

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

22 May 2019

**Sarah Fleming – Statement regarding agenda item 6
Specials Schools Consultation**

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

Statement

My name is Sarah Fleming, and I am a parent of a 6 year old child, who attends Larkrise Special Needs School.

I am saddened to hear that Wiltshire Council is still proposing to go with the one school option at Rowdeford.

I truly believe this to be the wrong option for our most vulnerable children, and fail to see your reasoning for removing our children to a 'super school', or a centre of excellence as you call it, in the middle of nowhere.

In your School Places Strategy 2015-2020, under location of new schools, section B9, it states that the fundamental aim in planning school places, is to provide places near to where children live, in order to meet parental preferences as far as possible, to place schools at the heart of their communities, and to minimise travel to school distances - why are you not adhering to this?

The strategy also states, in the same section, that Wiltshire Council recognises the importance of considering distance of travel from homes to schools when planning new developments, in order to reduce dependence on subsidised bus travel, and encouraging safe walking and cycling to school - none of our children will be able to walk/cycle to school if the one school option is agreed by yourselves.

I feel that our children are being fundamentally 'let down' by Wiltshire Council, and you are not looking at the bigger picture - this is not the best proposal for our children.... We do not agree with a 'one size fits all' option. This is not about what Wiltshire Council want, this is about what our children need, and deserve, and that is to be educated in the heart of their communities, as stated in your School Strategy.

As a parent of a child with severe special needs, who struggles with large numbers of people, large buildings, who cannot cope with noise, and needs people around him who he knows and trusts, who know him and understand his additional needs, who needs constant supervision just to stay safe, besides all the other issues that he faces on a daily basis, I CANNOT and WILL not subject him to this.

Thank you for listening.

Yours Sincerely

Sarah Fleming