

Statements and Questions for Agenda item 6

Consideration of Proposals for the Development of Special Schools for Children and Young People with Complex SEND/Severe Learning Difficulties

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

Due to the volume of questions submitted for this item, the Cabinet member will address the queries raised as verbal responses during the course of the presentation of the report at the meeting.

1. Questions from Duncan Carter (St Nicholas School)

"I could reference school size, being in the local community, transport journey time, or this being a case of ambition over common sense.

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

This is our own experience which highlight issues and uncertainties at the core of many parent objections to this proposal. And why we never expected this 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 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 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 an adverse outcome.

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 balance seizure control with quality of life.

When she is unwell we balance using or not using services, and for school this include decide 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 part day, balancing education, rest and overall health. The one school proposal restriction and reduces options and adds risks.

We are lucky. We don't know what the future holds. Not every SEND parent has that luxury.

The proposal expect to deliver so much, it can guarantees little. It takes away choice and more importantly adds risk. Do we as parents really 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 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 risks.

As a final remark I would ask to look to your conscience as to where liability should lie if a child suffered permanent damage or died as a result of these SEND changes."

As well as the statement I do have a collection of questions gathered from a number of St. Nics parents.

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 single Centre of Excellence campus approach compared to maintaining provisions in all the current settlements in and for North Wiltshire?

4 - How have Wiltshire Council ensured the proposed plan is robustly defensible against criticism of being discriminatory or at odds to central government policy, regulation or best practice guidance?

5 - Cllr Mayes refused recommendation 2 from the task force of SEN professionals on these grounds: 'Ofsted inspection evidence demonstrates that the largest special schools including those over 300 places are often judged outstanding, so the conclusion that such schools are inadvisable is difficult to reconcile'.

5a - Please name large school with 300+ pupils with outstanding covering the complete spectrum of complex disability and health conditions, with a geographic and catchment distribution similar to that proposed for North Wiltshire?

5b - For comparison how many by absolute number and proportion of smaller special schools with up to 120 pupils supporting complex disability and health conditions have outstanding Ofsted reports?

6 - Has the algorithm to obtain theoretical transport time for the new school across the county been tested against the actual transport times for first pupil picked up, last pupil dropped off for the existing schools? Parental discussion and experience suggests 6 St Nics pupils on transport could easily exceed 20-30 minutes for the cumulative pickups before starting the journey to Chippenham.

7 - Alan Stubberfield, the interim Director of Education, said at our consultation meeting that 'this isn't about money. Even if it costs £20 million, we just want to get it right for the next 30 years'. So why have the more expensive options been turned down, while respondents voted for, to develop three sites?

8 - Where did the '£20 million' figure come from, limit of expenditure or known conclusion that the super school would cost that and had already decided upon it?

9 - How will the proposal be future proof if it will already be at capacity once it's opened? (278 from 3 schools +123 additional spaces needed for north wilts by 2026= 401 students, not counting the 3-yr-olds they plan to include)?

10 - At the moment, from bus/car to door to school at St. Nics is about 30 meters maximum; how will the council ensure that this distance won't be exceeded, keeping in mind that the significant numbers of students have mobility problems?

There are so many more about the size, scale and provision of the new school including will it have a helipad that don't seem right to ask now but will need answering.

2. Statement and Questions from Melissa Loveday (St Nicholas School – Petition Organiser)

When I heard the news a year ago that my son, Noah, had a place confirmed at St Nicholas school in Chippenham, I felt like all my Christmases had come at once. That may sound over the top, but my husband and I had accepted that our son would need specialist provision when he started school. After all, he has a rare genetic condition called SCN2A, which causes him to be severely autistic (he is non-verbal and has a lot of sensory needs), and to have an epileptic encephalopathy, which is a severe brain disorder of early age that manifests with seizures that are usually multi-form and intractable; cognitive, behavioral, and neurological deficits that may be relentless; and sometimes early death.

It has been a rollercoaster ride over the past few years as we recognised, tried to understand and come to terms with our son's disabilities. Daily life is sometimes hard as we adapt and try to keep him safe and reach his potential, balanced with the needs of our typical daughter, work, and social life; there is little respite. But we have found an amazing support network in our local friends, and from the charities who have supported us, in our own community. We feel that Noah is accepted and valued by the Calne, Derry Hill and Chippenham communities where we spend our time, and so when he got a place at St Nicholas, we were thrilled that he would continue to be included in his own community. I would have loved for Noah to attend the same mainstream primary school as his big sister and his peers, but I knew that he would be safe, that his needs would be met by experienced staff so he could learn, but most of all, that he would be happy. What's more, I know St Nicholas has strong links with shops, the church, library and schools in Chippenham; I looked forward to the day when my daughter moved up to Hardenhuish secondary school and had the chance to interact with her brother when they hosted St Nicholas' sports day and other events. It is important to her, and our family and friends, that he is included in his own community.

