decisions. I personally hope the consultation can answer all questions ask. To prevent progressing an untested, unvalidated or unsafe plan.

These are

1. How is this proposal, BETTER FOR ALL?

2. What negative impacts are anticipated over the next 5 years by Wiltshire Council while this strategy is being developed, delivered and introduced? And what mitigation already/will be put in place to address negative impacts.
3. Who are the loser in terms of geographical location, SEND//EHCP and/or medical needs in the proposed future Centre of Excellence approach compared to maintaining provisions in all the current settlements in and for North Wiltshire? How is this better for all?
4. Do views, evidence and professional inputs agree that the following holds for the school closures as well the new school “will have an overwhelming positive impact for children and young people with SEND both in the school and supported through the Centre of Excellence in terms of:
 - Wellbeing
 - Progress
 - Attainment
 - Health
 - Community opportunities
 - Inclusion and integration”
1. At what age, why and from what previous placement do parents choose to send their children to
 1. Threeways
 2. St. Nicholas
 3. Larkrise
 4. Rowdeford
2. What differences in views exist between primary, secondary and post 16 parents and pupils at the different settings?
3. Specifically for Rowdeford without the benefit of hindsight is the feedback on whether parents would have chosen to send their child there at the start of primary schooling?
4. Is it understood if all the reasons parents made their current choices can be delivered by the enlarged Rowdeford to parental satisfaction?
5. What parental, educational and attendance concerns are not as yet definitely addressed in the published closure proposal, on which representation closes today 1st March
6. Will the enlarged Rowdeford as the current Rowdeford appears to be providing education to secondary school aged students Countywide.
7. Will or have changes to SEND provision in South Wiltshire been excluded from comments and assessments for changes to North Wiltshire.
8. Given the lack of students from Marlborough attending Larkrise or St. Nicholas.
 1. Is this due to there being no SEND children needing this provision
 2. That these students are being educated in independent special schools and/or out of area.
 3. Has the underlying reason be understood and would this reason impact the catchment area area of the enlarged Rowdeford for any specific SEND pupils.
 4. Separately will the new Rowdeford be better able to support children in and around Marlborough (and Cricklade)

Also from the published proposal I ask

1. How is the distance from the alternate site in Chippenham to the town centre measured at 2.2 miles, what are the impediments about alternate sites like the undeveloped land

near Chippenham Hospital. Or the original or remaining space on the council/ex-council land surrounding of the new Chippenham lidl foodstore.

2. Whether the transport plan is robust in design and test as it hasn't been shared.
 1. Does it distinguish between current and future time on transport separately for primary and secondary aged students. As even if overalls there was no significant increase in average travel time, increasing time from specific locations, or reducing travel time for less medically vulnerable Secondary aged students at the expense of increases for medically complex or Primary aged students should be stated and mitigated.
 2. How without reducing student numbers, having more parents drive to school or moving to a centralised pickup, drop off model (which has been dismissed) can the following claim be supported "be able to reduce the number of pick-ups". Particularly given some children at Larkrise (and St. Nicholas) are not using any transport to attend school.
 3. Whether the following can even be considered aspirational "There is guidance from the DfE about reasonable journeys. We will try to ensure that every child has a journey within these limits" as it appear impossible for a primary school child from Cricklade to reach the school on point to point transport within the primary school age limit even before considering "For children with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible."
 4. What is at the heart of the travel plan apart from hope, as there should be good quality evidence to confirm the belief. & not aspirational sentences like "We hope that by choosing a non-town location we will reduce the amount of time in congested town traffic at peak times"
3. How the requirement to maintain Community usage of the Hydro pools has been addressed.
4. Where Displaced pupils are going as the proposal seems to be at best vague and a worst deny displacement will occur due to school closures. Beyond that it doesn't detail what schools and colleges the pupils will be offered places at.
5. How is this change being delivered by the proposal and closures "Currently pupils have to choose between a specialist or mainstream provision. The new approach will ensure flexibility of choice and a full range of provision to meet the spectrum of need."
6. Regarding medical support onsite this is an aspiration as I read it, "This will mean that there **can** be full time nursing provision as well as other therapeutic support, reducing the need for hospitalisation and parents to travel to the school to support medical concerns.", what level and type of medical care is being proposed, how will this avoid hospitalisation? As beyond first aid while emergency services arrive what can safely be provided? While there may be some occasion a medical opinion is helpful to day to day care, under what circumstances would it be prudent to not have parents aware and/or planning to attend school or a major hospital if their child's health has or is deteriorating? (Given just yesterday we were provide a urgent appointment following a hospital day admission a week ago for Physio in 2 weeks time, the next date a qualified Physio attends St. Nicholas School. The gap between current needs and expectation, future expectation and reality appears so wide as to require an immediate review outside this process.
7. Is there not a contradiction in needing in county capacity due to limits in availability out of county but rely on the same out of county provision to conversely maintain parental

chose "In addition, while Wiltshire has been able to benefit from school places in neighbouring counties, these schools are also now reaching capacity and need places for pupils from their own Local Authority. Parental choice will be maintained via continued access to all schools within the region which includes Outstanding and Good Special schools in BANES, Somerset and Swindon as well as Exeter House in the south of Wiltshire." Also were and have these other authorities made aware and agreed that they may by this proposal be called upon to provide places due to WCC need to deliver parental choice.

8. Finally "Rowde does have good community transport links" in context of comparison with the principle settlements of Trowbridge and Chippenham seems unlikely and isn't substantiated. What does "good community transport links" mean or look like for Rowde and does the distance and path between these "links" in Rowde and Rowdeford mean Rowdeford actually benefits from them. To give an example if meaning and misunderstanding, Fishguard once had the most regular train service in the country, twice a day around 2pm and 2am. Not frequent but regular.

On a tangent but maybe worth raising, will the proposal support distinguish between those solely with identified Learning Disabilities and those with identified Learning and Cognitively impairment. As many students have only the former diagnosis and may or may not be Cognitive impaired, therefore there should be an assumption in any provision that there is a learning capacity, without or until there is conclusive evidence to the contrary.

Thank you for your consideration

[6.2.37 \(01.03.19\)](#)

Related to the Decision maker

I meant to send several weeks back but appear to have missed it .Also note the ps which I put together back in November.

I ask in good faith that you consider the best interests of every child as individuals in the decision to authorise the closure and removal of current primary and secondary educational provision from Chippenham and Trowbridge.

Ultimately I believe I have previously reference school size, being in the local community, transport journey time, or this being a case of ambition over common sense.

I'm already unclear as to what the new school community or communities will be and on what basis these can be considered better than the current school communities. My wife suggested the new school could feel like a zoo. Particularly if it does have a cafe open to the public.

I want to raise children's lives in the absolute most literal sense.

If you decide to close these schools and increase the cumulative distance from home to school and school to hospital for any family. I feel sure this decision will be tested by the legal system. Either by Judicial Review or Coroners Court. Personally I hope it is the former.

I feel my personal experience today is a perfect example of the problems around the plan.

Having been called by school again due to seizure activity today, and agreeing she didn't sound fit to travel by bus. I arrived at school to be ushered into the medical room because she's had/was having another prolonged seizure.

If the distance were further would I drive faster, would I take more risks, would I be as safe driving home with her in the car given the increased distance, would the journey itself be more fatiguing and introduce its own additional health risks. Could I call an ambulance while in transit and correctly get them to my unfamiliar location. Could the school be honest in all circumstances as to the health of the child and not risk the parent taking undue risks, while worrying about their child.

The following is an edit of something already in the public domain as it was presented to WCC during the November council meeting.

This is our own experience which highlights issues and uncertainties at the core of many parent objections to this proposal. And why we never expected this idea to be seen as viable and progressed to a proposal.

We live in Corsham and our daughter attends St. Nics.

In 2011 she suffered a prolonged febrile convulsion, an event that changed our lives, as within the week we were devastated to be informed she had suffered life changing brain damage, from a brain insult.

The seizure was eventually controlled when she was anaesthetised at the RUH. Unfortunately the RUH wasn't equipped to provide her ongoing care and she had to be transferred to BCH PICU for specialist paediatric care. It took 6 weeks to get her home, 8 months to finally rid ourselves of the NG tube and feeding pump.

We do know pre event she was a Globally Delayed Autistic child who had taken her first and only independent steps two days before.

And now we have recovered to an 11 year old Epileptic wheelchair dependant non-verbal child with complex Cerebral Palsy and hidden under that is still Autism. She is on anti-epileptic medication while still having multiple seizure on many days.

The reason for outline this is to point out we will never know how much more or less of her cognitive skills she would have retained or lost due to variations in the time for the ambulance to attend our home, the time to transfer to A&E, or time taken to undertake steps to stop her convulsing at the RUH.

I'm not sure I would want to know.

We don't even know if the transfer between RUH and BCH hampered her recover.

I wouldn't want Wiltshire ambition to create uncertainty or worse certainty in others that the selected location and/or its proximity to home and amenities contributed to health deteriorates, injuries or death.

Our daughter today has a sense of humour and her own character, her facial expression communicate so much, and she isn't medically that complex.

As SEND parents we take and accept risks everyday. We as a family balance seizure control with quality of life.

When she is unwell we balance using or not using services, and for school this includes deciding between bus, which is already marginal on the state 45 minutes door to door or car which is closer to 15 minutes door to door.

Also whether to attend full day or truncated day, balancing education, rest and overall health. The one school proposal restriction and reduces options and adds risks and complexity for many parents.

Personally we are lucky. We aren't living with the fears an immediately life limiting conditions brings and therefore don't know what the future holds. Not every SEND parent has that luxury.

The proposal expect to deliver so much, it guarantees little. It takes away choice and importantly adds burdens and risk.

Is this proposal fair to parents and aligned to legal obligations to us. As parents do we have no option but to accept a lack of choice in tandem with being burden with additional costs, risks and stress?

The proposal appearing to be focused on Education not EHC, and doesn't appear to take account that our children are complex and vulnerable.

Yes every child now and in the future should be able to access high quality education. But to access education the child must first be present.

As a minimum expectation we as parents should be able to expect a future that does not require any one of us to accept greater burdens and risks.

As a final remark I would ask to look to your conscience as to where liability should lie if a child suffers as a result of these decisions.

It was mentioned by WPCG that they have no remit to challenge council policy or decisions. And that they conduct consultation as requested by WCC. This creates a potential or actual conflict in there ability to acting or support SEND parents in situations where an advocate is required or conflict exists with the council.

For the school closures the decision maker needs to align and group responses in accordance with stakeholder impact, as levels of impact are as important if not more important than the number of responders impacted. The current consultation / request for comment could be perceived or actually lacks clarity, which could invalidate the ability of a decision maker to understand the differing groups view and therefore make safe determination in favour of on the proposal impossible. This does lead to a question as to what organisation or process ensure consultation is of good quality and in accordance and alignment with legal and central government guidance and obligations.

Regards

Ps.

I was recently reminded of this

Further School building questions to be asked or addressed.

1. How many classrooms is the school likely to consist of?
2. Are all classrooms being build to the same footprint?
3. Will all classrooms be fitted with changing places?
4. How will Wilts Council ensure the school stays as a Centre of Excellence and at the leading edge of SEND education?
5. Has any academy or partnership already assisted in the design, discussion or planning of this proposal
6. Is or has any arrangement, agreement or discussion with any organisation to run or maintain the school or site been conducted?
7. What will be the design capacity of each classroom?
8. For a one size/location fits all school have multiple edge cases in terms of educational, health and care needs been considered for the proximity to location and provision?
9. Has Consultation included best practice review for school sizing to allow children to successful interact, associate and socialise with peers?
10. Government policy suggest Primary school children should never be expected to travel for more than 45 minutes by transport with the expectation disable will travel for less. Can and will this be fulfilled in letter and spirit for all locations in North Wilts with the proposed location of the school? Does this include boarding and disembarking of passengers?
11. Will Wiltshire or the School differentiate in travel restrictions for disabled students based on age or conditions?
 - 11a. Does Wilts include real life pick up times for total route times? And what percentage of pupils journey are currently in the real world complete with 45minutes? The fact that already significant pupil journey fail this test doesn't mean it OK to let it persist.
 - 11b. Was consultation with parents and pupils be graded by SEND need or just lump as one view? As parents and pupils from St .nic and Larkrise are likely to have very different views and ability to articulate them than pupils at Rowdeford given the differences in provision ages and needs between sites.
12. In comparison to Sainsbury's Chippenham how will the school compare in car parking and building footprint. We are assuming approx 80% the car park size with a predominantly single storey building similar in footprint to the store?
13. What size buses will be typically used to bus children in?
14. What will be the mix of buses and taxis to fulfil transport restrictions?

15. Given the greater distances will the school / LA compensate or provide transport as required by parents to support inclusion?
16. Will breakfast and after school clubs be guaranteed to be part of the offering?
17. Will LA or school be providing associated transport for out of school provisions?
18. How many disabled parking space for parents will be provided?
19. Will the school and parking be sized such that school events can be extended to invite all parents of all children?
20. Will there be a helipad on site for the air ambulance?
21. At the 3 schools under treat of closure is Wiltshire ensure each pupil is and will continue to be adequately funded/supported from all source to deliver on the commitments in each EHCP. How does the council as the responsible body ensure the funding is matched to the full education and association equipment needs of each individual.
22. Given significant numbers of students are non verbal, how did the evidence get gathered in a non discriminatory way.

6.2.38 (01.03.19)

Dear Sir or Madam,

Further to my previous email, I realised I haven't explained exactly why St Nicholas School should remain in Chippenham. It isn't just that it is located in our community and that our son is near home and A&E to reduce health risks, it is also because it is a really good school. I know OfSTED disagree, but parents of older children and young people alike give it rave reviews for the progress their children have made.

I was weary of my son leaving Springboard DSC in Pewsham to start school last September as they are exceptionally brilliant at helping very young children make progress, and were crucial to us as a family learning how to support our son. I was worried that his new school would be more or less a babysitting service, or that they would flap about him having epilepsy and needing to walk them through his types of seizures, how to respond etc. But my fears were alleviated almost immediately: they could recognise our son's extreme sensory needs straight away; they could see he was a climber and pushed the OT to get him a helmet to keep him safe; they have stringent rules on his emergency medication and are eager to hear about any changes in his seizures; they saw the gaps in his learning that we hadn't, such as being able to use utensils to eat and getting the speech and language team to assess him straight away, which resulted in him progressing from PECS to using a speech device. His teacher and his TAs are incredibly knowledgeable and patient people who know how to keep children like my son moving forward! And the experiences he has had are wide and varied: from weekly swims in the hydrotherapy pool (swimming is a crucial skill we want (name of child) to learn as the rate of children with severe, non-verbal autism who go wandering and are found in water is much too high), to his first nativity at the local church, a Halloween party, Remembrance Day picnic, and an after-school disco in which families could come and be sociable, baking bread, making Christmas crafts, rebound therapy, soft play, sensory room... He is SO much calmer than he was, will sit for long periods of time (from a maximum of 2mins when he started to 10mins+ now!), engaging with an activity. He is much more aware of his world and of us. I can't tell you how pleased we are at how well he is thriving at school! Our test for a good school was: will he be safe? Check. Will he make progress? Check. Will he be

happy? Check. This last point is important, because we don't know how long we will have with (name of child) and we want him to have the best life possible.

So it isn't that St Nicholas is just any old school in our community, but because it is the BEST school for him and children with SEND, and I vehemently oppose its closure! We need MORE special schools, not fewer.

I also wanted to point out that I am disappointed that John Hamp, the headteacher at Springfields Academy, an independent (and therefore expensive to the Council?) special school, has previously been consulted and is often quoted as supporting the one-school option in North Wiltshire. It feels that he has a vested interest, perhaps vying for the executive head role or the same academy trust taking over the new school when it must be handed over to an academy. And if this is the case, why is the Council pandering to him at all (especially if there is a clear conflict of interest) given that he is running a school which also 'Requires Improvement' by OfSTED and one of the main aims of the proposal seems to be focused on creating an 'Outstanding' school?

Finally, I would like to ask that a flood risk assessment for the Rowdeford site is published in any further documentation going forward.

Many thanks,

6.2.39 (01.03.19)

Dear Directors, Commissioners, and Councillors,

I am writing with reference to the potential changes at Rowdeford School.

I would first like to say that it is very pleasing to hear that Wiltshire Council have decided to keep a school at Rowdeford, and it's encouraging that extra funding is being provided.

I have a son at Rowdeford School and during his time there he has blossomed, and grown from a vulnerable, animal fearing, heavily dependent child into a confident young man who is willing to try new things, do things for himself, has embraced the natural world, and is more aware of his place in society and how to manage himself within it.

The current school at Rowdeford has made my son the person he now is.

Rowdeford have used the fantastic enriching outside space for my son that enables non-academic students to learn practical skills, such as animal welfare and horticulture, for future employment which in turn leads to more independent adult lives. The outside space also provides benefits for all pupils by reducing stress and decreasing undesirable behaviours, it increases happiness and teaches patience & resilience. This mixture of woodland, field, walled garden, small holding, and so on must be maintained.

The existing teams of committed staff who work hard together helping pupils fulfil their potential and enabling them to become as independent as possible within their local communities must be allowed to continue the fabulous work they do and the teams must be allowed to grow organically. The school is already growing naturally, this needs to continue.

The suggestion that the existing Rowdeford School be replaced is worrying. It would be a huge and almost impossible challenge to create new cohesive teams of staff, in a new environment, with all new buildings and equipment and expect them to be able to provide the best support to both existing pupils who, in the main, find change difficult and to new pupils who staff have to learn and understand their individual needs. Growth needs to be managed sympathetically to the needs of all pupils and with minimum disruption to existing students.

The existing school has a wonderful ethos, a fantastic sense of and place in the

Yours sincerely

6.2.40 (23.01.19)

Dear Councillor Wickham,

We are writing to you as concerned governors and parents regarding the local authority proposal to close Larkrise and St Nicholas Special Schools and move the pupils to a new 'super school' in Rowde. We ask you to reflect upon and reconsider the cabinet decision made on November 27th as we firmly believe that it is not in the best interests of Wiltshire children.

We are aware that the increase in numbers of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities [SEND] means that the present schools have run out of space. We do understand and agree that both schools need new sites but we think that re-locating to Rowde is the wrong solution for both schools and more importantly for the communities of Chippenham and Trowbridge.

The proposal you have seen does list as unique to the 'one school' option all those advantages for pupils which apply EQUALLY to the two school option. In addition the two school option actually resolves the outstanding objections especially those concerning social inclusion and transport.

Our children have complex and severe learning and physical disabilities. Some are on oxygen and some have life limiting conditions. Many have autism. 'An outstanding education' for these pupils is about learning life skills embraced within their ever growing and thriving communities alongside their peers in mainstream schools. Most children like ours do not leave home at 18, go to university, travel the world. But one day, they are going to grow up and leave school. And if school is miles away in a small village they never visit out of school time - somewhere they've only ever been to on a bus or in a taxi - then where will they belong? You will be aware that Wiltshire Council has long argued against sending children out of county, in part because of the difficulty of re-integration when they return. Putting all children with SEND in one school, disconnected from any community with which they are familiar will simply create the same reintegration problem all over again.

Today, many of our school leavers still live in the Chippenham or Trowbridge area. Some of them have worked voluntarily at a local garden centre. Some are in independent supported living. Some of them go to the cinema together. Sometimes they meet up, with their support

assistants in local cafes. Many of them have been friends since they were at nursery together. They will probably be friends for life. These are successful young adults, living in the area they have grown up in, learning to manage their lives one step at a time in a place where they are recognised, greeted in the street, fussed over in the shops. This is invaluable support - and it costs nothing. We need the communities of Chippenham and Trowbridge to help us to raise our children. A wonderful example of what can be achieved when young people are put at the heart of their community.

