Northumberland County Council

Jacqui Pearson
<jacqui.pearson@northumberland.gov.uk>

Fwd: Closure of Bellingham middle school

1 message

Lorraine Fife <lorraine.fife@northumberland.gov.uk> 8 May 2018 at 13:56
To: Jacqui Pearson <jacqui.pearson@northumberland.gov.uk>

standard response

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Andy Johnson GCSX** <andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk>
Date: 4 May 2018 at 21:44
Subject: Fwd: Closure of Bellingham middle school
To: "Aviston, Sue" <Sue.Aviston@northumberland.gov.uk>, Lorraine Fife <Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk>

Fyi

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: julie p <julesp71@hotmail.com>
Date: Fri, 4 May 2018, 21:39
Subject: Fwd: Closure of Bellingham middle school
To: peter.jackson@northumberland.gov.uk <peter.jackson@northumberland.gov.uk>, wayne.daley@northumberland.gov.uk <wayne.daley@northumberland.gov.uk>, nick.oliver@northumberland.gov.uk <nick.oliver@northumberland.gov.uk>, richard.wearmouth@northumberland.gov.uk <richard.wearmouth@northumberland.gov.uk>, glen.sanderson@noethumberland.gov.uk <glen.sanderson@noethumberland.gov.uk>, john.riddle@northumberland.gov.uk <john.riddle@northumberland.gov.uk>, cath.homer@northumberland.gov.uk <cath.homer@northumberland.gov.uk>, veronica.jones@northumberland.gov.uk <veronica.jones@northumberland.gov.uk>, andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk <andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: julesp71@hotmail.com
Date: 4 May 2018 at 20:31:44 BST
To: Peter.jackson@northumberland.gov, Wayne.Daley@northumberland.gov, Nick.Oliver@northumberland.gov, Richard.Wearmouth@northumberland.gov, Glen.Sanderson@northumberland.gov, John.Riddle@northumberland.gov, Cath.Homer@northumberland.gov, veronica.Jones@northumberland.gov, andy.johnson@northumberland.gov, cath.mcevoy@northumberland.gov, teamoppy@gmail.com, rsc.north@education.gov.uk
Subject: Closure of Bellingham middle school

Dear sirs / madams,

I am contacting you to express my abject dismay and utter confusion on the recommendations that have been made from the outcome of the informal consultation into the education in the west of Northumberland as it appears, in my opinion, to totally contradict the factors which led to the consultation. I am absolutely appalled at the recommendation that Bellingham middle school is closed.

My understanding of the rationale for this consultation included the "physical state" of school buildings, financial difficulty of schools, the fact that many have excess capacity and there is a high transport cost.

This is where I become confused by the outcome:
1. Offering first schools to become primary - where are the additional pupils coming from? If they cannot fill to capacity currently then where do an additional 2 year groups come from?
2. The buildings require significant investment - there are many rural schools, the majority of which are not large enough, regardless of their state of repair, to have additional

year groups and of equal importance have the facilities e.g science labs etc to support primary education.
3. Financial viability of schools - money is required to make buildings of an adequate standard, more money is needed to provide the necessary facilities to ensure all curriculum is covered e.g science labs, additional teaching staff will be required for another 2 year groups especially considering 'sats' in year 6 require specialist skills

With regards to teaching staff how does the council expect to attract staff to such rural communities as they are not exactly within a reasonable commuting distance, particularly in winter months

This brings me to:
4. Cost of transport- I am uncertain as to how this proposal would reduce transport costs as many parents may choose not to have their child in. 2 tier system. I think serious consideration needs to be made that even if a family have chosen to live in a small rural community their child needs and deserves not just 'formal education' in their formative years but also the opportunity to gain social skills. How would this be achieved in a primary school of perhaps 20 pupils with such an age range, for example in Kielder?

Transport to schools is always a challenge in rural areas but I cannot see how anyone can justify the necessity for children form the age of 11 to have to travel a minimum of a 40 mile round trip every day. Some children have greater distances to travel and would be required to be on transport by 730am and potentially not get home until 5pm. They are then expected, and understandably so, to complete homework. At which point has the health and wellbeing of those affected i.e the children been considered? How can these children participate in extra curricular activities when they have no means of returning home? This, in addition, to less quality time with family and friends is detrimental to them developing social interaction skills.

Surely it must be acknowledged that exceptionally long days for children is not conducive to effective learning? The rural roads are often impassable during winter and even if they the are conditions are treacherous, yet this proposal deems it acceptable for some children to have to travel 40 miles to get to school and then back. It was deemed necessary, until

relatively recently, for a boarding facility at Hayden Bridge High School for such reasons.

All of the above can be negated by supporting Bellingham middle school remain open. It has the facilities, dedicated staff and is within a far more reasonable distance to transport children to be effectively educated. I find it incredulous that a 2 tier system is acceptable with the above factors in a rural area yet not in and near the town centre of hexham where none of the above are concerns.

I would greatly appreciate you considering my points and ensure that the final decision is made with the actual children a priority. No parent wants substandard teaching or facilities for their child but they certainly want them to be safe and happy in the education system

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Regards

Julie Mobberley

Sent from my iPad

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Lorraine Fife
School Organisation Manager
Northumberland County Council
Tel: 01670 624050