The truth is, we don't know how long we have with Noah or what new challenges he will face. So we want him to be happy and enjoy life, and we knew after looking around St Nicholas that it would offer him a wide variety of amazing experiences, from the hydro pool and rebound therapy, to equine and music therapy. We already feel a part of the school community, especially as there are children from his specialist nursery we know at the school. Noah is thriving and excited to go to school every day, jumping up and down with excitement! He has got to make bread, enjoy live music, carve a pumpkin, paint, run outside in the autumn leaves, have a tea party for Remembrance Day, dress up for a Halloween party, go swimming in the hydro pool; he is also making a lot of progress, exploring new sounds, making eye contact, initiating play, moving forward with PECs (a picture exchange system). Already we've had a meeting in which his teacher set realistic and achievable goals, and the Speech Therapist gave her a speech device and switches to take his communication to the next level. He has settled in well because it is a small, easy to manage setting with constant, familiar faces, who break down barriers for access to education. Every child with special needs should have the opportunities he has had, and I don't want his success story to stop now!

I implore all cabinet members to oppose the proposal put forward by Wiltshire Council for SEND provision and ask them to look again at the options. After all, a staggering 71% of respondents to the pre-statutory consultation voted for the three site option (meaning schools in Chippenham, Trowbridge and near Devizes) and all three schools have had an overwhelming response to their petitions to save their schools by their own communities. This is because these schools are valued, and their own communities recognise the importance of inclusion and easy-access to education for SEND pupils. The super-school idea has many flaws, not least taking my own cheeky, happy and adventurous little boy away from the community and school he loves and who love him. He and his classmates deserve to have a rich and fulfilling educational experience, and spending hours on transport, away from their communities, will not provide that.

Questions for the cabinet:

1. What guarantee/accountability will Wiltshire Council give that the responses to the statutory consultation will be taken into account, seeing as those put forward in the pre-statutory consultation were ignored (in particular 71% of respondents voting for the 3-site option)?
2. What guarantee can Wiltshire Council give that parents, staff and communities will be consulted and included when making decisions on

the specifications of the new school to ensure all students' needs are met individually and at an appropriate ratio?

3. Where is the £20million investment coming from? If it is purely a capital investment, what funds will be used and who will be responsible for maintaining the school and its overheads, and the salaries for specialist teachers and healthcare professionals, and how is this investment funding ongoing SEND education?
4. Has the Local Authority considered and budgeted for expensive agency staff to make up the shortfall of staff unable to drive and limited public transport to the proposed rural site? This is a problem faced by Shropshire's super school due to the changing needs of students year to year.
5. How will the LA ensure children are taught and cared for by familiar and experienced staff, and not a high turnover of temporary agency staff?
6. What measures will the LA take to meet their aim of 'community engagement', to ensure the super school makes links with schools, shops, churches etc in each child's own town or village in order to promote inclusion?
7. Anyone who understands autism knows routine is incredibly important for autistics to reduce anxiety, frustration and ensure a good learning environment; how will the LA mitigate this barrier to education when transferring students to a new school and settling them into the Rowde village, then moving them back again post 16 to be resettled into their own communities, which have now become unfamiliar and upsetting?
8. Has Wiltshire Council considered the cost and hindrance of the remote location for parents with little and unreliable public transport to Rowde? This may mean many parents cannot attend medical appointments at the school or bring them to school after attending one at hospital, attending school events and parents' evenings, or collecting their children when they are ill.

3. Statement and Questions from Corinna Davidson (St Nicholas School Parent)

I am a parent of a young adult who currently attends St.Nicholas school. My daughter is in her last year at Poplar College (6th Form).

When my daughter started St. Nicholas School in 2010, after 5 years at mainstream school, this was the right education provision, at the right time, in the right place. And this has not changed....