Being in Chippenham or Trowbridge places our children near their peers in mainstream schools. These mainstream children will be the doctors, teacher and policy makers of the future. They need to know about SEND children who experience all disabilities. You will agree, I am sure, that we do not want to go back to the days of discrimination, isolation and exclusion.

We understand the need to spend money in the most effective way possible but we do not think the current proposal is the best way to achieve this. We have not seen any proper costed proposals, and wonder if you have either, and question whether the projected capital outlay and 'economies of scale' would be enough to cover all promises made in the proposal. We question how resources such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy are suddenly going to be available in Rowde when there is a current significant shortage in the county. We feel particularly that the estimated costs for transport will be much higher than predicted. Wherever you place a new school, children will need to be transported to it but as the majority of our children live in the Chippenham or Trowbridge area there can be no advantage in transporting them further away. Additionally this would create lengthy travel times for vulnerable children, potentially causing further distress and, of course, parents would have greater difficulty in getting to the school.

Wiltshire Council has a fantastic opportunity to develop a properly integrated system of education and social care, from birth to supported independent living, with two Centres of Excellence supporting SEND children right at the HEART of their own community. Over the last five years, the Council has shown that it can be cutting edge in developing its "Local Offer": a 0 - 25 SEND service which brings education and social care together to put the needs of its children and young people first, from planning to funding to placement. The next logical step, surely, is to develop this provision in the same community - not to focus upon only the cheapest option, which is miles away from where it is most needed. The two school option, with a cost of just £4 million more than the one school option, would retain special needs education in the fastest growing areas in the north. Wiltshire Council's own Task Group concluded that, "it would not be appropriate to combine all three schools into one site," and their own School Places strategy document states that children are best educated, "at the heart of their community."

We do wish you to understand that we are not negative about the council. However we believe and assert that the two school option is not only in the best interest of our children but is also the best use of Wiltshire funds. As a Wiltshire councillor we urge you look again at the issue and listen to the wishes of the 73% of respondents who clearly voted against the one school option and wanted Wiltshire SEND children to be socially included in the two growing communities that provide services and social activities for everyone. Please reconsider the two school option, to save special needs education in Chippenham and Trowbridge and

ensure that our most vulnerable young people are enabled to live and learn seamlessly within their family communities.

6.2.41 (26.02.19)

We would like to raise the following concerns regarding the Special Schools Consultation:

1) Whilst the proposals for the new school in the North of the county sound great on paper, our concern is that the bulk of the project (and therefore, the money) seems to be focusing on this, and we are unclear as to how the provision at Exeter House School will be expanded - ie how many pupils do Exeter House school currently have on roll, and how many will there be after the expansion? What new facilities will there be at Exeter House?

2) Following on from this, we understand that the £20m investment is capital investment only. Where is the money that will enable the schools to afford to run once the buildings are in place?

3) What provision will there be for those children who do not need to be in a Special School full time (or at all) but who need more than a main stream school can offer? The county currently has only one resource base for secondary school aged pupils which is in Chippenham, and all of the resource bases for primary school aged pupils in the Salisbury area are full. There is a HUGE level of need for this type of provision across the county but these new proposals do not address this need at all.

4) Linked to this, the John McNeill Centre in Salisbury currently has a waiting list. They are unable to open for additional hours to accommodate more children due to a lack of funds. Will there be any increase in the provision for pre-school children with additional needs as well as those of school age?

5) Part of the proposal is to use outreach work to link the special schools with main stream schools. Could you please inform us as to how this will work in practice?

We hope these questions will be addressed in future communications regarding the consultation.

6.3 Additional emails from professionals

6.3.1 Dr Andrew Murrison MP (10.01.19)

Dear Sir,

I write to formally object to plans by Wiltshire Council to close Larkrise School in my constituency.

Larkrise is classified as good by Ofsted. It has the active support of the community and engagement with the community is a very special feature of school life. Larkrise is well loved by its students and their families. It is located centrally in Trowbridge which is the county town.

The council is right to want to improve provision for students with special educational needs. I am pleased that it will underpin its commitment by spending £20 million. It has correctly identified that something needs to be done but, in my view, come up with the wrong solution, one that will disadvantage those I represent.

Wiltshire council appears to have designed a solution before adequately exploring unfulfilled need. I regret to say that the council has been intent on closing Larkrise for a long time. I recall a wholly specious argument placed in the public domain about hoists being unfit for purpose which was simply incorrect and was distressing. The council's single minded approach to creating a very large school near Devizes and closing down more local provision seems odd and its argument strained.

My experience over many years and as an ex governor of a special school has been that the most traumatic part of the school day for students and their families is travel to and from school. I believe the authors of the plan have seriously misunderstood the importance of this. The proposals would make that feature of the school day so much worse. I would say that the transport consideration is at least as important as the extra services that the council is saying can only be provided through its proposed new school near Devizes.

The student population in question responds best to smaller, more intimate settings. Given than this is generally accepted, the closure of three small schools and their replacement with one catering for 350 pupils seems perverse.

To a greater extent than is the case for mainstream pupils, special needs students are likely to remain in their locality into adulthood. Consequently, familiarity and local links are so much more important. That is well understood at Larkrise where community involvement and inculcation with the locality are defining features of the school experience. That is a model that should be emulated, not undermined. I fear the centralising proposals will destroy one of the very great merits of special needs schooling for my constituents.

I share the council's desire to reduce out of county placement, particularly where this is disproportionately costly as a result of private placement or involves unreasonable travel. However, I am not convinced that the council has maximally explored joint working with neighbouring authorities. I have no principled objection to Wiltshire students being educated just across the border or students from neighbouring counties being schooled in Wiltshire. What matters is what works for them, commensurate with affordability.

The council has said that the Larkrise site is inadequate, that its buildings are old and that the footprint as it is insufficient for current demand and for the future. I agree. However, I do not accept that the council has done all it can to identify an alternative site or sites, particularly given the availability of nearby brownfield assets and the large scale greenfield home building programme with attendant infrastructure including mainstream schools underway around Trowbridge and in West Wiltshire generally.

Finally, can I finish by saying that I welcome the attention being given by Wiltshire Council to special needs and its willingness to invest. I feel strongly that its plan is misconceived and I look forward to working with it to achieve an outcome that improves the school experience of some of my most vulnerable constituents.

Yours sincerely,
Andrew Murrison
DR ANDREW MURRISON MP

6.3.2 St Paul Without Parish Council (27.01.19)

The St Paul Without Parish Council wishes Wiltshire Council to consider the following comments during its final round of decision making on the proposed new 'super-school' for special needs education.

This Council acknowledges the undoubted benefits of centralising the use of the available capital funding and the best technical and teaching expertise in one place. Our concern is that the chosen location for the new school will present children living in the north of the county additional and unnecessary challenges to those that they already experience.

This Council believes it is important that all children remain and are educated in their wider local communities. In this way children become known to other members of the community, have reasonable access to important facilities such as shops and libraries, and have access to mainstream schools.

In apparent direct conflict with these important features, the WC proposal intends to build the new school in a rural location distant from many of the population centres in northern Wiltshire. Assuming a capacity of 350, this will produce a minimum of 50 minibus journeys both morning and afternoon. Leaving aside the potential adverse impact upon local rural roads, the journey time for children from the north of the county could be almost 2 hours each trip assuming a number of enroute pickups. No young child, let alone one with medical needs should have to endure this.

The choice of this rural site has produced a further concern in that medical attention will take longer to reach the school than hitherto. Evidence is available to demonstrate that paramedics are required regularly at these facilities and frequently need to arrive as quickly as possible, particularly in the case of epileptic children where timing is crucial.

In summary, this Council acknowledges the difficulty in balancing the need to provide the best possible care and education for these children given the present financial constraints, however it is not convinced that the chosen site is adequate to deliver the undoubted benefits of centralising facilities and expertise.

6.3.3 Chair of Governors, St Sampson's CoE Primary School (04.02.2019)

I'm writing this email on behalf of St Sampson's CoE Primary School, where I am the Chair of Governors. Whilst the building of any new specialist provision has to be welcomed, there are a few key areas that concern both our Governing Body, as well as some of the parents who may wish to use the specialist school in the future. A key issue is the simple geographical distance from our school to the new proposed school near Devizes. We believe that it's too far for our children to travel and would have appreciated a specialist provision being closer to us. Whilst I appreciate that not everyone can be satisfied by the geographical location in a large county, the large distance to be covered daily will also hinder parental engagement with the new school; It may well be that such a geographical distance will simply deter some parents from forging key links with teachers at the school, by not attending parents' evenings, phonics sessions and drop-ins etc. Clearly, there is the idea that the new school will be able to share its excellent resources and knowledge with teachers at other schools in the county, however I feel that our school will be at a disadvantage again, as it's too far to send our staff there to benefit from regular outreach work.

I do hope you take our views in account when making your decisions.

Kind regards,

Julian Thomas

Chair of Governors,

St Sampson's CoE Primary School, Cricklade.

6.3.4 Nicola Grove, SEND Researcher and Trainer (08.02.2019)

Dear Wiltshire Council

I am writing to you as a Wiltshire resident and as a professional researcher and trainer in the field of special needs and disabilities, with particular expertise in youngsters with complex needs and severe disabilities. I have also a background in policy and curriculum development in special education. I have carefully considered your proposal and have read all your supporting documents.

This is an extremely retrograde step and one that I would urge you to reconsider.

My objections and concerns are as follows:

The idea of creating a large generic special school in 30 acres of grounds 3 miles out of Devizes has all the hallmarks of an institution. This may not be your intention at the outset, but this is a real risk when you are talking about the placement of young people with severe and profound disabilities who do not live locally. Your comments on engagement with the community (visiting to take advantage of the grounds and a cafe) are insensitive to say the least and indicate that you have little understanding of what is meant by social inclusion.

The notion of a "centre of excellence" that will support inclusion is long on aspiration and very short on evidence. Large training schools may work in urban areas and where the outreach/inreach is local for the majority of pupils, but here they would suck in expertise that would be better deployed in local schools.

You claim that journey times will cancel each other out, and make the extraordinary suggestion that because one child and one assistant enjoyed their travel time, this will have little impact. You must realise that for young people with ASDs, and with severe and profound disabilities, travel is - on the contrary - stressful and exhausting for them and their families. In fact my analysis indicates that journey times are likely to increase significantly for 75% of Larkrise youngsters and 45% of St Nicholas youngsters - in total, 63% of children will be travelling further to school. There is also the question of how staff who currently live near their local schools will get to work, even supposing they are able to keep their jobs.

You are riding roughshod over the views of 71% of parents whose lives will be affected by the proposal, and will severely restrict their choices of the right school for their children.

I am amazed by your dismissal of concerns regarding the impact of the school closures on the local economies. Put simply, since you yourselves estimate that Rowde and Devizes will benefit from the proposed new school, it is clear that Chippenham and Trowbridge (already towns in need of an economic boost) will lose out.

You appear not to have considered other possible alternatives which could in fact be cheaper in the long run. Your financial predictions are not robust.

I urge you to go back to the drawing board and consult in a real and authentic way with the local communities, with educational experts and above all with parents and families. Yes, Wiltshire is facing challenges, but with good will and the use of real evidence of what works, it is possible to come up with a solution that will mean that all children with SENDs are able to access the provision that is right for them, within reasonable distance of where they live.

Yours sincerely
Nicola Grove

6.3.5 Jon Hamp, Head Teacher, Springfields Academy (15.02.19)

I support the bravery and pragmatism of the Local Authority's proposal to create a centre of excellence for SEND provision in North Wiltshire. Although Rowdeford, St Nics and Larkrise are undoubtedly good schools, small schools with small numbers are not viable or sustainable long term.

This proposal allows for a centralisation of expertise and resources with the necessary range of required services and provision to meet need, in one location.

For children this can mean that specialist equipment and facilities are available on site for those who need them, supported by a broad team of therapists, teachers and care staff, whilst admin and other functions are kept to a minimum rather than duplicated across three schools.

This project will succeed through collaboration. As a special school leader in Wiltshire I aim to work with the Local Authority, and others, to ensure that; the proposal is delivered, that current concerns are taken into account and answered, and that it provides outstanding opportunity for children and young people with SEND. This is an exciting opportunity to build a beacon of outstanding practice for Wiltshire.

6.3.6 Westbury Town Council (19.02.19)

Westbury Town Council met last night to agree their response to the above consultation. Councillor King read out the letter from Aileen Bates – chair of governors at St Nicholas. Our members would like to add their support to all the comments made in this communication. In addition, the members would like you to note the following and to ask that you to feed their comments into the consultation.

- There are significant concerns about the size of the schools proposed. Smaller schools are more suited to children with complex needs.
- Locality - The schools are outside of the local community and this can lead to isolation.
- Community – There are concerns that the proposal disconnects children from the community in which they live.
- Transport – the length of journeys both in time & distance for vulnerable children (and their families).
- Staff – There will be an impact on staff and their work life balance, travel & transporting resources.

Many thanks for your help in this matter,
Deborah Urch MBIFM
Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Westbury Town Council

6.3.7 Chippenham Town Council Response to Consultation (27.02.19)

Dear Sir or Madam,

A meeting of Town Councillors was held on Tuesday 12th February to consider a response to the Statutory Notice on the intention to discontinue three special schools; St Nicholas School, Chippenham, Rowdeford School, Devizes, and Larkrise School, Trowbridge.

As a result of this meeting and in consultation with my Councillors I have been asked to respond to your request for comments. The Town Council objects to the closure of St. Nicholas School on the grounds of the following:

1. Social Inclusion

Councillors are of the opinion that the majority of St. Nicholas students are from Chippenham and that they should be educated alongside their peers and not separated by having to travel to a school outside of the Town. The Council are of the view that special needs children should not be treated any differently to mainstream schoolchildren and should be educated within the

Town. An integral part of social learning of students who attend St. Nicholas School is that they derive from the community within it. This is due to children being recognised in the community by their peers and others and is an example of how children are learning to live their lives independently.

2. Transport

The Town Council has noted that the existing transport budget is under considerable pressure with increasing costs to be met from a reduction in overall budget. The travel time as set out in the proposals ignores pick-ups and that vulnerable children will be travelling further which in some cases exceeds the recommended maximum travel time as set out by Central Government. St. Nicholas School currently offers children the opportunity to get to a range of activities within walking distance. This would not be possible at the proposed new school in Rowde. Finally, the Town Council feel that access to the new school would present a number of problems including congestion, increased pollution/CO2 emissions and other infrastructure costs that have not been fully considered. In addition visitors, volunteers and other professionals who need to attend St. Nicholas School will undoubtedly be put off from attending the new school due to the longer journey time.

3. Resources

The Town Council is aware that some of the students who attend St. Nicholas School have profound, life-limiting conditions and there is often the need for a parent or an ambulance to attend the School quickly. The location of St. Nicholas School is very close to an ambulance station and clearly such emergency services would take considerably longer to attend the new location in Rowde, should there be an emergency. There would be considerable disruption to the teaching and pastoral care staff of St. Nicholas School should services be transferred to Rowde. It is questionable whether the current resource team including volunteers would relocate such a distance given the cost to individuals. It is also questionable whether there is sufficient population in Rowde to support the new school in terms of teaching/pastoral care staff.

Councillors noted that the hydrotherapy pool at St. Nicholas School was funded and supported by the people of Chippenham including numerous businesses and a large charity. It is unclear at this point whether the combined demand from three schools into one at Rowde would be able to provide sufficient hydrotherapy pool facilities.

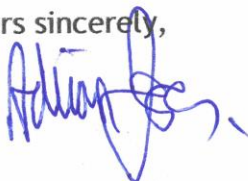
4. Finances

The Town Council wishes to question whether the proposed budget of £20 million to provide a new school is realistic. Given comments already made on access roads and local infrastructure considerations it is questionable whether £20 million is an accurate capital figure to provide what is such a specialist school facility. In addition, the running costs of any new school should be brought into the decision-making process.

Finally, Councillors provided the following comments against the new school proposal;

- Chippenham has unique support services including the hydrotherapy pool, Chippenham Borough Lands Charity as well as the funds and support for the School over the years through minibuses, improvement in equality which is not available in Rowde.
- The size of the school is important, with a smaller more intimate school being preferred.
- The large size of the new school would have to take into consideration the size of the car park and infrastructure to support this.
- The finance and running costs of the new school have not been detailed. There will be wider social and economic costs.
- The disruption to pupils who would have to move may cause psychological and emotional harm which could take months to overcome. To face different staff, and longer journeys. The transition from primary to secondary school is big anyway but increased with special school children.
- The location and access of the new school would affect the resources available to the children including activities and health services. The access is currently on a bend in the road and traffic would be greatly increased.
- The increased distance to the new location would have an impact in situations where a child is unwell at school and the child needed to be collected to return home.
- There is a good existing relationship with mainstream schools in Chippenham.
- There are better outcomes for special schools children when they are situated within the community
- The increasing number of children with Special Educations Needs and Disabilities (SEND) which means the present schools have run out of space.
- Councillors are minded to recommend that any future housing developments within the town should include consideration of the needs of the increasing number of SEND children and lack of local facilities with special reference to infrastructure requirements.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian Jones
Deputy Chief Executive

6.3.8 Governing Bodies of St Nicholas and Larkrise Special Schools (27.02.19)

Dear Sirs,

(With attachment)

I write on behalf of the governing bodies of St Nicholas Special School and Larkrise Special School

Please find attached our response to the Proposal issued on 9th January 2019, to close 3 Wiltshire special schools and replace them with a Centre of Excellence.

Our comments in response to each stage of the proposal are set out in the attached table.

