Northumberland County Council

Education Consultations
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Fwd: Closure of Bellingham Middle School

1 message

Cath McEvoy <cath.mcevoy@northumberland.gov.uk> 8 May 2018 at 11:46
To: Education Consultations <educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk>

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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Hamilton, Karen** <Karen.Hamilton@scp.newcastle.sch.uk>
Date: 7 May 2018 at 17:35
Subject: Closure of Bellingham Middle School
To: "Peter.Jacksonv@northumberland.gov.uk" <Peter.Jacksonv@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@northumberland.gov.uk" <Glen.Sanderson@northumberland.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>
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Dear Northumberland County Council Cabinet Member,

I am writing to express my concern at the suggested closure of Bellingham Middle School and to ask that you vote against this proposal due to the significant negative impact on the families, children and communities of the North Tynedale amd Redesdale area.

The council has taken the decision to maintain the three tier system within Hexham, rightly recognising the support for this system within the local community, yet has chosen to suggest moving to a two tier system for the North Tynedale and Redesdale area. Not only is this unfair, applying different standards and offering unequal provision within the same region, but makes no sense when the rural nature of the North Tynedale and Redesdale area is considered. The needs of rural areas such as ours are far better served by the three tier system which offers young children the chance to be educated within their local community, developing and strengthening those communities.

The move to a two tier system would see young children commuting for over 2 hours a day to schools outwith their community, removing their access to after school activities, reducing opportunities for socialisation and study and increasing their isolation.

As a parent who wants the best for their child, the closure of Bellingham Middle School places me in an impossible position. The current uncertainty around Haydon Bridge High School means it is impossible to be sure that the education provision there will be appropriate to my daughters needs. It makes it impossible to support her to understand and make a successful transition to a new school as the nature, size and even existence of the school she is expected to transition to are uncertain. Many parents may choose to try to avoid this uncertainty by applying to other schools whose futures are more certain, or may even feel their only option

to ensure the best educational experiences for their child is to move out of the area.

Apart from the obvious impact on the local community of reducing numbers, the impact on the children of loss of peer groups and friends, at an incredibly vulnerable time in their lives, could have a long lasting impact on all aspects of their emotional and educational development.

I would ask you to consider the long term outcomes of this proposal and the strength of feeling in the community which Bellingham Middle School serves. The closure of the school is not supported by those whose children attend the school and who the closure will have the most significant impact upon. The closure of Bellingham Middle School can only lead to poorer outcomes for the children, both educationally, socially and emotionally.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and I hope you will support the families of North Tynedale and Redesdale by voting against the proposal to close Bellingham Middle School when cabinet meets on Tuesday the 8th May,

Yours sincerely,

Karen Hamilton.