The recommendation that three existing special schools have to close to make room for one new "super school" is just not a vision I share and one I strongly oppose. Please find below my statement and questions:

The new school might be situated in a central location for the north of the county, however travelling times will increase for the majority and not minority. Your AA Route Planner calculations (Appendix 9) might be correct if the journey is from

door to door however no consideration has been given to the fact that transporting our children to their place of education often involves picking up others “on the way”. Reality is that a mere 7 mile journey to school can in our children’s life be 1 hour and 20 minutes long, as it is the case for my daughter!

Appendix 4 – Comments from a headteacher of a large special school:

- *The general rule from the LA re transport seems to be no pupil should be more than 50 mins either end of the day. I guess this is easy to achieve as we do have other special schools across the county.*

Yes, these times are only achievable because of other special schools across the county! This would not be the case for Wiltshire.

Appendix 4 – SEND Consultant

- *Journey times for pupils were 1 hr 15mins maximum.*

This might be achievable for some....not for everyone!

Appendix 2 – 4. Location

- *The Devizes area had most votes.*

Of course it would have the most votes, it’s the largest of the three schools!

Question: How many pupils attending Rowdeford do not live in Rowde/Devizes? (figures for St Nicholas and Larkrise were published)

Question: How can there be a guarantee that this new school will be a Centre of Excellence? From what I have read in the report, a lot of presumptions and speculations have been made. A key message from the consultation feedback was *staff are more significant than buildings, 72% of respondents said that special schools must have experienced staff in a warm and caring environment.* The report states that: *Staff would be expected to be subject to TUPE transfer to the new school and this would address concerns that there could be a loss of skilled staff who know your children.* However, the report also states that there is a risk: *problems with transferring to a new location* (page 31). There is absolutely no guarantee that staff will continue to work in the new proposed school. Travel times to work will be a detrimental factor - a survey how teaching staff (including TA’s) view this proposal would be useful, would they be prepared to “go the distance”?

Sabrina Hobbs, Principal of Severndale Specialist Academy with over 400 students and 300 staff was featured in Schoolsweek (June 2018) and she reports that “Predicting how many people it will be able to employ from one year to the next is their biggest challenge. One PMLD student may make the difference between whether we need to open up a new classroom or restructure the departments all together.”

Page 31 – point 32:

There are many families whose wellbeing over the next few years will be dependent upon timely decision making. The Local Authority has worked carefully over the past three years to ensure that the right solution is arrived at and no possible solution is missed or misunderstood, but is also mindful of how delay impacts on family life and wellbeing.

The Local Authority is already failing to provide accurate schooling for children with SEND and this is no “new news”. Special Schools have been crying out for help for a few years now. So the question is: What is happening in the meantime? How is the Local Authority planning to meet the CURRENT demand?

Where can I find the Wood Report which is mentioned by the Task Group? Selected information is given however this only provides us with a partial view. A complete set of evidence should be presented in order to draw conclusions.

How is the Local Authority proposing to fund the health elements mentioned in the report in this one new school? And are the health services actually going to be available in light of extreme staff shortages (VirginCare) particularly with regards to Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Physio Therapists?

Another key message from the consultation was *community matters – 90% of the respondents lived in either Chippenham, Trowbridge or Devizes and 71% of respondents wanted the three-school option (one in each of the town areas)*. I am one of those 71%...for what I consider very good reasons:

The recommended proposal claims to “provide children and young people with a lively community setting.” The proposed site could include a café, community gardens and public playing field, you promise closer links between SEND schools and neighbouring mainstream schools. Each have resources the others can benefit from...

So I conclude that Rowde/Devizes will continue to value the school, students and staff (as reported by Rowde Parish Council – Appendix 4). And I think that is wonderful...however, why should only that ONE community benefit from our beautiful children being around them? Why should only their community benefit from the concept of inclusion? Why should only their primary and secondary schools have the honour of meeting, interacting and learning from our SEND children? What about Chippenham and Trowbridge? Our special schools have worked hard to establish links within the community and surrounding villages! I have not mentioned cost but are you also promising to drive our children and young people to the invaluable links they have made over the years? Pupils are valued just as highly in Chippenham and Trowbridge as they are in Rowde/Devizes. You have shown no regards to WIDER inclusion. You are segregating...you are limiting the opportunities for our children and young people to participate in activities such as pupil exchanges outside of the Rowde/Devizes community. Our children and young people deserve to be seen not only in Rowde/Devizes and that’s why one new school in one location does not resonate with me.