Yours faithfully,

Jan Winfield

Vice Chair of Governors

Larkrise School

PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN NORTH WILTSHIRE PURSUANT TO A STATUTORY NOTICE PUBLISHED ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2019

Proposal Statement	Comment	Evidence
<p>The numbers of pupils in Wiltshire needing a special school place are growing and there is insufficient space for the number of pupils who need a special school place in the north of the county. Currently over 300 pupils are educated out of county because there are not enough places of the right quality in Wiltshire schools. With housing growth and military rebasing this, number will continue to grow.</p>	<p>Designation is the issue, not quality. There is a historical lack of understanding by the LA of the types of SEND primary and secondary need in the county. Where is the breakdown showing which needs currently cannot be met in county? With no breakdown to show which pupils currently go out of county and why, there is no evidence to show how the new school would meet this need. Re Housing growth: major building is ongoing in both Chippenham and Trowbridge – the areas of greatest expansion over the next 5 years. Future-proofing should be in these areas.</p>	<p>‘Seizing the Agenda’ Discussion Paper 2 June 2016 Wood Report, P20 Para 1.8.5 provides a breakdown of independent out of county placements to show this. See Wood Report P5 Fig 4</p>
<p>The three schools proposed for closure have a collective in-year deficit which is projected to grow to a shared trajectory of over £1m by the end of 2021-22. There are also wider pressures across the council budgets for provision for children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>Financial claims made by the LA throughout this process have been inaccurate: ‘We expect all schools to be in deficit by 2017’ (Seizing the Agenda 2016) The proposal is clearly based on financial savings, not on the best interests of the children. The national crisis in High Needs Funding may or may not continue into the future. This cannot be accurately projected as the La suggest.</p>	<p>No schools were in deficit in 2017. Many mainstream schools are in a similar position. Would the LA expect to close them?</p>
<p>The opportunity exists to improve provision by closing these schools. This would enable the establishment of a new academy as a SEND Centre of Excellence at a size of operation which could provide economies of scale and a wide range of professional skills and expertise alongside a consistent outreach capacity to support mainstream schools.</p>	<p>This could be achieved in the two/three school model as favoured by the 71% of survey respondents. This could provide individual Centres of Excellence in strategic locations, where skills and expertise already exist. Outreach would be less expensive delivered locally through the Collaborative Schools model, as already presented to the LA.</p>	<p>No evidence exists to prove that a new school would achieve ‘excellence’ until it has been inspected. No evidence exists to prove that the theory of ‘economies of scale’ only works in a one site solution.</p>
<p>St Nicholas</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school, which was originally built for 56 pupils, regularly educates more pupils on roll (79) than the current capacity (77). Expansion across the sites is not possible and the best available site in Chippenham is not well-located, being 2.2 miles from the town centre and adjacent to a growing comprehensive school with concomitant transport congestion issues at key times The school was judged as Requires Improvement in an Ofsted inspection of November 2017. 	<p>The expansion in the Poplar College site increased the capacity of the main school - not here acknowledged. The location of the Abbeyfields site is suitable, as agreed at consultation. Distance to local community facilities is considerably less than that at Rowde. Population wise, St Nicholas is very well placed, being centrally located for its outlying rural community, yet within walking distance of the town centre. The school population is likely to grow, not decline. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that traffic congestion would be any worse at Abbeyfields, as roads and access are considerably better than at Rowde.</p>	<p>What evidence is there that other sites have been explored in this process?</p>
<p>Rowdeford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school currently has 137 pupils on roll, with a current capacity of only 130. In 2017, we extended the designation to include Severe Learning Difficulties, (SLD) and we expect to go to consultation to extend numbers further during this year as we deliver a short-term plan to increase places in the county. Expansion on the site is possible, but DfE guidance states that due to the significant change in size and impact on the other two schools, the proposed education provision should be established as a new school. <p>Larkrise School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has significantly more pupils on roll (95) than the current agreement (85) and was built originally for 48 pupils. The site would no longer meets DfE 	<p>This needs clarification: will the current expansion (as in the short term plan) form part of the 'new school?' When and how will schools and parents be consulted on this?</p> <p>The current lack of outdoor space at Larkrise is a problem of the LA's own making. In 2017 the LA completed a capacity audit, which stated that the school building could accommodate 10% MORE pupils. This was challenged by the school and it was agreed an extra mobile classroom would need to be added to accommodate additional numbers</p> <p>The site across the road at the Ashton Street Centre, when combined with the present site would more than meet the demand</p>	<p>Other sites suggested have been dismissed without consideration or explanation as 'not viable.'</p>

<p>guidance¹ for even 48 pupils as there is insufficient space for both indoor and outdoor learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion on site is not possible. Land close by and further afield in Trowbridge has been considered, but the possible sites are either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ not well-located, accessed along residential side-streets with concomitant transport congestion at key times ○ too small, even when combined with the existing site, for the number of pupils ○ not sufficiently central for the north of the county to ensure workable journeys for the maximum number of pupils ○ or a combination of each of these. 	<p>Population wise, Larkrise is very well-located, with over 50% of pupils currently living in Trowbridge. This percentage is likely to grow, not decline.</p> <p>A one school option does not offer workable journeys for the maximum number of pupils; however a two or three school option would.</p>	
<p>All three schools are coeducation special day schools. Both Larkrise and St Nicholas offer provision for pupils with Physical, Medical and Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), including pupils who may also have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Rowdeford also offers provision to young people with Moderate Learning Disabilities (MLD), but not currently PMLD.</p>	<p>PROFOUND and MULTIPLE...!! How can the LA be trusted to create a Centre of Excellence when they clearly do not understand the needs of the children they are serving?! Both Larkrise and St Nicholas have always taken MLD children as designated by the LA.</p> <p>Note also that Rowdeford is currently a secondary school, which only offers MLD/SLD, with no PMLD, EYFS or primary KS1 or 2 provision</p>	<p>The current specialist expertise in PMLD/SLD (complex needs) resides in Chippenham and Trowbridge, with no guarantee that staff will be willing to move to a rural location for work.</p>

¹ Area guidelines for SEND and alternative provision; Including special schools, alternative provision, specially resourced provision and units
Building bulletin 104; December 2015

<p>Admissions arrangements for the proposed new school</p> <p>All pupils currently in the three proposed closing schools will have the opportunity to transition to the new school proposed to be in place from 1 September 2023. Each child will have a transition plan agreed through the annual review process. Following this, all new admissions will be via the Wiltshire Council SEND panel for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This will be a co-educational special school for children and young people aged 3 – 16 with SLD, PMLD, MLD and associated ASD (often called complex needs).</p>	<p>This would be expected practice for any child with an EHCP – to have a transition plan when moving to a new school. The two school option would offer the same.</p>	
<p>There is no expectation that pupils currently placed in schools out of county will go to the new school unless requested by them and their parent/carer. However, the new school will reduce the number of children/young people who will need to be placed out of county in the future.</p>	<p>What of parents with children currently in specialist centres who have an expectation of a place at Larkrise or St Nicholas in Sept 2019? They will already have made their choice of school. Early indications suggest that some parents are already considering home tuition and/or out of county placements as an alternative to no choice!</p>	<p>There is no evidence that out of county placements will reduce; indeed it is more likely that they will increase if a one school only option is available. With a two school option this would not be an issue.</p>
<p>Ethos and Religious Character</p> <p>The replacement school is expected to be non-denominational. Its ethos would be the provision of high quality learning which will give pupils the best start for adulthood and being active citizens in their communities. It will provide a Centre of Excellence, supporting pupils and staff of mainstream schools to promote inclusion and local provision where it is most effective.</p> <p>Balance of denominational provision</p>	<p>Schools which are miles away from the communities in which children and young people live, work and play are NOT promoting inclusion. Children do not become active members of their community if they only ever visit it on a bus or in a taxi How is inclusion promoted in mainstream schools if all complex SEND children are educated miles away in one rural school? Both Larkrise and St Nicholas are already situated at the heart of their local mainstream education hubs with long standing and close relationships forged over many years. Both SEND and mainstream children benefit from this</p>	

<p>As all three existing schools are non-denominational and the proposed replacement school is also non-denominational, there will be no impact on the balance of religious provision or the opportunity for parental choice in this area as a result of the proposed closures.</p>	<p>approach to inclusion which builds tolerance and familiarity with difference. Formal and informal links already exist between mainstream and special schools which are beneficial to staff in both settings.</p>	
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Displaced pupils

Given the nature of the proposals, the closing of 3 existing schools and the opening of a larger and purpose built school, there are unlikely to be displaced pupils needing accommodation as there will be more places in the new provision.

The context for these proposals is a long-standing strategic review of special school places and pupil numbers across the county. Based on analysis of growth due to SEND reforms, housing developments and military rebasing, the projected requirement for additional places is shown in the table below.

By SEN Designation	Placements in Wiltshire Special Schools (5 – 16yrs)	2yrs (2019)	5yrs (2022)	9yrs (2026)
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	Places North	Places South	North	South	All new	North	South	All new	North	South	All new
ASD	111		4	9	13	24	22	46	50	40	90
SEMH²	68		2	3	5	10	9	19	21	17	38
Complex	279	82	4	8	12	23	20	43	49	37	86
Sensory			0	1	1	2	1	3	3	3	6
All	458	82	11	20	31	58	52	111	123	97	220

<p>In addition, while Wiltshire has been able to benefit from school places in neighbouring counties, these schools are also now reaching capacity and need places for pupils from their own Local Authority. Parental choice will be maintained via continued access to all schools within the region which includes Outstanding and</p>	<p>These first two statements contradict each other; how is choice maintained if out of county placements become less available and in county choice is reduced to one school?? All the schools listed here are currently over capacity and predicted to have rising numbers. It is disingenuous to imply that places will be available e.g. out of county, when the number of places will be reducing rapidly.</p>	<p>This table is over two years old. It has no date or origin and the inaccurate figures it contains do not match with current realities.</p>
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² Social Emotional and Mental Health

<p>Good Special schools in BANES, Somerset and Swindon as well as Exeter House in the south of Wiltshire. There are also additional special schools for children and young people with ASD/SEMH (Autism and Social Emotional and Mental Health) in Devizes, Calne and now Salisbury, all in Wiltshire.</p>		
<p>There have been concerns that the new school would be for all pupils with SEND regardless of their particular needs. This will not be the case. We will continue to have schools for children and young people with ASD and SEMH and will also continue to expand the places available in mainstream schools. The Centre of Excellence will be a key development that will enhance integration, inclusion and differentiated support and opportunity across all schools in Wiltshire. Closures of the three schools are timed for 2023, by which time the proposed new special school would be established in Rowde. The new school would cater for 350 pupils aged 3-16. Post-16 education will be available at Wiltshire College, already a provider of relevant SEND education in several locations across Wiltshire, and other private sector providers already working in partnership with Wiltshire Council.</p>	<p>There will still be no choice of school for children with ASD. The current school available, Springfields, is full and there is no plan here to increase ASD places anywhere else. How are inclusion, integration and differentiated support promoted in mainstream schools if all SEND children are educated miles away in one rural school and all specialist staff are situated there? Both Larkrise and St Nicholas are already situated at the heart of their local mainstream education hubs with long standing and close relationships forged over many years. Wiltshire College already fail to meet the needs of SEND pupils, year on year. What changes will be made to ensure that they can fulfil the roles that Poplars and the Larkrise sixth form currently provide for pupils with complex needs and PMLD? Current provision at St Nicholas and Larkrise is 5 days per week. Will this be replicated at all Wiltshire College sites?</p>	
<p>We recognise that for pupils who will be attending Larkrise, St Nicholas, and to a lesser, but still significant degree, Rowdeford in 5 years' time, any move from the proposed closed schools to the proposed new school will be disruptive and may cause some anxiety for pupils and their families. However, we hope to minimise this disruption by:</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring as many children/young people and their parent/carers can engage in the design and creation of the new school • Considering opening a first phase of the proposed school for 3 and 4-year olds ahead of the main start for all pupils. This would involve phasing the construction of the school. This would reduce the need for transition for these youngest pupils • A similar arrangement could be offered for 15/16yr olds if it were in their best individual interests, with an early phased transition to college which could reduce transitions for this group also • Ensuring that every child has an individual transition plan • Having a 5-year programme during which we will prepare children, young people, their families and staff for the proposed change • Appointing an academy sponsor early on so that the leadership of the new Centre of Excellence can start making a positive impact as soon as possible • Creating communication plans, such as newsletters and online engagements, that keep everybody involved and informed • Learning from other schools that have managed similar changes, such as Three Ways School in Bath. 	<p>So the introduction to school for a 3 or 4 year old pupil in their new Centre of Excellence in Sept 2019 would be 2 mobile classrooms next to a building site, with none of the promised new facilities in place? We cannot see how this would be attractive to any parent! What choice regarding 'best individual interests' would schools, parents and young people have? This is simply a way of avoiding over capacity in the present schools, rather than investing in them. This is not in the best interests of the pupils! How will the interests of current 3- 5 yr olds or Post 15 children be protected?</p> <p>An early appointment of an Academy Sponsor is another example of the LA pre-empting the outcome of the consultation.</p> <p>The comparison with 3 Ways School is not valid as 3 Ways did NOT close 3 schools, is smaller by one third than Wiltshire's proposal and is situated in an urban environment in a strategic population hub.</p>	<p>The viability of the closing schools would be seriously compromised by the early removal of children. This will bring problems of staff recruitment/retention and budgeting constraints. How do the LA propose to avoid this?</p> <p>What assurances can be given that any chosen Academy Sponsor will not renege on promises made here?</p>
<p>Impact on the community None of the three special schools specifically serves a local area due to the rural nature of the</p>	<p>It is precisely because of the dispersed nature of the population of Wiltshire that a three school option makes</p>	

<p>county and, therefore, no individual community would be disproportionately adversely impacted by the proposed closures. Each school teaches pupils who are predominantly transported from communities across Wiltshire rather than from their local area. Currently, around 80% of children/young people attending special schools do not live in the town where their school is located.</p>	<p>most sense. Larkrise and St Nicholas serve the largest and fastest growing communities in North and West Wiltshire and are therefore key to providing an excellent, local service to the maximum number of pupils. At St Nicholas school over 45% of the current school aged pupils live either in Chippenham or close to Chippenham. 0% live in Rowde. At Larkrise over 50% of pupils live in Trowbridge, and attend school in their hometown. 0% of Larkrise pupils live in Rowde</p>	
<p>However, we recognise that the communities around St Nicholas and Larkrise, and indeed Rowdeford, have taken the schools to their hearts. Therefore, we will work with the local communities to explore ways in which they can continue to be involved in the lives of both the children/young people who attend the new school, but also the many children/young people with SEND who attend local mainstream schools and colleges.</p> <p>Rowde itself has embraced Rowdeford school and has actively supported the continuation of a special school in this rural community close to the busy town of Devizes. It is hoped the proposed new school will support the local economy, bus services, facilities and employment. To date, Rowdeford school has not struggled to recruit staff, and welcomes the opportunity to offer greater local employment to people living in the local and wider area.</p>	<p>How? This is a vague idea, completely without substance. Larkrise and St Nicholas pupils currently access their local communities, with all the attendant services of a large town, on foot, on a daily basis. At Rowde they would only be able to do this by getting back onto a bus – again. Given the time it takes to load/unload wheelchairs etc we wonder how many children will actually access Devizes – and how much curriculum time they will lose to more bus travel?!</p> <p>Rowde has supported the continuation of a small secondary school for MLD pupils. It is not good enough to ‘hope’ that this community support will continue, given the scale of the proposed new school.</p> <p>Rowdeford School struggles, like every other school, to recruit enough local staff. Most Teaching Assistants/MDSA’s/Passenger Transport Assistants do not have cars/do not drive and expect to work close to their home. Could the local area supply the high number of such staff required by such a large institution? And what of the negative effect this would have on the economies of Trowbridge and Chippenham?</p>	<p>Has Rowde Parish Council been formally consulted regarding the increase in traffic, the need for road and pavement improvements and the noise and disruption created by a large scale site development?</p>
<p>The location of the proposed replacement school is central to the north of Wiltshire, matching an equivalent special school covering the south. These two schools will be well placed to ensure</p>	<p>This deliberately ignores the fact that the bulk of the population resides in the two main centres of Trowbridge and Chippenham. Geographical position is irrelevant when looked at against population distribution. How costly will</p>	

<p>access to inclusive special education in all parts of the county and to offer support and outreach to local mainstream schools.</p>	<p>outreach be when virtually every school is miles away, situated in the very population centres from which you are proposing to remove all SEND education?</p>	
<p>All current staff will be subject to TUPE³ regulations.</p>		
<p>Rural primary schools None of the schools proposed for closure are a rural primary school designated as such by regulation. Special educational provision will continue in the rural location of Rowde. The Centre of Excellence will have a wider impact and will be able to support rural schools that often do not have the capacity for specialist SEND provision, allowing greater local inclusion.</p>	<p>The only education for SLD/PMLD will be in a rural location, the reality is the vast majority of pupils live in an urban environment. This is where they need to build the skills they will need for their future lives. There is little to no housing for supported independent living in rural locations; SEND children need to learn how to live in a town.</p>	
<p>Early years provision Early Years provision at St Nicholas and Larkrise would be replicated and extended in the proposed new school and further supported by the three specialist nursery settings that will benefit from the outreach delivered by the Centre of Excellence. The Centre of Excellence would also be able to support mainstream nursery settings and child minders to ensure that every child with SEND has a good start in life. We will explore the possibilities of offering multi-agency partners, such as health visitors, space in the new provision to offer integrated support from birth onwards.</p>	<p>Whilst it might make sense to collect all of these services together centrally – it does not make sense to then transport all the children to them! 3 and 4 year olds on long bus journeys every day is a terrifying prospect for parents, let alone the risks of transporting children who have regular seizures and may need rescue medicines on route to a school which will be twice the distance away from the nearest hospital than at present for all current PMLD pupils. What outreach could be provided to nurseries and child minders? Where does all this capacity come from and how is it funded? Why would the health visitors need to be at the school? Surely they would be visiting children in their homes, prior to coming to school? These are confused ideas with no clear benefit to be derived for anyone.</p>	

³ Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations

<p>Sixth form provision St Nicholas and Larkrise schools currently provide post-16 Education which will be closed or taken on by an alternate provider. Rowdeford does not have post 16 provision. It is proposed that all 16 -19 education will be provided by Wiltshire College and the range of private providers across Wiltshire with whom the Council has developed strong relationships. This may involve the current buildings or other community based sites.</p> <p>The aim is to increase the opportunities for preparation for adulthood in a wider range of locations, expanding on arrangements already in place and judged by Ofsted as effective. For those learners who will have formerly received their post 16 education through one of the special schools, there will be some change involved, however, this should lead to better development of life skills closer to home.</p>	<p>This is a very vague generalisation, with the hope that if the current provision ends, Wiltshire College, or someone else will pick it up. Where outside the Special School settings are the facilities for the most complex PMLD students and post 16?</p> <p>Preparation for adulthood starts well before the 6th Form so the LA is narrowing where this is provided The pupils are learning life skills from when they enter Larkrise / St Nicholas at age 4, Rowdeford is not closer to home for the vast majority of pupils</p>	<p>There is no description, or costing, in this proposal for the changes in curriculum, staffing, training or building adaptations that would be required at Wiltshire College sites – or any other establishment – to meet the needs of SEND pupils with SLD/complex needs or PMLD.</p>
<p>Special educational needs provision Of the three schools proposed for closure, two are rated by Ofsted as Good and one as Requires Improvement. The proposal will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and range of special education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new 350-place school will replace significantly overcrowded schools which currently do not comply with relevant DfE regulations, and will offer up-to-date facilities in a new build • The replacement school will provide economies of scale which reduce the 	<p>This would be equally true of a 2 or 3 school option. This is a problem which could have been resolved much earlier, without resorting to school closures or multi-million pound white elephant schemes. This is completely unproven! What if it doesn't? How will you ensure you secure the best Academy sponsor?</p>	<p>The LA have known about the rise in demand for places for years, yet they have continued to place more and more children in already over-crowded schools, without investing in their infrastructure. The investment does not match the promise</p>

<p>financial pressures faced by the existing smaller schools. The ambition of the project will attract national interest and affordably secure the best academy sponsor/provider and the best leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current schools have limited access to therapies. By bring the schools together all pupils can access good shared resources such as such as therapy, SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning), sensory support, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Paediatricians and community/school nursing • Currently we are not always able to offer all children and young people a place in our local schools because of lack of space and insufficient specialist support on site. The new school will offer more places and higher levels of support • Currently pupils have to choose between a specialist or mainstream provision. The new approach will ensure flexibility of choice and a full range of provision to meet the spectrum of need. 	<p>Not unless the number of therapists is increased! The same number of children would still require support. Is the answer just longer queues?</p>	
<p>Curriculum and special educational needs provision</p> <p>The proposed new school will deliver a curriculum compliant with the general requirements of Section 78 of Education Act 2002, enabling students to benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum which will allow them to develop their skills and knowledge, preparing</p>	<p>This is a narrower curriculum than is on offer at present. It seems dated in its approach and certainly won't attract positive national interest</p> <p>For the vast majority of SLD pupils preparation for life after school involves a great deal of access to their local communities.</p>	<p>It is clear from the comparisons made here that there is nothing new or 'cutting edge' in the proposed curriculum for the new school. All of the examples given for the 'scope' of the new provision are already</p>

