Northumberland County Council

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

Re: Bellingham Middle School

1 message

Lorraine Fife <lorraine.fife@northumberland.gov.uk> 3 May 2018 at 10:45
To: Jacqui Pearson <jacqui.pearson@northumberland.gov.uk>
Cc: "Aviston, Sue" <Sue.Aviston@northumberland.gov.uk>, Andy Johnson GCSX <andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk>

HI Jacqui

Can you please prepare the standard response for below in line with the Lorraine Bell response please?

Many thanks

Lorraine

On 3 May 2018 at 08:29, Andy Johnson GCSX <andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk> wrote:

> fyi
>
> **Best Wishes**
>
> **Andrew Johnson**
>
> **Project Director (Education and Skills Service)**
>
> Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group
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> Northumberland County Council
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> County Hall
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> Morpeth
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> NE61 2EF
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> Tele: 01670 622767

Email: Andy.Johnson@northumberland.gov.uk

Website: http://www.northumberland.gov.uk

PA – Deborah Anderson

Tele: 01670 622764

Email: Deborah.Anderson01@northumberland.gov.uk

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kelly Hollings** <Kelly.Hollings@northwt.org.uk>
Date: 2 May 2018 at 22:32
Subject: 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@northumberland.gov.uk" <Glen.Sanderson@northumberland.gov.uk>, "John.Riddle@northumberland.gov.uk" <John.Riddle@northumberland.gov.uk>, "Cath.Home@northumberland.gov.uk" <Cath.Home@northumberland.gov.uk>, "Veronica.Jones@northumberland.gov.uk" <Veronica.Jones@northumberland.gov.uk>
Cc: "Scott.Dickinson@northumberland.gov.uk" <Scott.Dickinson@northumberland.gov.uk>, "andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk" <andy.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk>, "cath.mcevoy@northumberland.gov.uk" <cath.mcevoy@northumberland.gov.uk>, "guy.opperman.mp@parliament.uk" <guy.opperman.mp@parliament.uk>, "teamoppy@gmail.com" <teamoppy@gmail.com>, "rsc.north@education.gov.uk" <rsc.north@education.gov.uk>

Dear Northumberland County Council Cabinet member,

This evening I attended a very inspirational meeting at Bellingham Middle School (BMS) and my enthusiasm to support this school has been re-invigorated.

We are going through a very unsettling time in Bellingham, I have three children currently in Bellingham First School, my eldest child is in year 4 and will be moving up to BMS in September; currently for 1 year only.

The staff and teachers at BMS really impressed me with their enthusiasm and love for their School. In spite of the fact that closure has been stated for BMS, they reassured us that our children will not be affected and will be nurtured in year 5 just like they have been in previous years, I thought this was outstanding, a very positive attitude and not one negative comment was uttered; what fabulous staff whose jobs are at risk.

Taking all of this into account; why is BMS under threat of closure? I'd really appreciate you answering my questions. Of course I'm delighted that all of the rural schools under threat are going to remain open as primary schools, it does pose the question – WHY is BMS closing when it is the largest school in our catchment? Currently 24 pupils are registered to attend BMS as new starters in September 2018; what will happen to them if BMS closes?

My son is really looking forward to spreading his wings; leaving Bellingham First School and starting a new chapter in BMS. He and his class mates are deeply worried however about what will happen if BMS school closes, it currently looks like year 6 pupils will merge back into Bellingham primary school and this to him is like taking a step back; returning to a school that he's fledged from with the same head and pupils that he thought he'd left behind on his academic journey. This is not healthy, year 6 is SATS year and returning to their old school during this stressful year is not a healthy option.

I know that travel is also a very big consideration. When pupils enter year 7 they will need to travel to Haydon bridge or Hexham, at the tender age

of 10/11. What a terrible waste of life sat on a bus for all of that time, when they don't need to! Please re-consider your decision to close BMS; a local rural School that pupils can safely walk to. You must experience the daily slog of commuting, the mundane nature of traveling to work is soul destroying and stressful, and you're expecting pupils of Tynedale to start their daily commute at the age of 11, a stressful drain on them at such a young age, a threat to their mental health and please tell me when they're meant to fit in time to do their homework and enjoy family life? The stress of this of far too much. But this is avoidable, closure of BMS is avoidable, it does not have to happen. Think of the safety implications, the road closures, the stress of early starts, the sapping heat in the summer months and the cold in the winter, these are children, not adults in a 9-5 job. The amount of time sat on a bus will equate to almost half of their time in the classroom.

Please listen to the residents in North Tynedale and Redesdale like you have listened to residents in the West of Northumberland, we have a voice too, and the right to be listened to.

Yours faithfully

Kelly Hollings.

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Lorraine Fife
School Organisation Manager
Northumberland County Council
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