“Those young people growing up in mainstream schools are going to be our future leaders and policy-makers. They are going to be the future doctors, nurses, employers, social workers, teachers – they are the ones with the keys to the future.”

“I think that’s what the basis of education should be. It’s about developing the future generation into making a different a different society. And we are hoping that the next society would be more inclusive.” (Hobbs, Sabrina 2018)

4. Question from Marie Elliott (Larkrise School)

As part of our campaign group we have come up with the following questions for the cabinet.

1) What methodology did you use to prepare the analysis of options to ensure that balanced weighting was given to all options and not just the preferred option of the Council? The report seems unbalanced, inconsistent and somewhat biased.

2) 71% of those consulted and the Task Group were strongly in favour of three schools being retained. Why have their views of not been given stronger weighting the analysis and conclusions?

3) Why have the Council not included in this report a details on all the responses they received to consultation and their analysis and response to all the comments made? The impression is that that comments shared are those that support the Council's on SEN education preferred option.
Of experts

4) The list of consultees does not include any of those you would normally expect to be asked when new development is proposed such and Planning and Highways and utility providers. Why is this?

5) why does it seem that council have completely ignored the wishes of parents of SEN children who know best what they need and the recommendations of a task group of experts given evidence by over 30 people involved in SEN education

6) We respectfully request that the council publishes in full, for the use of all interested parties all evidence gathered in the development of this proposal including the consultant report by Wood in the earlier TaskForce? The appendices used to support this proposal are in summary format with selected information, presenting only a partial view, and have been written by council officers to support the proposal, not to present a full and complete set of evidence from which conclusions can be drawn.

7) Can the council explain why in Trowbridge, an area of significant housing and population growth as referenced in Core Strategy, second only to Salisbury, the

proposal is recommending the location of this specialist provision so far away from an area of need, and from two existing schools in established local towns with strong community infrastructure?

8) When transport costs for SEN and SEN Transport are escalating nationally why is WCC proposing a new school in a rural location with very limited public transport, requiring the population of two existing schools to travel much further to access their education?

9) Has the council undertaken an impact assessment on current pupils' travelling time to the proposed new location? We respectfully request that the evidence of research on the distance travelled is published? Also, I think psychological assessments on the effect of extra travel and coping in a large school on children with social and sensory issues should be made.

10) What is the proposed funding strategy for the single school option? How does the council propose to fund this?

11) Why could a two school model not become a centre of excellence? Where is the evidence that shows collaboration by two schools can not result in outstanding practice?

12) The three schools model could achieve some economies of scale, reduce management costs and support service costs and develop specialist expertise if they federated or became their own specialist Multi Academy Trust, so the disadvantages on p25 are not fully upheld.

12) Is the new site proposed for the new super school on council owned land on green belt?

13) Why has the Ashton Street site been allocated for housing and demolition through the one public estate programme when this consultation on the future school location is still ongoing p52? What profit does the council gain from the sale of this Site? Why can the council not direct a developer to fund a new provision through s106 or CIL? Why has this site not been tested with planners? Why are there no options for creative options with developers? Where is the evidence to support this position?

5. Questions from Catherine Wilson BSc. Representing Blackbird Beauties

1. We respectfully request that the council publishes in full, for the use of all interested parties all evidence gathered in the development of this proposal including the consultant report by Wood in the earlier TaskForce? The appendices used to support this proposal are in summary format with selected information, presenting only a partial view, and have been written by council officers to support the proposal, not to present a full and complete set of evidence from which conclusions can be drawn.

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3. When transport costs for SEN and SEN Transport are escalating nationally why is WCC proposing a new school in a rural location with very limited public transport, requiring the population of two existing schools to travel much further to access their education?
4. Why have the views of 71% (639 people) of respondents who wanted three schools been overruled and an option for one large school has been proposed instead?
5. Has the council undertaken an impact assessment on current pupils' travelling time to the proposed new location? We respectfully request that the evidence of research on the distance travelled is published?
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- 11) What methodology did you use to prepare the analysis of options to ensure that balanced weighting was given to all options and not just the preferred option of the Council? The report seems unbalanced, inconsistent and somewhat biased.
- 12) 71% of those consulted and the Task Group were strongly in favour of three schools being retained. Why have their views of not been given stronger weighting the analysis and conclusions? 13) Why have the Council not included in this report a details on all the responses they received to consultation and their

analysis and response to all the comments made? The impression is that that comments shared are those that support the Council's preferred option.