<p>them for life after school. As a special school, it will place great emphasis on personalised learning, aiming to ensure that all students develop their expertise in literacy, numeracy and life skills, but in a way best suited to each individual student. There will be separate approaches for different key stages and levels of engagement and ability, including those who will potentially have dual placements with mainstream schools.</p> <p>Broad curriculum pathways would include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A curriculum that covers the broad topics first introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage • A Profound Curriculum designed for students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties • A broad curriculum developing the learning of students with moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs and autism in all areas whilst focusing on reducing specific barriers to learning that individuals with complex needs may experience. <p>At every stage of their education, each child's strengths and needs would be considered carefully and the best curriculum pathway for them chosen and reviewed regularly in the context of assessed needs and EHCP targets. The aim would be that challenge is pitched at the right level for each student to make the best progress possible.</p>	<p>Our current schools already offer highly personalised learning and have the best expertise in differentiating learning for a wide range of designations.</p> <p>Can the LA explain what Literacy and Numeracy looks like for a PMLD child and how it is relevant to their needs? This seems like a backward step in terms of narrow curriculum offer.</p> <p>Dual placements are already possible, given the flexibility of funding and current pupils already spend time in mainstream schools.</p> <p>This already happens in their current schools and is better tracked in a small school with fewer changes of staff and easier, more immediate communication. Thus, it is more appropriate to a 2 or 3 school model</p> <p>It is at best unwise and at worst unlawful to imply in a public proposal that a particular curriculum offer will be made, when an academy proposer has not yet been established.</p>	<p>established practice in all special schools in the county. What is clear, is that smaller, local schools are better equipped to respond quickly and flexibly to change and can adapt an individual child's curriculum, based on the most up to date information through the intervention of staff who know their pupils very well because they see them across a range of contexts every day.</p>
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<p>Further details will be set out once an academy proposer has been established as noted within the DfE Guidance for opening schools, but, we hope the above gives a feel for the scope of the provision.</p>		
<p>Effect on standards and contribution to school improvement The new school will build upon the recognised good practice of the existing three schools and, therefore, will not have a detrimental impact. This will enable a comprehensive, viable school fit for the future which will support not only the pupils who attend the school but also the wider population of pupils with SEND in Wiltshire as a Centre of Excellence, using curriculum approaches and expertise described above to support pupils and staff in schools across the county.</p>	<p>This is merely a repetition of the unsubstantiated promises made earlier in this document.</p>	
<p>Travel It is recognised that, for some pupils, journeys will be longer while, for others, shorter. This change can be a concern, when children/young people have significant medical or behavioural needs. Currently, pupils' journeys average 40 minutes (Rowdeford 43 minutes, St Nicholas 37 minutes and Larkrise 41 minutes), with the shortest being 4 minutes (St Nicholas child) and the longest 119 minutes (St Nicholas child). Initial estimates for the proposed new provision suggest there is likely to be a similar range of journey times, but potentially for different children/young people.</p>	<p>Not all pupils are eligible for LA paid transport; children living within Trowbridge/Chippenham are often not eligible. However, by default all pupils will be eligible for transport to the new school because of its remote location. For most pupils journeys will be longer as the new school will be further away from the centres of population – therefore MORE children will have LONGER journeys. Both Calne and Melksham are equidistant from Chippenham and Devizes, but both of these routes are much more difficult to Rowde than to the larger towns. In Trowbridge our parents survey shows that only 66% of current pupils need to access Wilts transport. 51% of current Larkrise pupils live in Trowbridge. Currently 80% of special school children access transport. Whilst we recognise this is a high figure; it is currently a decreasing one, as families move to the new housing in</p>	<p>Suitability of arrangements 34. As a general guide, transport arrangements should not require a child to make several changes on public transport resulting in an unreasonably long journey time. Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age to be 45 minutes and for secondary school age 75 minutes, but these should be regarded as the maximum. For children</p>

	<p>Trowbridge and Chippenham. In the proposal, however, this would rise to 100% for the new school at Rowde, with the additional increased cost of vehicles, drivers and PA's that this would necessitate. This is very unlikely to decrease over time as there is no planned housing expansion for Rowde.</p>	<p>with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible.</p>
<p>All pupils who attend Special schools can be considered for transport provided by the local authority and the vast majority will be eligible (all current pupils are eligible). For the three schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rowdeford pupils would continue travelling to the same location on transport provided by the local authority • For pupils who live in or close to Trowbridge and Chippenham, it is likely that journeys may be longer. Our initial assessment of pupils traveling now (and this will be different in 5 years' time when the new school opens) is that about half of the pupils will have longer and half will have shorter journeys • There is guidance from the DfE about reasonable journeys. We will try to ensure that every child has a journey within these limits but, as the guidance recognises, this may not be possible for every child in a rural county like Wiltshire • We hope that by choosing a non-town location we will reduce the amount of time in congested town traffic at peak times and, by having one destination, be able to reduce the number of pick-ups, or time between pick-ups, so that the longer 	<p>This depends on how travel times are calculated. There is a big difference between the time taken by car in a single journey and the journey by mini-bus or taxi which may involve picking up several other children en route. As the number of children living in urban areas will continue to rise with the planned expansion of our strategic towns, inevitably most journeys will become longer.</p> <p>Clearly, no reduction is possible unless you reduce the number of pick up points! Is this the underlying plan? Have parents been consulted on the potential for such a change? "We hope" is a hopelessly vague premise for families to base their travel and/or child care arrangements on. Has the LA considered the impact of longer journey times on families with siblings at other schools, working parents etc.?</p> <p>The increased risks to health of PMLD pupils involved in travelling long distances twice a day to a site much further away from the nearest hospital have not been properly considered by the LA. These are serious, life-threatening issues which families grapple with every day. We know of a number of families who have moved home to be within a reasonable distance from both school and nearest hospital. It is unfair and unrealistic to expect them to have to move again because of an ill-thought through LA plan.</p>	<p>35.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the walking distance required in order to access public transport. The maximum distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the routes they are expected to walk to the pick up or set down points and should try to be combined with the transport time when considering the overall duration of a journey. With regards to pick up points, local authorities may at their discretion use appropriate pick up points when making travel arrangements. For arrangements to be suitable, they must also be safe and reasonably stress free, to enable the child to arrive at school ready for a day of study.</p>

<p>distance is balanced by a more efficient fleet of transport options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be creating transport plans for every child/young person with particular regard for the support they may need for medical, behaviour and/or sensory needs. 		
<p>We also recognise that this may be a difficulty for staff who will have a longer journey to work and for parent/carers with limited access to transport. Rowde does have good community transport links and, as the local authority also has a role in public and community transport, we will seek to ensure this is continued and, where possible, improved.</p> <p>Rowde has good access routes, being close to Julia's House and Canon's House respite facilities, quick access from local ambulance stations and onwards to major hospitals if needed. It will also offer Virgin Care (our current community health provider) consulting, office and therapy rooms. This will mean that there can be full time nursing provision as well as other therapeutic support, reducing the need for hospitalisation and parents to travel to the school to support medical concerns.</p>	<p>This fails to take into account total journey times on public transport. From e.g. Warminster it would take 3 buses to get to Rowde and there is no train service. Rowde village does NOT have 'quick access' to major hospitals!!</p> <p>It is a dangerous proposition to suggest that Virgin Care nurses can replace professionals at a hospital to 'reduce the need for hospitalisation' Parents will be rightly very concerned at such a suggestion!. The provision of a school nurse at St Nicholas did not in any way reduce the need either for hospitalisation or for parents to attend for medical concerns. That is not the role of a school nurse and should never be the role of any health professional other than a medical doctor. People go to hospital because they need to be in hospital, not in school.</p>	<p>Is there a proposal to increase public transport services to Rowde? If not, then it is disingenuous to suggest that "we will seek to ensure."</p>
<p>Location and Costs</p> <p>The school will serve the northern, middle and western parts of the county of Wiltshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land utilised will include space available in the grounds of Rowdeford School and potentially additional current 	<p>We think this is an under-estimation of the final cost. It is likely to be more like £40 million</p> <p>This rather pre-supposes that the proposal is agreed without amendment. Pre-determination?</p>	

<p>farm land that will be re-designated, also owned by Wiltshire Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost is estimated at £20m and will be met Wiltshire Council (agreed 27.11.2018 Cabinet) • Planning permission will be required; this should be obtained in the summer/autumn of 2019 		
<p>Pre-consultation raised some concerns that this rural site could segregate and isolate children and young people with SEND. This has not been evidenced by the current school, which has a strong and proactive relationship with the community. The Centre of Excellence will also enable the school to build strong links with all schools across Wiltshire, offering opportunities for both staff and pupils to engage in both in and out reach education.</p>	<p>The current school has only MLD 11-16 pupils: ie those more able to recognise and manage the change from one community to another.</p> <p>The current school at Rowdeford provides a more subject based, outdoor learning curriculum which meets the needs of MLD secondary aged pupils.</p> <p>Younger children and those with SLD/ASD need stability and continuity more than any other designation.</p> <p>No mention has been made of the strong links that Larkrise and St Nicholas have which are promoting and building social inclusion in Strategic growth hubs.</p>	

<p>Summary</p> <p>As part of these proposals, the local authority has taken forward a series of Equality Impact Assessments. The impact assessment suggests that mitigating actions can reduce, but not eliminate all concerns. There are over 3500 pupils with an EHCP in Wiltshire and many more on SEN support in mainstream schools. It is essential that the proposals support both the individual and majority needs. We recognise the loss of well-loved schools will be difficult, but believe the plan for the Centre of Excellence will provide an outstanding provision and approach to ensuring every child/young person with SEND</p>	<p>It is not just that St Nicholas and Larkrise are 'well-loved' but rather more that they are in the right place to meet the needs of pupils with PLMD/ SLD, provide and promote social inclusion and work with the mainstream schools and resources bases within the area. The 2 school model can support both the majority and the individual needs of pupils with SEND .There is no evidence to suggest a single new build will achieve this.</p>	
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<p>has a good education and is able to make good life choices as they grow up.</p>		
<p>Overall, the proposals will have an overwhelming positive impact for children and young people with SEND both in the school and supported through the Centre of Excellence in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing • Progress • Attainment • Health • Community opportunities • Inclusion and integration 	<p>Do longer transport times and isolation increase wellbeing? If skills aren't generalised until post 16 how can you argue for improved attainment and progress? Journeys involve children being less mobile and so where are the health benefits? Far fewer community opportunities Less inclusion and integration</p>	
<p>However, it is recognised that some students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have longer journeys • May experience a level of disruption as they move from the old to new school • May have worries during the development of the project about what school will be like in the future. 	<p>For most pupils journeys will be longer as the new school will be further away from the centres of population. Only children from the Devizes area will have shorter journeys. For all other children the journey will be longer. Wiltshire Council have completely under-estimated the level of disruption that these moves would cause to Wiltshire families. E.g. In moving to the new school, long-standing peer groups would not be maintained as year groups from 3 schools are amalgamated. A similar dispersal would occur with teachers and TA's from each school. Families organise their lives around the needs of their SEN child: other siblings who need to get to school, working parents etc all fit in around their routines. Earlier waking times can interfere with feeding, medical and personal care; longer journeys mean that young children can have very long days. Most SEN children have no clear concept of 'the future' on which a local authority would base the spending of £20 million.</p>	
<p>We hope this will be mitigated by:</p>	<p>Throughout this process the opportunities for engagement for families have been woefully inadequate. None of the mitigating</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many opportunities for engagement in the development of the school and centres of excellence• Good transition plans and support from staff and families• Well-arranged transport and transport plans• Good planning and communication through the progress of the project.	factors you cite address the complexity of the problems you fail to foresee.	
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6.3.9 Jan Winfield. Former, Vice Chair of Governors Larkrise School (28.02.19)

Dear Sirs,

I have been involved in the discussions around SEND provision in Wiltshire, in a range of different roles and contexts, since at least 2013.

As first a parent governor and now Vice Chair at Larkrise School, I was closely involved in the plans to expand Larkrise into the Ashton Street Centre in 2013/14, working with the project managers and architects to produce plans for a new school, either on one or both sites. Later, I was involved in the many discussions held between the Local Authority and the six special schools around the 'Seizing the Agenda' project, which ultimately evolved into the proposal now under consultation.

I also co-founded The Friends of Larkrise School and have been heavily involved in the campaign mounted by parents and the wider Trowbridge community to Keep Special Schools Local.

So, you will forgive me if I say at the outset that I understand very well the urgent need to expand provision and improve the facilities available to our current children and their families. And I understand, too, the economic necessity of providing an excellent service, whilst living within a constantly reducing budget. These are problems that I, too, have wrestled with, alongside your officers and commissioners, school heads and governors for several years.

From special school MATs and community MATs, through Academy chains and free schools to re-furbs and new builds – I have rehearsed the same arguments and considered the possible outcomes again and again. In the end, I, too, have reached the conclusion that a Centre of Excellence has much to commend it, in achieving the aims of excellence of provision, state-of-the-art facilities and economies of scale.

However, where I depart from the current proposal is in the proposed siting of such a school in the rural location of Rowde village, separated as it is, from every social, cultural and economic link that has been built up over years in the towns where our special schools are currently situated.

The arguments for Rowde seem initially to be sound ones; the availability of adjacent, council owned land lowers the cost of building/expansion and reduces the complexities of planning. Its position, in the geographical centre of the county has a seeming logic, but Wiltshire is a large rural county with a widely dispersed population. Geographically, Rowde is away to the east, on the edge of Salisbury Plain, close to Devizes – which is not earmarked for anything like the kind of population expansion of the West Wilts towns, but does have a serious problem with traffic congestion. I know, because I sit in the traffic jams crawling up Caen Hill every week!

Almost all the current cohort of children at Larkrise, Rowdeford and St Nicholas schools live in and around the major population centres of West Wiltshire; from Warminster towards the south, through Westbury, Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon and Melksham to Chippenham and Malmesbury in the north. These towns are linked by a well-developed system of roads, including the upgraded A350, a range of frequent bus services and a train station in every town. They are the major employment centres of Wiltshire - and Trowbridge, Melksham and

Chippenham form part of the strategic hub for housing expansion. Why on earth would you site a Centre of Excellence anywhere other than at the centre of this cluster?

Building a large, single site school at Rowde makes neither logical nor economical sense. It is not a child-centred idea and does not take into account the many ways a Centre of Excellence could be used, if located more sensibly. The apparent convenience of Rowde cannot, must not, outweigh the huge benefits to our most vulnerable children of being educated in their own local communities - the places where they are most likely to spend the rest of their lives - and the very places with which they most need to be familiar and confident as they grow towards independence. A special school is not like a mainstream school. It is not a staging post on the way to university, work and an independent adult life. For the majority of children in special schools the transition to independence is a much slower, less certain one, requiring a great deal of sensitive and experienced support - and with no guarantee of reaching the goal of full independence. That some young people do eventually manage to live independent lives, with support, is testament not only to the schooling they have received, but also to the community that has helped to raise them. That is why it is so important that special schools are situated at the heart of their communities, surrounded by the very services, facilities, leisure activities and volunteer opportunities they will need throughout their lives.

And the benefits of local SEND education do not stop there. Dual placements at mainstream schools, the proximity of nurseries, district specialist centres and resource bases, the training opportunities for mainstream SEND teachers and TA's from a local Centre of Excellence all help to spread and grow the expertise – much more cost effectively than servicing them from half way across the county! Furthermore, the benefits to the communities themselves should not be ignored. Wiltshire Council has spent much time, effort and money in the last five years on developing its SEND 0 – 25 provision, with a clear vision for wrap-around support from birth to 'stability' – precisely so that young people **can** stay in their own communities, be supported to live fulfilling, meaningful lives and access the same work and leisure opportunities that the rest of the population can. This kind of inclusion right from the start means there is recognition and familiarity with learning disability amongst the general population which encourages a kinder, more tolerant society. If our SEND children are nowhere to be seen in our towns, then their chances for acceptance and equality are vastly reduced – and we, too, are diminished by their absence.

So, if a Centre of Excellence would bring a new dynamic to SEND education in Wiltshire – what could it look like, and where should it be sited?

Given the linear dispersal of towns along the western county border, the most sensible idea might be to preserve the three current sites, turning them into a central, expanded site at Rowde – perhaps to take secondary age pupils who might be better able to manage the longer journeys – with two satellite primary-age sites at Chippenham and Trowbridge. The Rowde site has the space, potentially, to grow its designation to include SLD and ASD learners, whilst the two smaller primary based sites could also accommodate those PMLD children for whom travelling long distances may be too costly, too time-consuming and present too much of a health risk. Post 16 provision is already established at Poplar College in Chippenham and at other Wiltshire College sites, so a smaller provision catering for SLD and PMLD children in Trowbridge would complement this service and ensure that post-16 education is not only accessible, but differentiated to take account of the diverging needs at this age; some towards

work and employment opportunities and others towards life-skills training. Services such as therapists, passenger transport etc could be centralised at Rowde, and although this would still entail some journeys between the three schools, this could be more efficiently managed than at present through the strategic leadership of the three sites as one Centre of Excellence.

A different model might be to split the Centre of Excellence across just two sites and develop these in Rowde and Melksham. If the primary site was in Melksham, then the two sites would be geographically close. Melksham is equi-distant from both Trowbridge and Chippenham and, with its supermarkets and town facilities, replicates the kind of urban community our SEND children need to learn to negotiate. It wouldn't be everyone's own community – but it would be much closer to it than Rowde! Centralising services here would be much more cost-effective than at Rowde and parents would find attending appointments much easier if they were reliant on public transport. In fact transport begins to look considerably less problematic, given the A350 linking all the towns of West Wiltshire, with Melksham right in the centre. Journey times for the majority of pupils become manageable and anxieties around health issues reduce, with a major hospital only 20 minutes away. Health and education support workers on low wages would find Melksham a much more accessible option, so recruitment and retention issues are...less of an issue!

The advantage of retaining Rowde as the second site, apart from the space on hand to develop/expand, is that the current Rowdeford School already offers a more rural, outdoor curriculum, with many opportunities to encourage vocational education to its MLD and possibly ASD students, in addition to the more traditional curriculum. It would be a great tragedy, I think, to lose that link to the land-based industries that a rural county like Wiltshire relies on.

A Centre of Excellence across two or three sites would also give parents choice – and perhaps offer better opportunities with less travelling for some of those families who currently need costly out of county placements. It also offers the possibility of better differentiated Post 16 courses, both on and off site.

So, a two/three site Centre of Excellence offering an age appropriate, broader and more differentiated curriculum right through to 18 and beyond. Closer to home in distance and feel, with flexibility and choice built in under strategic leadership with a centralised range of SEND services on hand. Now that's an exciting proposition!

Trowbridge has a unique opportunity at this moment to build such a school - and by siting it close to its strategic town centres, to make a clear statement about how it values its most vulnerable young people. It is an opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the county - and the country - what outstanding education provision for young people with SEND looks like in the 21st century. To provide cutting edge, state-of-the-art centres for young people from birth to independence where they can share services, experiences and spaces with local people - and, by playing their part in their community perhaps help to make it a more tolerant and inclusive society for all of us.

£20 million is a lot of money. Let's do something really special with it. Our young people deserve it. Our communities deserve it. We were bold when we developed our Local Offer and our SEND 0 - 25 agenda. Let's not lose faith in those same youngsters now. Let's build them something they - and we - can be proud of, now and for the next generation to come.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

With respect,

Jan Winfield

Former Larkrise parent, Vice Chair of Governors, Secretary, The Friends of Larkrise School

6.3.10 Staff member, St Nicholas (28.02.19)

All the documents that have come from WC have felt very biased towards persuading people to the Councils view, it does not feel like a democratic process.

To quote from the FAQ:

The school will include hydro-pools, sensory rooms, physio, open outdoor space, speech and language therapy and family care

There will be attractive child friendly buildings which are safe, friendly, calm and engaging places with wide corridors and lots of natural light

The school will have excellent teaching from well-trained, caring, specialist and dedicated staff.

This suggests that all these facilities are not currently available in the current schools. The truth is that St Nicholas already provides a hydro-pool, sensory room, physio, outdoor space, speech and language therapy and family care

We already have an attractive child friendly building (just 25 years old purpose built) which is safe, friendly, calm and an engaging place with wide corridors and lots of natural light

The school has excellent teaching from well-trained, caring, specialist and dedicated staff and it is insulting to our amazingly dedicated staff to imply that we don't already have that.

St Nicholas has a fabulous Hydro pool already that is approx 10 years old, We only need one for 80 pupils plus it is available for hundreds of the local community to use. The new school to cater for 350 pupils would need 3 or 4 Hydro pools to give all the children the same access. Will this happen?. We have no idea the consultation just says in a general way that it will have everything but in reality nobody knows if the new school could provide hydrotherapy in the same way that St Nicholas can.

Another quote from FAQ: Rowde is an active community with small shops, pubs, a church, bus services, cafés and a primary school.

In reality Rowdford has one shop not shops, one cafe not cafes, 2 pubs, and a church. Bus services seem to consist of 5 buses a day from Chippenham and 4 buses back to Chippenham, there is nowhere for the children to go without getting onto a bus, you cannot walk in to the village from Rowdeford as it is not safe to do so. A member of staff needing to use the bus living in Chippenham and working in Rowde on a school day would arrive at 7.33 in the morning for work at 9.00 and leave at 16.18 when finishing at 15.15. This is simply not practical.

It is so important for our children to maintain their links to the Community they are already a part of in Chippenham. Previous pupils work, live and socialise in Chippenham and that is surely because it is their community and where they are known and feel safe and confident. There are also the concerns regarding our most vulnerable pupils with high medical needs, Chippenham is well placed to access emergency aid when required and this is required on a regular basis.

There are many other reasons for keeping a SEND school in Chippenham not least the retention of our highly trained skilled staff, some of whom won't make the transition to Rowde due to not having transport or already travelling a distance to work. We understand that change is required but we already have everything in place at St Nicholas we just need a new, larger school building in Chippenham. Chippenham is a large town with further development planned for some time, it would be the wrong decision not to have SEND provision in this town.

6.3.11 Somerset County Council (01.03.19)

Somerset currently has one child accessing Larkrise School and as such, we have an interest in this proposal.

That child, who is a current NCY 3, lives 20 miles from Larkrise. The proposed new school at Rowdeford (Due to open in September 2023) would extend that distance to 30 miles.

We as an LA, and the child's parents, will need to consider the impact of that increased distance and through the Phase Transfer review process, decide where that child is best placed from 2022 onwards.

On the proposal itself, we have no objections and recognise a similar pressure on special school places in our own area.

Kind regards

Phil Curd | Strategic Manager | Access & Additional Learning Needs
Somerset County Council, C402, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

6.3.12 Wiltshire Music Centre (01.03.19)

Dear Sir/Madam

Wiltshire Music Centre (WMC) has a long track record of engaging culturally and creatively with young people with learning difficulties through our artistic and creative learning/outreach work, and we will continue to be proactive in our support and development of this provision in schools across the county.

We engage highly skilled artists and therapists who are committed to offering a wide range of opportunities to young people despite the many challenges that they may face. WMC hosted a national disability arts festival in October (Fast Forward), we curate and produce a bi-annual Special Schools Festival, and our Zone Club for learning disabled young adults provides a monthly music and film making session supported by a range of specialist practitioners.

We will continue to develop and promote this work whether the schools remain on separate sites or are combined on the proposed new site at Rowde. Despite some concerns about the potential impact on the individual schools and communities, we are supportive of the draft plan. WMC is also keen to support schools and families during the transition/consultation period, be involved where appropriate in the development of this plan in the future, and we would be delighted to engage as fully as possible with the project over the coming months and years.

Yours sincerely
James Slater, Artistic Director

6.4 Emails received during Phase 2

6.4.1 22.03.2019 Speech and Language Therapist

Dear Wiltshire Council

I am writing to you about your proposal to close local special schools in Wiltshire, which I have read. I strongly disagree with this proposal.

I am a speech and language therapist with clinical expertise in young people with complex communication disabilities. Complex communication disabilities present barriers to all aspects of learning, especially social, emotional and friendship building opportunities. Young people with communication disabilities need **enhanced** opportunities to participate in and contribute to their **local** communities so that they can develop and maintain **friendships**.

Your proposal is gravely mistaken. You are proposing to create an institution-style school for all students with SEN to travel to, miles away from their local communities, and miles outside a town. This will present these young people with **enormous social inclusion barriers**. You are removing the very opportunities these students need. This will have a severely damaging effect upon their current and future quality of life. It cannot and will not provide the type of education that these students need to prepare them for their adulthoods.

I would urge you to reconsider.

6.4.2 05.04.2019 Ex-Chair of Larkrise School

Jane,

It has been a number years since I was the Chair of Larkrise School, but I would like you to take into account my consider thoughts on the decision you will need to take on the proposed mergers. I can well understand the parents' concerns, changes are always worrying, but so often are short term

In my view the Council needs to take a long-term view of what is best for the children NOT the parents.

Larkrise location is not suitable for extending, but has wonderful facilities with the excellent hydro pool. The question of transport is a red herring for most of the children come via taxis or school busses from wider area than Trowbridge. I strongly believe if at the earlier consultation stages the staff and Governors had visited the Devizes and seen the beautiful

grounds and the fact their children would be breathing much cleaner clean air and benefiting from the open countryside, nature and wildlife, many objections would have been muted.

What I never have been able to understand has been the policy of bringing children on long journeys across Salisbury Plain to Devizes with facilities being available in Salisbury. Also, the decision to reduce the number of beds for boarders at Devizes, resulting in those £100,000 high costs being incurred for their stay in Somerset. I felt a different approach could have been made by refurbishing the facilities at Devizes and merging Larkrise as a part of that refurbishment programme, including tackling the problems of stairs and improving the accessible at the house.

However, my priority was always the welfare of those young children and providing them with skills to become more independent, though very often the wonderful skills and efforts by our staff to develop the children independent skill's, were so often frustrated by parents insisting on doing everything for their child.

Hope these comments are helpful, best of luck.

6.4.3 08.04.2019 Parent using unit within mainstream school

My son is currently attending Rainbows, a unit within a mainstream school. This works well for his primary education; he has the specialist support he needs for his moderate learning disability and behavioural issues but is also in an integrated setting. I would like him to have this opportunity when attending secondary school.

Our ambition for our son is that he is able to live as part of the community, seen as a valued and accepted member. I have real concerns that if he is schooled away from this community he and other children like him will be invisible to 'mainstream' community members when they leave their school and try and establish their adult life. Other 'mainstream' children need daily experiencing of being alongside children with disabilities and additional needs, in order to accept them as part of their world. We are setting children like my son up to fail as an adult, if he can't walk into any social setting and have the confidence to know he will be accepted as a community member.

I know proposals for the new school include access to the latest therapies and therapists. My son doesn't need this, he needs to grow into an adult and to know he can have friends, be loved and make a valued contribution to the world he lives in.

A good quote I once heard: 'you take a child with a disability out of a mainstream school and you teach the other 25 children in his class that he doesn't belong in their world'

Yours sincerely
Mary Reed

6.4.4 08.04.2019 Parent (St Nicholas School) response 1/6

Please can you consider and address the several questions that popped into my mind on reviewing the presentation [at Hardenhuish School, Chippenham on 5 April].

The key one is can we have the underlying data as was agreed which has been used to generate the tables. Particularly as to whether the current and future transport figures are based on the same process and procedure, and that the current figures have been compared with actuals for validation of both these and the future expectations.

Particularly of interest is how the formulates and simulations discovered Rowdeford students will have an average 20% reduction in journey times to Rowdeford in the new world.

Whether Rowdeford school will need a Right turn filter lane given it on the same road as Rowde primary.

Whether the need for 59 as opposed to 51 routes and a small increase in overall mileage adds or reduces transport costs.

As an aside it is interesting to see that of the Rowdeford contributes 600+ of the 1000+ miles driven currently and 30 of the 55 students already travelling over 1 hours. And would make me want to ensure my future figures are accurate and reliable. Given primary school children have an expectation for less than 45 minutes and only once secondary age does the limit increase to 75 minutes. The figures are uninformative to address this constraint. Therefore, whether and what the impacts and assessments are to primary as opposed to all students is a question that should be answered. Using currents students as a example of potential future expectations.

Whether the calculations include children not currently using transport and/or within walking distance of a current school.

Whether additional time on transport to gain access to the principle settlement communities is factored in to the transport times and cost models.

What The 5 million difference in 2 * 100 pupil.verse a single 200 pupil school actually represents, is it the additional setup or a annual cost benefit. If setup what is the annual cost delta between the two scenarios.

$98+81+130 = 309$ with the new school proposed for 350 to address the 2026 requirement of 50 complex places in North Wilts suggest the currents schools already need students displaced to other setting. Unless the new school is planned for 400+ places the remain 73 places must be going into other settings, therefore where, when and how are these being developed. Although post 16 hasn't been separated and could marginally address the mismatch in capacity.

The figures suggest the new school may not be intended to be the school of choice for the current types and abilities of students attending the 3 existing schools. And/or is only designed in this phase to deliver to Wiltshire 2026 expectation.

Although ultimately the whole presentation is based on the premise that a single school fulfils Wiltshire's PSED and other obligations in North Wiltshire, which is something would be helpful to address head on in any decision to progress on such a plan.

As no comparison exist to a 3 location 5-15 model there is no true comparison in reference, for journey times and mileage to a 3 local school model.

6.4.5 08.04.2019 Parent (St Nicholas School) response 2/6

I also think this is the right time to send this

With respect to the proceeding consultation it feels this wasn't of sufficient rigorous and enquiring to ensure the views of the consulted were understood and address in the proposal. With the views of some stakeholder groups either overlooked or combined and therefore potentially seen as statistically irrelevant. For example, the views of non-verbal and primary

school age children failed to be identified and expressed separately. Why should their views appearing to be unheard and undocumented? As if asked they may have different, unvoiced or similar views to the seemingly quoted secondary school verbal children. The details were insufficient to understand if there is any splitting views between pupils at sites proposed for closure and the current secondary school only site intended to be reused for the wider educational needs. If the cross section of views are not provided and assigned how is the appearance of predetermination avoided or the impression of impartiality demonstrated, For these vulnerable suggestible individuals an approach that ensures impartiality needs to be defined and used. Without impartiality built in any questioner's bias in expectation or opinion could influence the responses.

With particular reference to the Equality Impact Assessment and Public Sector Equality Duties, the very existence of which I have only during the challenge to this process become aware of. There appears to be a requirement that from the instance that forced relocation of pupils and removal of educational establishments became a consideration an impact that needs to be assess. The update needed to reflect this seismic shift. Given the preceding guidance In the 2017 equality impact statement shared during the legal challenge in people impact. state "no existing child/young person will be moved (unless they want to)"

As the proposal is toted as a once in a generation / 30 year plan the risks to current and future pupils across North Wiltshire base on actual or synthesised locations, with common educational, health risks/consideration should be understood and addressed. This would create a cross-section of impacts to be scoped for the likely SEND cohort attending Wiltshire special schools. Given our personal experiences and circumstances we know the relocation to a school further from us will have negative impacts. And that we chose to use the local (St. Nicholas School, Chippenham) school and not the perceived better (Threeways, Bath) school for many of the reason now being expressed and argued, with the added disadvantage that the proposed school is further from the acute care hospitals required in an emergency. Even providing a helipad for the air ambulance offers no guarantees, and suggests Wiltshire Council will be relying on a Charity to mitigate against flaws in the proposal.

The impact assessment should as previously stated document restrictions and/or mitigations of impacts. To understand the range of impacts that need addressing from a health perspective to my own knowledge St. Nicholas School has now or previously supported children with

End of life plans

Care plans

Epilepsy, with various seizure triggers and levels of control Autism Oxygen dependency PEGs/NG and pump feeds Shunts Continence Constipation Medication & toileting regimes Requirements for Emergency med at and away from school.

And

Classes of predominantly non ambulant children

I also understand the direction of travel for health globally is to move support for long term conditions out of the hospital toward the community, which could add to the schools obligations over time.

The school also celebrates friendship day annually to remember those who have departed.

I know the proposal to close schools will have negative impacts and believe these impacts are significant, varied, risking physical and mental health of children, parents, extended family and potential beyond.

As a parent of a child who has suffered a life changing health event I know how much the "what ifs" risks family, mental and even physical health. And that blame and uncertainty are inevitable part of the equation.

Blame may be direct, i.e. an event happened while in someone else's care (whether or not they could or should have had the foreknowledge or training to prevent or mitigate impacts), or indirect, the child became or is/was more frequently ill due to infection or over tiredness to a level they were more susceptible to other complications. The blame may be in the nature of why didn't I do? Or why didn't I have? Or why didn't they? Or why did they?

Potential the most damaging to mental health is the why didn't I? Which could in relation to the proposal be anything from keep my child off school, self-educate, visit school that day, take my child to the doctor before school. Pick up from school, the underlying current on the blames outlined here is why did I have my child educated at a large establishment away from me. And the self-blame will be tempered by being force due to the compulsory nature of education to travel my child further to an imposed restriction in location choice of schools and/or have them educated at a school with potential 3 times as many pupils and staff as I otherwise would have chosen or expected to choose.

More pupils will almost certainly equate to more illnesses persisting for longer, more travel distance irrespective of time may equal more tiredness and fatigue. It could equate to increased levels of constipation, which could among other thing be an epileptic trigger. Given the multitude of epilepsy triggers there could be others introducing more seizures for some children.

Using transport to access the community for learning will just exasperate the situation.

Blame may be justified or not. It doesn't stop it being real to the individual. And apart from anything else that could lead to legal actions.

Our daughter was going to need support and input pre brain insult/damage, post event our anticipated level of inputs and support increased, although the most immediate changed was in her needs for medical and Occupational Therapy equipment and inputs. I do not believe today she is supported fully in reaching her full potential, while I fear this plan add risks to her and others very lives.

The claim is made the current schools will be in financial deficit and this is being promoted as in part a justification of the closures. At all schools I can believe budgets are stretched already and restricting delivery particularly to the more severe PMLD children's educational needs, in these circumstances it is likely schools will be in deficit financially or in provision whether of theirs, the LAs or Governments making.

Given all this particular in relation to the risks to my daughter's and family's well being I feel aggrieved we are having to take this course of action at this time. There are clearly risks and little evidence these are known, documented, understood or robustly addressed.

Regarding the previous statutory proposal publish 9th January.

Firstly, and foremost to be able to feedback effectively it seems key as to have the details as to where are our children are actually being displaced to as part of the closure proposals. Given there is no linked equivalent new school decision aligned to the same timeframe and if the Education Adjudicator decides against it or WCC never proceed with the new school proposal then there may never be.

There is little detail in the new POST 16 provision. There is little to no certainty at all. In this current proposal WCC could move the new school into the middle of Salisbury plain or

Scotland once closures are confirmed and we would have no consultation or representation period to have our views with respect to closures on this basis heard.

The guidance even implies that linked proposal should be considered together and that the LA doesn't act as the decision maker in these circumstances. Page 24 of the guidance first paragraph of the Decision section "The LA will be the decision-maker on a school closure proposal, unless the closure proposal is 'related' to another proposal that is to be decided by the Schools Adjudicator."

Going further I struggle to see how I meaningfully respond on some aspects, as the closure proposals which at publication appears to lack details and clarity against the requirements set out in the guidance. key ones to me being.

i) Under Annex B Travel P29 how the proposal actual provides the requested "Details of length and journeys to alternative provision." The response begins "It is recognised that, for some pupils, journeys will be longer while, for others, shorter. This change can be a concern, when children/young people have significant medical or behavioural needs. Currently, pupils' journeys average 40 minutes (Rowdeford 43 minutes, St Nicholas 37 minutes and Larkrise 41 minutes), with the shortest being 4 minutes (St Nicholas child) and the longest 119 minutes (St Nicholas child). Initial estimates for the proposed new provision suggest there is likely to be a similar range of journey times, but potentially for different children/young people." Makes it unclear what is being said, committed or included, particularly regarding children not current using transport. Picking on just one statement "We hope that by choosing a non-town location we will reduce the amount of time in congested town traffic at peak times" I could hope to win the lottery it doesn't make it happen. This change includes a range of times but doesn't provide testable or indicated routes, distance and times for locations around the county. So even in what little it does say could include unsafe assumptions, expectations or proposals.

We believe our epileptic, nonverbal, incontinent, Cerebral Palsy daughter's time on transport if she attended Rowdeford would increase. In tandem with the risk her hours in attendance could reduce. Without transparency on the way timing used by the council were obtained and calculated this assumption will remain until proved otherwise. While being further from major hospitals in an emergency or home if she has a significant but non-hospitalising seizure.

ii) Under Annex B Travel P30 how does the consultation identify and proposal show compliance with "the proposed arrangements will mitigate against increased car use." particularly give the current school locations include the 2 North Wiltshire principle settlements and future state doesn't, in conjunction with the population density and expected growth across the North of county. With the expected number of meetings and visits parents can be expected to make to the school. And no clarity as to whether all students have even been accommodated in any transport plan.

iii) Under Annex B Impact on the community P29 the closure or assumed closure of a community accessed Hydro pool (Starfish Hydro Pool, St. Nicholas School, Chippenham) <https://www.neptuneaquatics.co.uk/starfish-hydrotherapy-pool> is not referenced or addressed as required by the sentence "A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community of the closure of the school and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact." Particularly when read in conjunction with page 18 Community services "Some schools may be a focal point for family and community activity, providing extended services for a range of users, and their closure may have wider social consequences. Where the school is providing access to extended services, provision should be made for the pupils and their families to access similar services through their new schools or other means."

iv) Under Travel and accessibility P12 apart from vague statement and promises on the councils intent to attempt to improve the good community access to Rowdeford there is no

details nor comparison as to the adverse or not of impacts on disadvantaged groups between existing and future situations which is at odds with the expectation the “Proposers and decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account and that the the proposal will not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups.”

v) Under Annex B Sixth form provision P29 the proposal is expect to cover in additional to where these students will be displaced to “Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, the effect for 16 to 19 year olds in the area that the closure will have in respect of—

a) their educational or training achievements;

b) their participation in education or training; and the range of educational or training opportunities available to them.” It seems the proposal has little details on what will be provided given all that is said is “St Nicholas and Larkrise schools currently provide post-16 Education which will be closed or taken on by an alternate provider. Rowdeford does not have post 16 provision. It is proposed that all 16 -19 education will be provided by Wiltshire College and the range of private providers across Wiltshire with whom the Council has developed strong relationships. This may involve the current buildings or other community based sites.

The aim is to increase the opportunities for preparation for adulthood in a wider range of locations, expanding on arrangements already in place and judged by Ofsted as effective. For those learners who will have formerly received their post 16 education through one of the special schools, there will be some change involved, however, this should lead to better development of life skills closer to home.”. An aim is not a commitment, and without detailing the capabilities of the current provisions, how do you benchmark improvement. As our daughter will be approaching this phase of her education the lack of clarity and certainty around this is very relevant and concerning.

vi) It was note to demonstrate the issues and concerns in out of step consultation there seeming to be suggesting of adding a “challenging behaviour unit” which could change the nature of the faculty and would needs very clear guidance and controls on how ALL risks to ALL pupils will be mitigated at ALL times on and off school premises due to the inclusion of this provision on site. And would be something I would have liked to be able to raised during the closure representation process for the decision maker review.

I also can't understand how the decision maker based on proposal and <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-consultations> survey could have made an informed choice in conjunction with the published proposal as opinions (while attributed to parents) are not by design further aligned to a specific school, nor online did there appear to be any controls preventing statical errors being introduced due to individuals making multiple submissions. Similar deficits appearing to existing in preceding consultation. Potential leading to a over representation of Devizes and surrounding area relative to population density. Even without this distortion in theory if greater than 50% of all parents supported the proposal from all parents this could still represent less than 25% support from both St Nicholas and Larkrise parents. Meaning the views of distinct stakeholder groups may be diluted or statistically misrepresented. Particular given in 4 years at the time of implementation the number of the current children still attending these schools is likely to be over 50% at Larkrise and St Nicholas across the upper primary years and the whole senior school while only 20% and all entering their last year of education at Rowdeford given the schools different intakes.