14) How do the council propose to reintegrate children back into their own communities after removing them for so long ? How will this be delivered and how much will it cost ?

15) Has the council considered the societal consequences of removing children from their community on their communities ? How do they propose to deal with the societal problems e.g. Stigma and violence that results from removing disabled people from their communities? How will this be paid for?

16) How do the council propose to ensure consistency of staff in a rural location away from the main urban centres of the county? What extra support is planned to be in place to help retain consistency of staff and education ?

17) Many children with complex needs struggle to navigate large institutional environments - This is the reason we place them in small community based schools. What extra provision will be put in place to ensure that they can navigate such a large environment without anxiety and melt downs ?

18) Many parents place their SEN children in small environments because it's the only way to ensure that they can access their full statutory right to full time education- when placements start breaking down how do the council propose to provide the education?

19) How are the council proposing to fulfil their obligation to students with MLD (Mild learning disability) ?

20) How do the council propose that families on a low income access the school for TAC meetings, unexpected pick ups and other appointments at the school? Not all parents drive and public transport is only at set times. Parents with SEN children spend a disproportionate amount of time battling for their children to access full time education. Many mothers in particular are forced to give up their work when mainstream and resource base education fails our children. We are expected to be available to collect our children at a moment's notice. How do the council propose to ensure that this that this doesn't drive already vulnerable families further into poverty?

21) Why do the council's proposals remove choice of educational setting in Wiltshire when Neurotypical and able bodied children can access a large choice of primary and secondary educational settings in their own community? Surely we should be moving towards equality in education for disabled people instead of restricting their choice even further ?

6. Statement and Questions from Emily Wadds (Larkrise School)

Here is a statement and questions regarding item 6 on the Agenda.
Consideration of Proposals for the Development of Special Schools for Children and Young People with complex SEND/Severe Learning Difficulties.

My youngest daughter Lydia is 8 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.

The travel to school distance will have a very negative impact on many of our children and the cost both financially and environmentally would be huge.

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 Lydia 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 and is classed as life limited. 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 Lydia 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 Lydia. When Lydia 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 Lydia's teacher and teaching assistants. They are my support network. They know Lydia 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 Lydia 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 Lydia 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 Lydia's or my best interest but may be our only option. Having spoken to other parents we are not alone in this thinking.

I can not 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 Lydia. 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 urge you to vote against this proposal. Please don't let us go back to the days of hiding people with special needs away, out of sight out of mind.

I also have several questions regarding the transportation to school and home again of pupils with complex medical needs like my daughter Lydia.

1. Has the LA researched the travel times for each existing pupil who would be displaced from their current school, and have they assessed whether all of them would be able to travel from home to school within the maximum time set by the LA?
2. Has the LA determined the cost of arranging transport to the schools in the proposed locations? Is this cost higher or lower than current arrangements? If higher, what current expenditure in the High Needs Budget will be ceased in order to pay this increase?
3. Has the LA compiled a full list of those pupils who would need transport to school who have serious, life limiting medical conditions, for example epilepsy, dysphasia, oxygen dependency, and factored in the cost of the provision of extra supervision by transport workers with medical training and supervision and insurance to the modelling of cost of transport to school?

I would be grateful if the LA would share their evidence and assessment of these points in full to reassure myself and other parents that these areas have been planned for thoroughly within this proposal.

7. Questions from Jan Winfield (Larkrise School)

As the parent of a former Larkrise School pupil, I would like to submit the following questions to the Cabinet, with reference to the above item:

1. What is the proposed funding strategy for the single school option? How does the council propose to fund this?
2. Why could a two school model not become a centre of excellence? Where is

the evidence that shows collaboration by two schools, or a split site school across two already established communities cannot result in outstanding practice?

3. The three schools model could achieve some economies of scale, reduce management and support service costs and develop specialist expertise if they federated, or became their own specialist Multi Academy Trust; so the disadvantages on p25 are not fully upheld.

4. Why has the Ashton Street site been allocated for housing and demolition through the one public estate programme when this consultation on future school location is still ongoing (p52?) What profit does the council gain from the sale of this site? Why can the council not direct a developer to fund a new provision through s106 or CIL? Why has this site not been tested with planners? Why are there no options for creative alternatives with developers? Where is the evidence to support this position?