Also while at separate stages it was impossible to support or express preferences and expectations around the increase in school capacity proposal while objecting to the school closures.

Regards

6.4.6 09.04.2019 Collective voice from South Wiltshire (1)

We are contacting you as a collective voice of parents with children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) in Salisbury & South Wiltshire.

We would like to bring your attention to the extended special schools consultation that is currently running till May 6th 2019 so are also very aware we are running short on time to get our points across of how the proposed plans and the current lack of provision in South Wiltshire will and is already seriously effecting children and their families in the south of the county.

The proposed plans at present are to close 3 existing schools north of the county and to build one super school in Rowde near to the existing school Rowdeford in 2023.

Rowde is almost 30 miles from Salisbury and on a good journey without stopping can take on average around an hour.

Parents at the schools north of the county have been fighting against these proposed plans with support of the local constituencies to keep the current special schools open, keeping children with complex medical and educational needs within their local communities, an inclusive environment where they continue to learn and flourish with minimal disruption in terms of travelling.

After talking to the parents in the north of the county we feel its now time for parents in the south to be heard, our children matter too!

At present there is one special school in Salisbury this being Exeter House, this school is primarily for children with severe learning needs.

We have the recently opened satellite Springfields South at the Sarum Academy site and 4 small resource bases attached to local primary schools that are all at capacity and oversubscribed there is currently no secondary SEN provision this side of Devizes!!!

The crisis for SEN places in South Wiltshire is very real and is happening right now! It is expected for children of South Wiltshire to hang on till 2023 for this super school that is miles away from home. There is no mention of the funding creating a school for children in Salisbury or South Wiltshire with moderate learning difficulties or creating more resource bases so children can stay within schools in their local communities.

The proposed Free School for ASD/SEMH is not due to open till 2026! in the meantime all these vulnerable children that deserve a happy education are either being sent miles away to schools north of the county that are bursting at the seams, or are having to be homeschooled causing hardship on many families, or children are being sent miles out of county to suitable placements!

Instead of this super school that no one seems happy about why can't Wiltshire County Council focus on using this funding to provide appropriate provisions within different areas of the county?

We look forward to hearing from you!

Natalie Romano - on behalf of parents in South Wiltshire

6.4.7 17.04.2019 Parent (St Nicholas School) response 3/6

This is a personal view based on a gut feeling so would need working up to a skeleton proposal to allow for comparison with the 1 school proposal.

What is not a personal view is the travel data in the 1 school proposal seems to lack clarity (We assume the biggest winners and loser are Larkrise and St. Nicholas pupils but can't see this, and assume South Wiltshire pupils at a Whole county school are included in a future North Wiltshire Proposals travel planning) and appears current actuals are being compared with future theoretical, so isn't giving a fair or potential true comparison or reflection on the future transport quality compliance.

Seeing as a 1 site school can't achieve greater than neutral in respect to transport and the figures should be open to significant scrutiny to ensure the quality is even as adequate as neutral. This quality scoring being based on the reading of transport guidance that less than 45 minutes on transport for primary SEND children is ONLY advisory.

A three site approach for 4 to 15 schooling across North Wiltshire should be used for comparison, as logic says this can work towards a geographic splitting of pupils between schools and provide transport routes which will be reduced in distance and time relative to a 1 school option. If the sufficiency criteria can be addresses due to the pre-existence of the school on the St. Nicholas and Larkrise as this would address to some degree the value for money question. If not, then 2 new suitable sites will need to be identified, (preferably within the footprint of a new housing development) for the review. I would think Larkrise and St. Nicholas are used these are sized for around 60 pupils in the current buildings eventually (although adding Ashton Rd may increase Larkrise capacity, these being an estimate based on the current occupancy and not current guidance), if new sites are proposed then each site would be good to size for 150 pupils even if built out to smaller footprints initially.

Also, the proximity of schools to colleges could improve the outcomes scoring.

Regards

6.4.8 25.04.2019 Collective voice from South Wiltshire (2)

We are contacting you on behalf of parent/carer of children with SEN in Salisbury and South Wiltshire. It has come to our attention that during the special school's consultation that the south of the county has been omitted. Although today on writing this it has been confirmed that a consultation has been set up in Salisbury. Unfortunately, we feel that due to only having one week's notice this consultation will be poorly attended.

This has led to many experiencing first-hand repercussions of inadequate SEN provision in Salisbury and South Wiltshire. We have a strong support network that is present on social media, and due to this, we have produced a document to prove that the needs of our children are being ignored. Please note this covers only a small number of families in Salisbury and South Wiltshire, there are many more we have unfortunately been unable to reach in this short space of time.

At present we have one SEN school Exeter House (future centre of excellence), please see the attached document for travel times to other schools in Wiltshire. These are unacceptable for any child. We do not dispute that Exeter House is an exceptional provision. However, many children fall outside of their criteria. Which ultimately means they are placed into mainstream schools. A few children are placed into resource bases, unfortunately, again these are all full, and the spaces are few and far between. These also do not address the provision for children who need secondary education.

We have recently had a temporary provision provided for children with ASD in Salisbury. However, this is now full and has a waiting list. This provision again does not cater for secondary age children.

At present there is no middle tier for SEN children in Salisbury and South Wiltshire, there are many children who do not fit either the criteria for Exeter House, Springfields South or this proposed free school in 2026. Again, while this proposal is decisive for the future, this doesn't cover the educational and social aspirations of children with moderate learning disabilities, complex needs and other associated needs. Not every child has ASD/SEMH, each child is an individual and while we understand that it is challenging to provide a school that everyone is happy with, a middle ground does need to be found. As currently too many children are missing out or receiving an inadequate education, in Salisbury and South Wiltshire.

This is similarly represented by children who have ASD who can keep up with the National Curriculum; however, they are unable to cope in a mainstream setting.

Please see attached an excel spreadsheet. This has been produced by using an online survey. The answers from parents have been copied and pasted into the spreadsheet for ease of reading. Ninety-two parents filled out the survey and overwhelmingly only around 4 of these parents have had a positive outcome, when considering their child's diagnosis process and their education, in Salisbury and South Wiltshire.

It is simply unacceptable to continue to send children from Salisbury and South Wiltshire to provisions in Devizes, Calne and beyond. To end this email on this note, would you make a 60-mile round trip daily without having a drink, stopping for a toilet break etc.? Would you send a vulnerable senior on this journey with no support or assistance? Would you send a child without SEN/Disabilities on this journey every day and be happy about it?

This needs to stop! The crisis is real and happening now Salisbury, and South Wiltshire need adequate provision sooner rather than later.

6.4.9 28.04.2019 Parent (St Nicholas School) response 4/6

Having reviewed the presentation in detail it does raise several queries.

For me the key ones at this time being

1. Where is the underlying data which was promised as my assumption is Larkrise and St. Nicholas pupils are the biggest winners and losers in the transport delta statistics.
2. That there appears to be a predetermining that a single North Wiltshire school is acceptable. Which doesn't appear to be evidenced. Nor evidence that scaling up the plan that a single school for Wiltshire is not better value and also acceptable.
3. Where in the assessment process does the alignment to government regulation, council obligations and equality duties take place, particularly with respect to
 1. pupils and their families right to family life
 2. That some disabled primary school pupils are not being more discriminated against due to the reduction in choice from 2 to 1 and relocation out of the principle settlement to 1 educational location in the north of the county
 3. That some disabled secondary school pupils are not being more discriminated against due to the reduction in choice from 2 (or 3) and removal from principle settlements to 1 educational location in the north of the county
4. Where is the POST 16 plan, and/or evidence the impacts around their existence in the closing school and that their needs have been incorporated in the overall plan

and sanitised out of the primary and secondary school proposals, statistics and planning.

5. Have any risk assessment been taken to ensure external factors that could impact the validity of the proposal are known and address, like regulations changing transport guidelines to transport requirements. Which could happen as the result of a human rights case or other event outside the councils control.
6. How and where is the validation of the assumption used for the statistics and transport models to ensure some level of fairness in the comparisons.
 1. As where and how are the not on transport pupils included in the transport plans, figures and statistics
 2. As have and how have POST 16 pupils attending Larkrise and Poplar college been extracted and/or realigned in the statistics, or are they in fact included in the pupils being delivered to Rowdeford in the travel comparisons, an establishment which is not being proposed to have POST 16 provision.

Also have the South Wiltshire pupils attending Rowdeford today which are not part of the long term future North Wiltshire Rowdeford school site plan been removed, to ensure the consistency of the snapshot modelling to the future catchment.

6.4.10 30.04.2019 Parent (St Nicholas School) response 5/6

The following [submitted from HAMPSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUS] is a health professional's response for inclusion in the consultation to my enquire of her as to the health risks associated with additional time and distance on transport and relocation of an educational establishment further from their homes and acute A&E hospitals.

Sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you. Just a little background about me, I have been a Paediatric Nurse since 1995 and am now a Children's Community Nurse with a Public Health Degree and I have about 15yrs experience in community nursing.

I have read through your email and I empathise with your concerns. One of things you may want Wiltshire to clarify is who is going to provide the school nurses for the new super school, as it is obvious from your list there are children with a wide range of health issues accessing education at the three present schools.

Below I have listed generalised potential detrimental effects of prolonged journeys to school, however there is no research papers I can find to back these statements up. This information comes from my experience of supporting children and families in the community, I will continue to research and see if I can find anything more substantial to support these statements. I wondered if it would be worth each parent contacting their child's Lead Paediatric Consultant or Children's Community Nurse and asking them to provide a supportive letter specific to their child's health needs detailing how this change may affect each of their diagnoses.

1) POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF A PROLONGED JOURNEY TO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH PRE-EXISTING COMPLEX HEALTH CONDITIONS:

- Increased fatigue/stress on the child from the length of journey decreasing their ability to focus and learn when they get to school.
 - Extended school day on transport after a busy day at school reducing their family time.
 - This fatigue could reduce the child's resilience to fight infections leading to lowered school attendance.
 - Excessive fatigue is also one of the main triggers for epileptic seizures.

- It is not recommended that children are enterally fed by PEG/NG whilst being transported therefore this reduces the times at which they can receive nutrition. This increases the stress on parents to ensure that the right amount of nutrition is being given over a 24hr period.
- Some children that are PEG fed are prone to vomiting/refluxing and therefore transporting them long distances after these feeds could place them at higher risk of this, which could also lead to increased chest infections.
- Some children on the autistic spectrum find it hard to sit still for long periods of time and the sensory overload of transport may make them feel highly anxious which would manifest in challenging behaviour in an enclosed space.
- This challenging behaviour could be very stressful for children who are more sensitive and prone to startling reflexes. Such as children who are partially sighted or deaf/blind.
- Inactivity on transport would not be recommended for children with constipation, exercise, walking to school for example would be advised.
- Extended times in wheelchairs for non-ambulant children where they could be at home chilling in their more comfortable seating, preventing any potential skin breakdown from pressure areas.
- Potential medical emergencies whilst having to travel a longer distance to reach school/home/hospital.

2) POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE SCHOOL BEING SITUATED FURTHER AWAY FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOME AND FAMILIES:

- If child is unwell and requires parents to collect them there would be a time delay as parents have a longer journey to the school: this delay could have a negative impact on medical outcomes.
- If the school require support with specialist equipment such as suction machines, feeding pumps, ventilators etc from parents: care would be delayed by parents travel time, this could have wide consequences ranging from needing to access emergency medical support; to children missing out on important nutrition/education.
- For parents to attend for specialist meetings, plays, assemblies etc. they would need more time off work to allow for travel time and then may not be able to attend these : missed opportunities for memory making with their child who has an uncertain future.

I hope this is of some help to you, I think you already had most of these covered, I wish you well with your campaign to keep St Nicholas school open as it looks like a lovely school and you obviously feel strongly that it is the best option for your daughter to reach her potential, if there is anything else you think I can help with please let me know.

6.4.11 30.04.2019 Parent Governors submission from St Nicholas School

We hereby submit comments, views and concerns collated during two parent/carer workshop sessions facilitated by myself and Duncan Carter, part of our role as Parent Governors.

The workshops were held at St. Nicholas School and only St. Nicholas parents/carers attended. We anticipated sessions to run for approximately one hour. However, the evening session ran for two hours while the workshop in the morning had to be drawn to an end after three hours while continuing to generate a wealth of comments and concerns.

We ran the workshops on the understanding we would share the findings with this wider consultation. We therefore hope you find the feedback useful in order to fully understand what and why parents/carers have the views and feelings about Wiltshire Councils proposal and will add these to the consultation evidence.

Kind regards,

Duncan Carter and Corinna Davidson
(Parent Governors)

Workshop facilitated on 24th April 2019 from 7-9pm

IS a single combined school at Rowdeford a good plan for your child?

100% of attendees replied with "NO".

Why?

Too large (children and staff)
Travel
No community
The complexity of needs
Segregation
No choice
Parental engagement (lack of)
Quality staff will be hard to find due to location
Environmental sustainability
NO POST 16 provision

IS it a good plan for ALL children?

No, as for the same reason as above!
No- Remote location, no community links/ties
No- emergency travel to hospital time increased
NO- time not in education
No- Pollution and allergies
No- lack of specialist knowledge of EACH pupil

WHY would a one school option not work?

Transport/time/logistics
Impact on home life – i.e. adhere to siblings school times and work times, less time with family!
Too many children
Too intimidating for parents, too
This would NOT be an option for mainstream children/families - DISCRIMINATION
This would increase discrimination further re: travel time
Location
Community links not strong, children need to be visible in the community = belonging.
Social cohesion, NEED TO MIX WITH MAINSTREAM (this works both ways!)
Inclusion
Physical therapy = will it be big enough? Time? Staff? Costs? Gym, sensory, etc.
Collection of unwell children
Are health needs met in an emergency?
Staff need to know ALL children's needs as stated in EHCP
Staffing

WHAT would need to be in place to make a one school option in Rowde acceptable?

Detailed plans of what would happen to pupils' needs BEFORE to even consider a one school option!
And those plans to be adhered to IF one school option is accepted and acceptable

It is not an option
A one school option could kill

Parental discussion

This parent/carer group said that:

Accept a plan: expand Rowdeford to cover full age range and abilities with or without POST 16 at a superior level. This would mean it would release the pressure of St. Nicholas School with a view to reduce to school capacity
Parents would rather send their children to an “adequate” St. Nicholas than to an “exceptional” Rowdeford super school

Workshop facilitated on 25th April 2019 from 9.15-12.15pm

IS a single combined school at Rowdeford a good plan for your child?

100% of attendees replied with “NO”.

WHY?

Segregation/social inclusion

Size – too large – too many people – unfamiliar faces, sensory impact?

Not within a community, too rural

No choice

No quick access to emergency services

No mobile phone signal

No public transport = how do parents/carers go to meetings/events/emergencies/illness?

Less likely to recruit parents to volunteer

Would be too polluted/lots of traffic

Travel time

Staff? Retainable in this area? Midday supervisor in this rural area?

The village of Rowde is not a big enough community! Library? Gym? Shops?

IS it a good plan for ALL children?

No!

Reasons the same as mentioned above

For some but not for ALL

WHY would a one school option not work?

Size (all aspects)

Travel

Choice

Environmental impact (pollution, impact to residents)

Unfair for those who want their children to be educated CLOSE to their own community

Staffing

Parental engagement

Not future proof

More out of county

More discriminatory than the current situation

WHAT would need to be in place to make a one school option in Rowde acceptable?

A miracle!

Acceptable could be: use Rowdeford as a “centre of excellence” WITH large satellite sites in strategic towns in North Wiltshire

Dual enrolment was discussed however too many issues were raised (funding, transport, staffing etc) and parents realised this rarely works (personal experiences were shared)

Parental Discussion

Whatever proposal put forward needs to be

Transparent

Clear

Evidence based

Looking closely at the children’s needs

Realistic and achievable

Meeting EHCPs

Not including aspirations or hopes

Considering the impact of family life

Giving equal weight to social inclusion as their (WCs) value for money/budget

Concerns about Academy status i.e. cant hols WC accountable

If EWC does not deliver = complaints, tribunals!

WC has no idea or knowledge about our children’s needs/abilities and we can see this in everything they publish!

POST 16???

An overriding concern raised was that Poplar College is seen by some, as part of the future POST 16 provision as it is not called St. Nicholas school therefore safe.

That the need to access the Community includes learning life skills

That the need to access the Community includes learning and developing awareness of dangers for independence

Feeling that additionally time in transport accessing the community should be added to the daily transport times

Feeling that being known and part of a local community and social cohesion will suffer. The children displaced will be seen as them and not us. Children being safe as they are known by the community.

Wiltshire Council argue against attendance to National Star for POST 16 as this is outside the pupils community. The argument followed here Rowdeford to a 5 year old is similarly outside many pupils community. No consistency in their thoughts.

The discussion returned to the satellite provision and suggested this idea extend beyond principle settlements if enough local demand exists.

Further that criteria should be defined to trigger a review, as to whether there is sufficient local demand and need to justify an additional satellite.

Parental choice to relocate closer to the school at Rowdeford, particularly for the subset of children with childhood life limiting conditions, will be restricted due to the limited housing stock in close proximity to Rowdeford.

Converting to an Academy was raised as a concern as the Council pick up the bill but doesn’t retain ownership of the asset. In conjunction with recent media attention on the financial issues with some academies.

Parent fundraising could diminish with the remoteness i.e. no or low engagement with friends of....

No understanding how site security will be maintained. And how risks to children will be addressed with public rights of way across or near the site.

It appears impacts to POST 16 have not been understood and even confused as closing St Nicholas will also close Poplar college as is.

Not been clear what will be the broad impact of closures of Larkrise and St. Nicholas POST 16 provision

Little indication across the board that current POST 16 providers have the knowledge and experience to adapt to the mix of cognitive, physical and medical needs currently supported by Larkrise and St. Nicholas POST 16 settings. Nor that a robust plan has been sufficiently developed to successfully support these students into adulthood.

6.4.12 01.05.2019 Parent (Larkrise)

Good morning.

As a parent of a child at Larkrise this isn't my first email.

Sadly, the timings for the consultation meeting aren't possible as that is my child's bedtime and it takes both me and my husband to do her bedtime routine.

In my last email I went through the many reasons why my child is at Larkrise, what sets it out from other special needs schools and most importantly why children like my daughter, so not need a super school - this is like hell to a child like her.

As I can't make the consultation I wanted to make my voice heard again. If Larkrise closes and a new school is opened in Rowdeford my daughter wouldn't follow. It's too far and if we wanted a super school she would be at three ways.

I just had to stop typing as [name of child] had a big seizure. This is our reality. We live in traumatic, nightmare, unwanted worlds with or complex children.

I beg, I plead, please don't add to our horrendous daily worries by taking these schools away.

Many thanks
Charlotte Body

6.4.13 01.05.2019 On behalf of the Keep Special Schools Local Campaign

An open letter to Wiltshire Council:

After what felt like a positive meeting between parents and friends of St Nicholas and Larkrise schools and Wiltshire Council's commissioning officers on 3 April, we were surprised to hear from other parents and fellow campaigners that, during your consultation meeting on 5 April, you were still very much plugging your rural one-school model, using skewed statistics and unfair comparisons in order to try to influence stakeholders. Our impression from you was that rather than covering old ground, these meetings were intended to generate new and fresh ideas in order to consult on constructive solutions and alternative options to address the lack of special school places provided by Wiltshire Council.

As news of this consultation meeting spreads amongst key stakeholders, namely those families whose vulnerable children will have 7+ years of schooling remaining from 2023, more if you include Post 16+ provision, I feel it is my duty to convey to you that the brewing resentment felt towards Wiltshire Council is reaching an all-time high. There is a real danger that, rather than 'fostering good working relationships with families', as you stated was your aim in settling the legal case against you, you will achieve the exact opposite - with spectacular results - should you continue with your short-sighted, short-term plan for the future prospects of our children.

We understand that you hold a preference for the one-school option, to which you are entitled, as it meets a lot of your own criteria. However, there are a number of boxes which this model

simply does not tick for school governors, parents and children. For us, the heavily weighted boxes MUST include:

- social and community inclusion
- ensuring children with vulnerable health needs are within reasonable distance of an A&E department and other health risks are considered
- an accurately calculated transport model (note your data claims that Rowdeford students will save 986 minutes in transport time with a new school at Rowdeford, which is clearly oxymoronic; your data does not seem to include those not currently using transport and will have to; and your data does not show how the number of children who can walk/be pushed to school will be significantly reduced)
- improved access to education for disabled students (let's face it: education professionals agree that long journeys are not conducive to learning for even typical students, let alone those with disabilities, as they arrive fatigued before their school day has even begun).
- Advancement of equality of opportunity
- Parental choice
- School size
- Access by public transport if Wiltshire Council is meant to mitigate against environmental impact and encourage parental engagement/access for meetings, events, illness
- Quality of life

So while we formulate our own ideas and SEND vision for Wiltshire, our question for you is:

What alternative options have you generated that better meet stakeholders' needs?

What new ideas have you analysed, in as much depth as the one-school option, that you can present to us for consultation? We appreciate you will have a much greater understanding of the parameters and resources at the council's disposal and we do not have your knowledge and expertise for what is financially viable in formulating these plans. However, just as climate change activists campaigning to reduce the use of plastic cannot be held responsible for developing recyclable alternatives, as they are not scientists - you will appreciate that, although through our campaigning we can make suggestions, it is up to YOU to devise provision that meets the needs of our young people - utilising our input.

At the full Wiltshire Council meeting on 26 February, the two schools submitted their individual petitions, including more than 7,500 signatures each, for 'debate' (although your definition of this is debatable in itself). There the Council voted on and agreed that Wiltshire Council would receive the petitions and 'a response given that demonstrates a meaningful engagement'. I sincerely ask that you adhere to this motion as we have tried every reasonable avenue to gain your attention and to help you understand why your plans will not work and must be changed. If the one-school option is what is proposed to Cabinet once again, we will be forced to challenge it by any and all means necessary, including but not limited to legal action. I am sure both parties will agree this is very costly for all involved, both financially and psychologically, and only further delays education provision for the most vulnerable children in our county.

This also brings me to point out that the consultation period ends on 6 May, which technically only adds up to 16 full working days, when it was agreed it would be extended by four weeks. Guidance suggests that any consultation is run during term time and you will appreciate the Easter Holidays is a time for families, but also when we become carers 24/7 and have other siblings at home, so don't be surprised if the bulk of information provided by stakeholders is submitted to you at the 11th hour. We understand that there is a rescheduled Cabinet meeting to discuss special schools on 22 May. Should you wish to submit a report and a proposal for Cabinet's consideration, we understand this must be published 10 working days prior, which would take us to 8 May. Any court in the land would agree that one full working day from the end of the consultation period to the publication of a full report, is not adequate time to collate and analyse all of the responses and to investigate and analyse all proposals put forward by stakeholders. This is not due consideration.

If you haven't done so already, we implore you to seek independent legal advice on how to meet statutory guidance. In particular, you must go back and check that any proposal will meet your legal obligations, including your Public Sector Equality of Duty, and ensure you have a robust Equality Impact Statement. Furthermore, Guidance suggests that when proposals are linked, such as amalgamating schools, the Schools Adjudicator is the decision maker, not the local authority. Attempting to skirt this issue will only cause you problems down the line.

To date, the underlying data that you agreed would be provided to parents has not been forthcoming; specifically the data that will show the 20% of journeys with significant increases in travel times and how many students will fail the 45-minute maximum transport guidance. Where is the information that was promised on the possible use of the former Law Courts in Chippenham as a redeveloped special school site? What is your response to the points raised during the consultation period of 9 Jan-31 March, for instance the need for wider wheelchair-accessible pavements in Rowde, and the numerous other questions raised? Where are the full replies to our questions submitted prior to the Cabinet meeting in November? Refusing to answer our questions and concerns by ignoring us undermines any trust between parents, families, staff and governors and the council.

STOP IGNORING US.

First, you ignored headteachers, governors and staff when they formulated plans to help you improve and expand provision across Wiltshire; then you ignored the Wood Report and your own SEND Task Group's recommendations; next you ignored the 72% of people who responded to the pre-publication consultation in the summer of 2018 who voted for the development of three special schools in North Wiltshire. As campaigners, we have organised petitions and protests, lobbied councillors, had this issue debated in Parliament by MPs, gained media coverage across local papers, radio, BBC Points West and ITV West Country, and launched a legal challenge to which you conceded. What more must we do to get you to listen to us, the governors, parents and carers who are the key stakeholders for children with special needs? For a long time, we have thought 'surely if they could understand our children and what they need to achieve, they will be able to see that a one-school option at Rowdeford is illogical and actually institutionalisation and discrimination by any other name,' but we are now beginning to think that this isn't the case: is the truth simply that you do not care? That money comes before people? While we understand that budgets are tight, that burden should not be shouldered by already hard-pressed families. Why should our children simply take what they are given or have any less right to an appropriate education to reach their true potential than any other child? If there is not enough money to provide what is needed for SEND provision, then it is your duty to put pressure on central government to supply it or to consider your other budget headings. It is just a matter of priorities.

At the moment, we are a large group of families, carers and school governors, representing our wider SEND community, who have become advocates and campaigners, spurred on by our passionate understanding of our children's needs; and the council's one-school-fits-all model is not it. We feel this in every fibre of our being. So, despite the considerable strain and toll it is taking on families already pushed to breaking point given their disabled children's needs, we will continue to fight for what is right. But this comes at a price: at the moment we are passionate campaigners, but it won't be long before we are forced into becoming angry activists.

Please help us in shaping a proposal that can be agreed not just by Cabinet, but by families who are directly affected by these decisions and will have to endure the consequences of them for the rest of their lives. You have an extraordinary opportunity here to create a far-reaching SEND strategy for the whole of Wiltshire, from 0-25 years, and not just a sticking plaster for the short term. Let's create something that will meet the needs of ALL children, that will improve their outcomes into adulthood and enable them to reach their full potential.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa Loveday

On behalf of the Keep Special Schools Local Campaign

Wiltshire SEND Action

6.4.14 02.05.2019 Wiltshire resident and expert in SEND

I am contributing to this extended consultation to voice my strong objections, as a Wiltshire resident, and expert in special needs (40 years as a speech and language therapist), to the proposal to build a large school at Rowdeford and close the existing schools in Trowbridge and Chippenham catering for young people with severe and profound learning difficulties.

I have read WC's proposals in detail, and have also watched the film of the interview between Stuart Hall and Laura Mayes. The extended consultation time has enabled me to do further research on the topic, which has confirmed my original scepticism, and raised new points for consideration.

1. Building a large special school is likely to prove a white elephant, and prove extremely costly in the long run.

An expert in SEND policy provision whom I consulted from the University of Exeter was aghast when I outlined the proposal (he had read the Wood report, which I sent him). In his experience, this proposal is ill considered. Borrowing millions of pounds to fund new provision is extremely short sighted, and demonstrates naivety. The most responsible and successful authorities with whom he has worked are collaborating honestly and directly with mainstream and special schools to state what the budget is and to strengthen the universal offer, rather than creating large centres which in turn contribute to creating more youngsters labelled SEND in order to fill the places and justify the expense. I object because WC are showing financial irresponsibility in going down this route.

2. Outreach into local schools

There is conflation in the interview between two issues: one - how to provide for young people within special schools, and how to support young people who are in mainstream. There is no need whatsoever for a large special school to be built in order to develop an effective and co-ordinated outreach support system.

Economies of scale (see below) can be effected without this. Part of the problem has been created by the closure of resource bases. The money available would be better spent in reviewing and reconstructing flexible provision across the special and mainstream sector. This is the path recommended by experts in special education (see the work of the Exeter Policy Research Seminars).

I object on the grounds that a new special school is not the only, nor the most appropriate way to develop outreach support, which is best achieved by small local teams who know the schools and can work in classrooms alongside teachers rather than driving huge distances to places they do not know.

3. Failure to take account of the specific needs of young people with severe and profound learning difficulties.

Neither Ms. Mayes and Mr. Hall made any reference to this cohort, which is the group most impacted by the closure of their local schools. With respect to transport, for example, both agreed that it was "important that the journey be a positive experience". In the documents outlining the provision, reference is made to one young person "enjoying the journey to school". Journey times for a youngster with MLD who can converse with the driver and his friends and relax is a totally different experience to that of a young person with profound and multiple disabilities who finds the journey stressful and exhausting and who will be impacted both emotionally and medically by long journeys. Analysis of the likely journey times for the young people show that a majority of the young people at St Nicholas and Larkrise will be travelling further than they already do (the claim was that about the same number will travel more and less, which is false). At Larkrise, over half the children currently live in Trowbridge. Many of these journey times are going to exceed the recommended travel times of The quoted example of ONE family who would rather their child spend an hour getting to the right provision than 5 minutes to the "wrong provision" is disingenuous and is highly unlikely to apply to parents with children who have S/PMLDs. Of course parents want the right provision. The argument of those whose children attend St Nicholas and Larkrise is that they have BOTH the right provision and shorter journey times than will apply to Rowdeford.

It is unimaginable that you are proposing to send 3 years olds such distances away from home Cllr Mayes describes local transport as "good". Buses currently go every hour from Trowbridge and the journey is an hour; from Chippenham hourly and 40 minutes. It is clear that in fact the access to the school is dangerous, and that major works will need to be undertaken. How are parents and indeed staff to reach the school?

4. Social inclusion

I was interested to hear from Councillor Mayes that " at 16 they should be back in their communities". This is a tacit acceptance that the school at Rowdeford will remove these youngsters from their communities. The majority of Larkrise children (70%) come from an area where Trowbridge is their main local town for recreation, shopping and other facilities. At present they are known and valued, and they use the town regularly. What is proposed is in effect an institution. It was horrifying to read the view that social inclusion would be effected through visitors coming to an onsite cafe and gardens. This is a 19th Century view of children with disabilities as spectacle and objects of charity, of which you should be truly ashamed.

It is unclear how children with severe and profound disabilities will be included in the local town. Again it will involve journeys. You should be reminded that a 3 mile journey for children with profound disabilities, on top of an hours journey into school and back, is disruptive and stressful.

5. Failure to take account of the impact on the local economies I have yet to see any financial projections regarding the impact on two struggling towns of the closure of two schools which are major employers and consumers. Please provide this information. As you yourselves estimate that the Rowdeford area will benefit, you are clearly aware of this issue.

I urge you to work closely with parents on developing a more responsive and flexible provision.

kind regards

Nicola Grove

6.4.15 03.05.2019 Rowdeford School TA

My name is Marion O'Brien and I am a TA at Rowdeford School. I was also at the meeting in County Hall last night.

And was hoping you could forward this to the appropriate people as part of the consultation.

I have worked with SEN students for 25 years, in both Primary and Secondary settings. Here in England and in Forces Schools abroad.

And the one thing I personally believe is that each student requires a individual plan for their needs met by different environments.

Some as we are aware find safety in a small enclosed space with little interaction to achieve their best.

Others need so much more!

An environment that offers them, opportunities that they, might not, have been able to access before.

I believe that unless we are introduced to new experiences, we might not go looking for them!! And in doing so miss out on our key skill or our safe, happy place.

Rowdeford School offers so much more.

We could offer that safe cosy environment But we can also offer the chance to walk or wheel though a very peaceful green environment.

Where you can experience working with animals and gardening in a controlled safe space. That is a Really working environment.

On a personal level My father always said "if we didn't have our large garden, where would we have stomped off to?"

Rowdeford also offers this space to exercise any frustrations we all might have on occasions, once again in a safe, controlled environment.

It truly is a beautiful space to work in and a privilege to grow up in!

In conclusion

In my experience we all need something different to help us reach our goal in life and who knows what that is unless we, as individuals are given the chance to find out for ourselves?

Many Thanks
Marion O'brien

6.4.16 03.05.2019 Wiltshire resident

Children with disability and their parents are very unfortunate. These families need maximum support and genuine sympathy from the Council. I believe the proposal to close local Special Needs schools and concentrate all Wilts disabled or SN children into a single special institution in a comparatively isolated location to be unkind, impractical and wasteful. The consequent

much increased transportation by motor vehicle would be hard on the children, disproportionately costly and, of course, environmentally detrimental. I ask Wiltshire Council to be open to proposals from the parents and others with understanding of the overall requirements.

John Bowley, Warminster

6.4.17 01.05.2019 Parent (Larkrise School)

This is my second letter to Wiltshire Council regarding their decision to close Larkrise school and I would like it to be included as part of the extended consultation please.

I find it very disturbing that Terence Herbert, Corporate Director Children and Education, Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children Education and Skills and the entire committee who voted unanimously in favour of closing Larkrise would consider it the best way forward for the vulnerable children they serve. For me it seems that the decision was taken to ease a challenging financial situation and not with the best interests of the children at its heart. I have no idea how many councillors voted but find it astounding that all of them would feel that vulnerable children should be hidden away in a large and unfamiliar location.

Laura Mayes replied to my first letter and one of the points she made was that therapy staff had to travel to different sites which was time consuming. Was any consideration given to the parent's time in preparing their child for earlier starts and longer journeys and later returns to their homes? Therapists are able to travel unaided between sites and although I appreciate the time this may take surely a timetable could be devised which would maximise their time in each school?

Another reason Laura Mayes gave was that knowledge of the school and child is lost when staff change or are on leave. I hope that this is not the case as full and proper recording of care and input to every child is an essential part of any professional role and if this is not being done then it should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Extended travel and transfer time for these vulnerable children cannot be in their best interests as it will be both confusing and exhausting adding stress and distress to both the children themselves and to their parents and siblings. It is hard for me to understand how a unanimous vote could condone this alone never mind the "hiding away" of children with such individual special needs.

Terence Herbert is quoted as wanting to work with families to find a solution and it is such a shame that this didn't happen before causing so much distress to the families concerned. It shows a complete disregard for the needs of pupils and their family's expertise in what would be best for the children rather than what is best for Wiltshire Council.

To even consider placing all of the county's children in one institution shows a complete disregard for the inclusion which the individual schools have embraced which such success. Such large institutions are outdated as they have proved to be unsuccessful.

I do hope that the extended consultation will include the knowledge and expertise of all the medical, mental health and teaching professionals involved in the care of these children and families as well as take advantage of the considerable research available as to why institutionalising groups of vulnerable children is ill advised.

A valid answer as to why the unused Aston Street venue cannot be adapted to help space issues at Larkrise site would be appreciated.

I look forward to a positive outcome for the children as a result of the consultation as well as a response to my comments above.

Yours sincerely

Erica Watson (Mrs)

6.4.18 03.05.2019 Melissa Loveday (follow up from 2 May consultation)

Further to the consultation meeting that took place in Trowbridge last night, I wanted to expand on a few points raised during the meeting.

You explained your criteria and the framework you have been working to HISTORICALLY. We have explained our own set of criteria, and you (David) agreed that we could come up with a joint framework to prevent us going round in circles (ie further legal challenges against illegal proposals).

You have asked for alternative proposals and we presented one. However, until we agree a framework, we're not sure how this or any other proposal can be put to the test to ensure it ticks the most boxes of our combined criteria.

Also, our proposal to keep specialist provision in Chippenham, Trowbridge and Rowde is not specific on sites because we want the flexibility to work with you. As I said in my letter to you all, it is not up to us to know what land or other resources Wiltshire Council has at its disposal. After the meeting last night, I spoke with Michelle Donelan (MP) and asked her thoughts on the former Law Courts as a potential redeveloped school for Chippenham. She said that Wiltshire Council owns lots of land across Chippenham and that she isn't an architect; therefore, she can't say whether redeveloping the Law Courts would be more cost effective than building a brand new school elsewhere in Chippenham. We can, of course, give you suggestions, but we feel time is better spent by all if you can tell us which sites would be most cost effective. Otherwise, we will ask that you run ALL council-owned land (and the Law Courts) through a jointly created framework, for a school in Chippenham in order to meet the need for specialist provision in this area (ie 140 places with room to grow). You could also tell us if utilising the existing St Nicholas site for primary, while rebuilding or renovating elsewhere for a secondary site would be more cost effective than a one-site St Nicholas in Chippenham.

The exact same can be said for Larkrise in Trowbridge. Expand, co-locate, relocate or rebuild? You tell us what is the most cost effective and where, as we know this is a key issue for why other proposals, historically, have been turned down.

I also wanted to say that we do not wish to pursue further legal action. The only winners in that scenario are the lawyers and barristers, and the emotional and financial toll on families only fuels the fire of anger and resentment towards the council. We WANT you to come up with a proposal that is LEGAL! So please, ensure any future proposal meets your PSED and that you conduct a robust EIA. In particular, the one-school model for such a wide catchment such as North Wiltshire will not 'advance equality of opportunity for disabled people' with non-disabled people, nor will it 'reduce discrimination' as you aren't taking mainstream students and amalgamating them into a mega institution far from home.

David seemed to imply that the council got to the one-school decision in Rowdeford due to 'miscommunication'. If you could agree that this proposal is dead in the water because it is too controversial and disliked by too many, it would go some way towards rebuilding trust and goodwill between stakeholders and the council.

Finally, it occurred to me that there is some confusion between the Rowdeford contingent and our campaign group. They don't understand why community is so important to us, and I thought perhaps maybe you, as officers, don't either.

'Where does community stop and start?' one Rowdeford parent asked, and it's a great question! For me, it's simple: it's where my family and I spend our leisure time. We don't even live in Chippenham and probably live closer to Rowde. But we never go to Rowde. But we do go to Chippenham, several times a week in fact, for dance lessons (my typical daughter), out to eat, grocery shopping, park runs, the splash pad at John Coles and picnics/playdates in the various parks, meeting up with our friends, going to the cinema, shopping, etc. It is a natural hub and the place we feel comfortable spending time as a family, and it is important that Noah visits these same places during the school day so he is also comfortable and familiar with them. It is important for families with other children who attend mainstream Chippenham schools to feel part of the same community. It is important for mainstream students to be able to do work experience at our school and vice versa, not to mention the shared activities such as St Nicholas' Sports Day at Hardenhuish, where disabled and non-disabled children and young people can integrate and have the opportunity to get to know each and understand each other.

Community is more than something that happens at the weekends. **Ensuring the best outcomes for our children is completely entwined with community and social inclusion.** Enabling them to reach their full potential is dependant upon them having the opportunities to explore, engage with and be valued in their own community **as part of their curriculum.** We may not have a fully inclusive education system, but this as close as we can get. So yes, while parents across all three schools just want the best provision possible for their children, for many, **community inclusion is a huge part of quality provision,** as equally weighted (if not more) as high-tech equipment, specially designed facilities, and even magical, tranquil woodlands. Families should have the choice to decide what is important to them based on what each school has to offer and their own child's needs, in the same way we do when we choose a school for our typical children. I truly hope this helps you to understand why inclusion needs to be heavily considered in any future proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa Loveday

6.4.19 03.05.2019 [St Nicholas Special Schools Governors](#)

FUTURE OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS

As governors of St Nicholas Special School in Chippenham we are writing to confirm our strong commitment to the criteria we outlined during our meeting with council officers on February 12th. [This meeting was recorded although we have not received a transcript].