6) What methodology was used to prepare the analysis of options, to ensure that balanced weighting was given to all options and not just the preferred option of the Council? The report seems unbalanced, inconsistent and somewhat biased. Given that 71% of those consulted and the Children's Select Committee Task Group were strongly in favour of three schools being retained, why have their views not been given stronger weighting in the analysis and conclusions?

7) Why have the Council not included in this report the details of **all** the responses they received to their consultation, together with their analysis and response to **all** the comments made? The impression is that the comments shared are only those that support the Council's preferred option.

8. Statement and Questions from Teresa Lilley (Larkrise School)

My 9 year old son Lewis Blake has severe global developmental delay, a neuromuscular disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, amongst other things and he attends Larkrise School. We live in Trowbridge and Lewis is a very well known character in the community. Everybody loves Lewis!

Myself and my family feel VERY strongly about the council's proposal to close Larkrise school which has been at the heart of this community for as long as I can remember.

Growing up I went to Paxcroft Primary School. I remember Larkrise being built, I remember taking it in turns going over to have lunch with the children of Larkrise

and them coming to us for play time, sports days, assemblies... little did I know that one day I would have a child of my own at Larkrise....

This was a very important part of my time at primary school.... I WAS TAUGHT ABOUT INCLUSION!!! I wasn't afraid of these children, I didn't stare or make fun..... SOME DO!!! Sadly, uneducated children can be very cruel, at no fault of their own. Being right next door, Paxcroft School have continued to include our children in their school day, in their Sports day's, Harvest Festivities... This is SO important for social inclusion.

The children of Larkrise are very much part of their community in which they will live in as adults. An important part of their learning involves going into the local supermarkets, the Library, the town centre....It is so important that these children feel safe in their community and have a strong sense of belonging. They need to learn how to be independent in their OWN community, this means learning how and where to get on a bus into town and how to access their local library. These are just a few examples. Our children have as much right as every other child to go to school in the 'HEART of their community' as stated in Wiltshire's School Places Strategy 2017-2022. No child should be denied this!

This brings me on to the proposal of taking away Post 16 education?! As a parent of a child with additional needs I used to feel proud of our Councils provisions, I actually felt like we did matter! Now I only feel disappointed and scared as do lots of other parents.

What happened to 'inclusion' to 'embracing diversity'??? It would appear that NOT 'everybody matters'..... This is sad. Look at the support behind us from the local community.... Ask yourselves WHY is there uproar about this proposal??

I urge you to reject this proposal and consider whether Wiltshire Council are actually adhering to their Mission Statement 'Everybody matters...'

I would respectfully ask that the following questions are answered prior to the meeting on the 27th:-

1. We respectfully request that the council publishes in full, for the use of all interested parties all evidence gathered in the development of this proposal including the consultant report by Wood in the earlier TaskForce? The appendices used to support this proposal are in summary format with selected information, presenting only a partial view, and have been written by council officers to support the proposal, not to present a full and complete set of evidence from which conclusions can be drawn.

2. Can the council explain why in Trowbridge, an area of significant housing and population growth as referenced in Core Strategy, second only to Salisbury, the proposal is recommending the location of this specialist provision so far away from an area of need, and from two existing schools in established local towns with strong community infrastructure?

3. When transport costs for SEN and SEN Transport are escalating nationally why is WCC proposing a new school in a rural location with very limited public transport, requiring the population of two existing schools to travel much further to access their education?

4. Why have the views of 71% (639 people) of respondents who wanted three schools been overruled and an option for one large school has been proposed instead?

5. Has the council undertaken an impact assessment on every current pupils' travelling time to the proposed new location? We respectfully request that the evidence of research on the distance travelled is published?

9. Statement and Questions from Lance Allan (Trowbridge Town Council)

Statement – Trowbridge Town Council is deeply concerned that the proposal to close Larkrise Special School in Trowbridge will have a significant and long lasting impact on those pupils who currently attend Larkrise and those who will be in attendance immediately prior to the closure of the school in 2023.

Question – Has an alternative location closer to Trowbridge been considered?

Statement - Trowbridge Town Council therefore believes that arrangements should be put in place so that such pupils and those responsible for their care, can make a choice. This would include the choice to go to Rowdeford an earlier stage than the opening of the new school at Rowde, including for those not already in attendance at Larkrise. And also the choice to remain at Larkrise after the opening of the new school, for those who would otherwise transfer for a short period only. This would require Larkrise to remain open for a period following the opening of the new school.

Question – Will such choices and options be considered carefully before reaching a decision?