In that meeting we reminded you yet again of the importance to our children of:

- Inclusion and social integration
- Learning within the local community in order to provide a quality outcome
- Size
- Choice
- Transport
- Medical services
- Parental support and engagement

We refer you to our letter to councilors, copied below that further outlines our views and concerns.*

We believe that all these criteria can only be met by keeping two schools, with primary and secondary sets, in Chippenham and Trowbridge, the two towns in the North with the greatest economic development and growing populations.

The following 2 options provide for the expansion of St Nicholas School in Chippenham to support the forecasted growth in SEND education requirements

Option 1 – Split Site for 140 Pupils

- The existing school to be remodeled and used as a lower school to support up to 60 pupils.
- A new site to be sought to house an upper school for 60 pupils and a Post 16 facility for 20 pupils. The site could be a new school build or could be an existing building that could be converted. The cost of a new build or existing building conversion could be offset from the sale of the existing Post 16 College.
- Existing land/buildings owned by the council to be made available

Option 2 – New School for 140 Pupils with Planned Expansion to 180

- A new St Nicholas School to be built on a new site with the cost offset from the sale of the existing school and the Post 16 College.
- The new site to be chosen to build a school designed to house an initial 140 pupils with planned expansion to 180 as follows:
 - Lower School – 60 pupils with planned expansion for a further 15
 - Upper School – 60 pupils with planned expansion for a further 15
 - Post 16 Facility – 20 pupils with planned expansion for a further 10.

Both of these options would ensure a school that is:

- Financially viable
- Is able to accommodate potential increase in numbers
- Has the flexibility to make sure every child is in the place best fitted to meet their needs and best outcomes
- At the heart of the community

Increased financial security would enable the school to carry on and expand the work it already does in:

- Supporting high needs in mainstream schools and resource bases
- Co-operating with the mainstream schools and providing links between the two
- Working with SEN and other nurseries to ensure early intervention where needed
- Creating a continuum of education within the local area where pupils can be moved as their needs changed
- Linking with Health and Social Care to provide integrated support for the child and their family

In addition both options would allow for change to be introduced gradually and new strategies to be pursued.

We know that our views are supported by parents, professionals, the local council and local people. This is evidenced by their comments to you. They are also evidenced by research on successful SEND provision, which highlights social inclusion and small size as vital elements in the delivery of service that provides best outcomes for our most vulnerable children. Other

local authorities, such as Suffolk, with similar budget restrictions are managing the issue with inclusion, not exclusion.

We are very supportive of the presentation made by the parents of both schools and have worked with Larkrise to give joint comments on your Special Schools Provision Option Appraisal Tool. We support the Larkrise proposal for the expansion of their school in line with our criteria.

The special schools already work closely together and we believe there is already a shared Vision of Excellence that with the suggested expansion of service would ensure that every child gets the best possible education that prepares them for a happy life in their local community.

Aileen Bates
On behalf of the St Nicholas Special School Governors

* LETTER RE PROPOSED CLOSURES OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Dear Councillor,

We are writing to you as concerned governors and parents regarding the local authority proposal to close Larkrise and St Nicholas Special Schools and move the pupils to a new 'super school' in Rowde. We ask you to reflect upon and reconsider the cabinet decision made on November 27th as we firmly believe that it is not in the best interests of Wiltshire children.

We are aware that the increase in numbers of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities [SEND] means that the present schools have run out of space. We do understand and agree that both schools need new sites but we think that re-locating to Rowde is the wrong solution for both schools and more importantly for the communities of Chippenham and Trowbridge.

The proposal you have seen does list as unique to the 'one school' option all those advantages for pupils which apply EQUALLY to the two school option. In addition the two school option actually resolves the outstanding objections especially those concerning social inclusion and transport.

Our children have complex and severe learning and physical disabilities. Some are on oxygen and some have life limiting conditions. Many have autism. 'An outstanding education' for these pupils is about learning life skills embraced within their ever growing and thriving communities alongside their peers in mainstream schools. Most children like ours do not leave home at 18, go to university, travel the world. But one day, they are going to grow up and leave school. And if school is miles away in a small village they never visit out of school time - somewhere they've only ever been to on a bus or in a taxi - then where will they belong? You will be aware that Wiltshire Council has long argued against sending children out of county, in part because of the difficulty of re-integration when they return. Putting all children with SEND in one school, disconnected from any community with which they are familiar will simply create the same reintegration problem all over again.

Today, many of our school leavers still live in the Chippenham or Trowbridge area. Some of them have worked voluntarily at a local garden centre. Some are in independent supported living. Some of them go to the cinema together. Sometimes they meet up, with their support assistants in local cafes. Many of them have been friends since they were at nursery together. They will probably be friends for life. These are successful young adults, living in the area they

have grown up in, learning to manage their lives one step at a time in a place where they are recognised, greeted in the street, fussed over in the shops. This is invaluable support - and it costs nothing. We need the communities of Chippenham and Trowbridge to help us to raise our children. A wonderful example of what can be achieved when young people are put at the heart of their community.

Being in Chippenham or Trowbridge places our children near their peers in mainstream schools. These mainstream children will be the doctors, teacher and policy makers of the future. They need to know about SEND children who experience all disabilities. You will agree, I am sure, that we do not want to go back to the days of discrimination, isolation and exclusion.

We understand the need to spend money in the most effective way possible but we do not think the current proposal is the best way to achieve this. We have not seen any proper costed proposals, and wonder if you have either, and question whether the projected capital outlay and 'economies of scale' would be enough to cover all promises made in the proposal. We question how resources such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy are suddenly going to be available in Rowde when there is a current significant shortage in the county. We feel particularly that the estimated costs for transport will be much higher than predicted. Wherever you place a new school, children will need to be transported to it but as the majority of our children live in the Chippenham or Trowbridge area there can be no advantage in transporting them further away. Additionally this would create lengthy travel times for vulnerable children, potentially causing further distress and, of course, parents would have greater difficulty in getting to the school.

Wiltshire Council has a fantastic opportunity to develop a properly integrated system of education and social care, from birth to supported independent living, with two Centres of Excellence supporting SEND children right at the HEART of their own community. Over the last five years, the Council has shown that it can be cutting edge in developing its "Local Offer": a 0 - 25 SEND service which brings education and social care together to put the needs of its children and young people first, from planning to funding to placement. The next logical step, surely, is to develop this provision in the same community - not to focus upon only the cheapest option, which is miles away from where it is most needed. The two school option, with a cost of just £4 million more than the one school option, would retain special needs education in the fastest growing areas in the north. Wiltshire Council's own Task Group concluded that, "it would not be appropriate to combine all three schools into one site," and their own School Places strategy document states that children are best educated, "at the heart of their community."

We do wish you to understand that we are not negative about the council. However we believe and assert that the two school option is not only in the best interest of our children but is also the best use of Wiltshire funds. As a Wiltshire councillor we urge you look again at the issue and listen to the wishes of the 73% of respondents who clearly voted against the one school option and wanted Wiltshire SEND children to be socially included in the two growing communities that provide services and social activities for everyone. Please reconsider the two school option, to save special needs education in Chippenham and Trowbridge and ensure that our most vulnerable young people are enabled to live and learn seamlessly within their family communities.

Aileen Bates
Governor

Corinna Davidson
Parent

6.4.20 04.05.2019 Wiltshire resident

I am writing to protest about the proposed closure of the three Special needs schools at Chippenham, Trowbridge and Rowdeford in favour of one much larger school at Rowde.

A large school of over 300 pupils will be confusing and overwhelming for children with special needs. Special needs children are best educated as near as possible to where they live. This means that the local environment is familiar to them and they will grow up where people know them and they know local people. Special needs children should have the same rights as others to be educated locally. Longer travel times is not always easy for these children, or for the parents who are further away when needed in case of illness or distress. More journeys mean more traffic, more congestion and more pollution. Surely this goes against the policies of Wiltshire Council. This whole scheme is ill advised.

Joyce Field, Westbury

6.4.21 04.05.2019 Parent (St Nicholas School) response 6/6

Personally I don't wish to proposal or proceed on this but a 400-600 pupil Wiltshire wide school at or around Market Lavington looks feasible based on geography and the original criteria and reports.

I believe it fails on every level be this moral, legal, community, health or environmental and would create a hostage to fortune for the council, but I do feel the need to raise it to clarify whether the previously used 4 criteria were ever robust enough to protect decisions makers from being expected to support a larger and therefore probably better value for money option at a central location like Market Lavington even though it is even further away from all 3 key population densities and acute care. Therefore increasingly likely to lead to negative medical outcomes.

6.4.22 06.05.2019 Rowdeford School TA

I have worked as a Teaching Assistant at Rowdeford School for 11 years, and it is the best place I have ever worked, with the most positive, happy atmosphere I have come across in my experience working and volunteering at other schools in New Zealand and, since 2000, in Wiltshire. I do believe Rowdeford has a 'magic' formula that would be hard to replicate if the school was closed down, and worse, amalgamated with another school/s on an alternative site.

When considering the Council's plans to make major changes to Special School arrangements in North Wiltshire, I can't help thinking of the proverb 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'. I think it would be a tragedy if Rowdeford School was closed and its beautiful grounds no longer able to be enjoyed by special needs pupils, their families, staff and the community, across the county. The sense of space, peacefulness and calm that the Rowdeford environment provides could not be replicated in a different facility elsewhere in the county. The setting, with the woods, the historic grounds and ancient trees, is so integral to our school, and the setting is a major factor behind why Rowdeford has done so well as a LOfC provider.

Many times I have seen pupils' emotional or behavioural problems improved or resolved when they are given space and judicious support outdoors, by Rowdeford's caring and experienced Teachers and TAs. The spacious outdoor setting is especially valuable to those pupils - some from urban areas - who would otherwise not get the opportunity to spend time outdoors and to appreciate and learn about nature.

With its location near Devizes, roughly halfway between Trowbridge and Chippenham, Rowdeford offers the best of both worlds - a quiet, spacious outdoor setting, but not too far from the major towns. If Rowdeford school was made larger to accommodate the expected

increase in SEN pupils in the coming years, the grounds around the school could be extended, allowing for well thought out entrance and drop off arrangements for pupils arriving by taxi. I believe any increased traffic from greater pupil numbers would be accommodated more easily from a semi-rural site such as Rowdeford, than from a new site in a more built up area.

If Rowdeford School was amalgamated with schools on another greenfield/brownfield site, the school's magic formula would be lost forever. It would take decades to establish an outdoor setting approaching anything like what we have developed over the years. It is a privilege for pupils to be able to attend a setting like Rowdeford School. As concerns about damage to the environment get worse every day, it would be a tragedy if that inspirational environment was lost forever.

6.4.23 06.05.2019 Rowdeford School Headteacher

You will be aware that I have provided significant feedback to the consultation over the past year through written reports and face to face feedback. I thought it might be helpful to share a few newer ideas and thoughts. My aim is not to replace everything I have said before so please do also refer to feedback I have given in the past.

Firstly I still believe that a significant increase in the size of Rowdeford School, in line with the proposal tabled at the November cabinet meeting, should be at the centre of any solution going forward. I believe significant growth of Rowdeford School would provide the opportunity for an outstanding provision that will deliver a fantastic legacy for the future of SEND in Wiltshire. The strategic position of the school, as evidenced by recent feedback, will provide an average reduction in the journey time for students. The available site would put award winning, outdoor learning at the heart of the curriculum; it is a well proven fact that this leads to improved mental health and well-being alongside opportunities for students with SEND to self-regulate their emotions and behaviours; the site is truly inspirational and provides a healthier way of life as well as an enriching educational experience. A large school would also provide the true economies of scale that are needed to allow creativity, space for additional services and a real opportunity to provide extraordinary outcomes in terms of education, health and care. Quality of provision and exceptional practice within this context would also allow for outstanding in-reach and out-reach opportunities to support mainstream as well as other specialist provision; it would also allow for innovative and strategic leadership of resource bases in the future.

I am delighted that it is now widely agreed that the new provision must also include post-16 facilities to cater for students with more profound, severe or complex needs, that are currently not being catered for by other providers. This is a very positive step forward in my opinion.

I am increasingly of the opinion that a school for 350 students will not be enough. For September 2019 there are already 350 students needing places across the three schools and this number is projected to grow over the next seven years. It is possible that the additional space required could be achieved without significant additional outlay on top of those costs already agreed by cabinet.

I would propose that the Local Authority continue with their plan for significant growth of Rowdeford School but also maintain the Larkrise and St Nicholas sites, reducing numbers on these two sites, to ensure that they meet DFE guidelines. This would result in.....

300-350 students based at Rowdeford School

50-75 students based on each of the other sites (Larkrise and St Nicholas)

The two smaller sites could be used for a variety of different options; to ensure that some parental choice exists the Rowdeford campus would meet the needs of the full range of students across the three current schools. Some ideas for use of the two smaller sites could be:

Primary age students – This would make it easier to meet the 45 minute journey time guidelines as well as parents having the choice of a more local school for their primary age children.

14+ curriculum – This would ensure that students from KS4 upwards had an element of choice (based on skill set) and were able to move nearer to their home communities as they transition to adulthood.

Complexity of need – This would allow the sites to specialise in terms of those students with more profound or complex needs. Alternatively one of the smaller sites could offer a 'sliding door' between mainstream and specialist schools providing transition that meets the needs of students both ways.

To avoid the escalating costs of duplicating administrative and leadership teams across the three sites it may be better to join all three schools together under the same umbrella. This would allow dynamic, strategic leadership across all three campuses and lead to economies of scale that would provide a truly exceptional wrap around educational experience for students with complex needs.

It would lead to holistic education, health and care provision that meets needs, provides a quality provision with outstanding outcomes and delivers value for money in the short term and long term.

I would be happy to expand on any of these ideas if necessary.

6.4.24 06.05.2019 Grandparent (Larkrise School)

As a grand parent of a student at Larkrise school I am very concerned with the 1 school proposal. My grand daughter is thriving in her small school and enjoys walking to and from school every day. An important activity she will lose should this proposal continue. This will also add to the transportation costs. I cannot see how any child will be able to leave the Rowde site without even more transportation in place due to the unsafe and unsuitable pavements, roads and total lack of amenities to visit, this is such an important lesson for these children. They need educating to live and exist!

The confinement and isolation this big school (apparently the biggest Wiltshire would have) would cause is against everything the Community Care Act of 1990 was brought in to stop. It didn't work then and will not work now.

With global Autism diagnosis growing at an alarming rate, 1/59 on the last survey, i feel the need for special schools could out grow mainstream needs. Why is it that housing contractors are not being made to contribute, as they do for mainstream schools when they are building block housing? This needs to change.

I fully understand the cuts you are being made to uphold but with growing housing builds, lack of police force and other provisions, where is all the money going? We need it back to keep our towns running.

With no back up plan or money left what happens when this 1 site school fails!?

LOCATION - to maintain a 3 site plan, gaining sponsorship from local companies to aid annual running costs (as I am led to believe this is what the Council are unable to afford) Each school becoming it's own charity.

TRANSPORT - Keeping children in their own communities cuts transport costing, i feel the money saved on running costs will be out weighed by the added transportation needs.

COSTS - Large and state of the art is not needed, greener echo friendly ideas may be costly at first but pay off in the long run. Each school can make more money if green area is available to use for fetes etc, hydro pools can be rented out to disabled users (much needed) as halls for evening classes etc.

Trowbridge and surrounding areas have pulled together to support our special needs school beyond belief, the communities would also participate with finishing work if local, painting, cleaning, green areas after all that is what community is all about, working together. Looking out for each other, people, schools and business.

Thanking you

6.4.25 06.05.2019 Parent (Larkrise)

I'd like to discuss my concerns regarding the possible school closures.

I am a parent of a child who currently attends Larkrise Special Needs in Trowbridge. From the beginning I have favoured and voiced my opinion for the 3 school option. Each school has wonderful features which suit the children that attend. Rowdeford especially, has wonderful outdoor space which should not be compromised by extensions to the schools to fit the requirements of a super school.

A super school does not suit everybody!!!

Children should have the choice to stay within their local community. Mainstream students are not expected to travel to primary schools, nor do they only have one option. They are expected to state 3 choices, why should our children not have the same principles.

I feel keeping the 3 schools is the best option for the children in question, this can be achievable by requesting more support from the community that the school is situated, and leaning more on the pta groups. This also means the schools don't loose the post 16 that's currently offered within the schools, and reduces the fears of transitioning between schools at different ages.

By keeping the schools within the towns and communities they are already in means they can offer goods to the public. Local bake sales, intergrating with other facilities such as nursing homes.

Larkrise also regularly visit and attend the shops, the local park, soft play centres, the cinema and more. They have weekly swimming lessons at the local pool, a weekly walk to the school to purchase fruits and snacks, and use the local farm for horse riding lessons. These are all valuable life lessons and experiences, these should not be forfeited.

Thanking you,
Kayleigh Ramplin

6.4.26 Friends of Larkrise School – results from Parent/Carer survey Dec 2018

1. Where do you live? Trowbridge 56%
Warminster 14%
Westbury14%

Melksham 4%
BOA 4%
Devizes 2%
Other 6%

2. How does your child travel to and from school?
Walk 16% Drive 18% WCC Transport 66%
3. Do you have access to a car? Yes 78% No 22%
4. Would you be able to drive to Rowde to transport your child to and from school?
Yes 6% No 88% Not sure 6%

If no, please state why not: The top 3 answers were:
Other children at different schools, Work, No car/Don't drive
5. Would you be able to drive to Rowde to attend meetings or if your child was ill and needed to be collected?
Yes 44% No 36% Not sure 20%
6. Do you have any other children currently attending another school in Wiltshire?
Yes 68% No 32%
7. Does, or would, your child require a 1-2-1 Passenger Assistant if they currently use, or had to use Wiltshire Transport for medical reasons eg. epilepsy?
Yes 22% No 54% Not sure 24%
8. Would you be able to get your child to a central drop off/collection point in the mornings and after school?
Yes 14% No 68% Not sure 18%
9. Do you have concerns regarding a central drop off/collection point?
Yes 86% No 10% Not sure 4%

If yes, please state your concerns: The top answers were: safety, weather, noise, distance from home, waiting, meltdowns, other commitments.
10. Would your child cope with a larger scale 'Super School'?
Yes 8% No 72% Not sure 20%
11. Do you agree with the Council's proposal?
Yes 4% No 88% Not sure 8%
12. Do you recall being able to have your say?
Yes 36% No 64%
13. If asked, would your child be able to give his/her opinion?
Yes 14% No 76% Not sure 10%
14. If a new school was to be built would you prefer:
Town setting 86% Rural setting 6% No preference 8%
15. If Larkrise was to close and a super school open in Rowde, would you send your child?
Yes 16% No 60% Not sure 24%

If no, what would you prefer to do, i.e. home school, find a local resource base etc:

Top answers were: Home school, Resource Base, Other School, Mainstream

16. How strongly do you feel on a scale of 1 to 10 that parents should have a 'choice' where their child goes to school?
10 – 94% 9 – 2% 8 – 2% 7 – 2%

6.4.27 Friends of Larkrise School – results from Staff survey Dec 2018

1. What is your role at Larkrise?
Teaching staff 33% Support staff 50% Admin team 4% Other 13%
2. How long have you worked at Larkrise? Range from 1 to 25 years. Average 8.5 years.
3. Where do you live?
Trowbridge 50%
Warminster 8%
Westbury 8%
Melksham 8%
BOA 4%
Devizes 4%
Other 18%
4. How do you travel to and from work? Drive 58% Walk 30% Cycle 12%
5. Do you have access to a car? Yes 83% No 17%
6. Would you be able to drive to Rowde to work? Yes 70% No 30%
7. Would it be possible for you to work in Rowde? Yes 66% No 34%
8. Do you agree with the Council's proposal? Yes 8% No 92%
9. Do you recall being able to have your say? Yes 42% No 58%
10. Do you feel that the children you currently work with, if asked, would be able to give their opinion? Yes 20% No 80%