

CABINET 22 MAY 2019

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question Submitted by Rebecca Burrell

Regarding Consultation on Prescribed Alterations – Shropshire Hills Federation

I speak as a parent of three children at Norbury and also an ex-pupil of the school way back when. I can also draw a comparison to Norbury because we moved back to Shropshire partway through the children's primary school education, leaving behind a struggling school and bringing to Norbury children who needed an opportunity to catch up. Norbury, and similarly Stiperstones school, are more than just small schools for a handful of children. They are key parts of rural and dispersed communities offering an outstanding education that celebrates and draws upon their remote setting. Norbury offers something seemingly quite unusual both in terms of the quality and variation in educational experiences and also the level of engagement with local communities and groups. It was in direct contrast to our old school that we were immediately welcomed in at Norbury and integration as active school supporters was embraced. The level of fundraising for the school demonstrates the commitment to it from not just parents but also the wider community of local residents.

It is a testament to the leadership of these schools that all people who replied to the consultation responded in support of children's education moving from Stiperstones to Norbury. Both communities see this as the very best option for the Stiperstones children and also for the future success of Norbury. In a climate where we are trying to build upon good and outstanding education for all children in this country it seems absolutely right to support this consultation. In doing so we would be providing the best opportunity to future proof this high standard of education for all children involved and also enhance the community cohesion in these remote rural Shropshire areas.

Does Cabinet recognize the extensive work put into this proposal by all communities of Shropshire Hills Federation and agree that children's education is far more important than just the building in which they are educated?

Response from Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Thank you for your statement in support of the proposal from the governing body of the Shropshire Hills Federation. For a number of years officers in the Council's Learning & Skills division have worked closely and supported the senior leaders and governors of the individual schools and the federation and are acutely aware of the extensive work that has been undertaken by them all. Cabinet is clear that the

quality of education in Shropshire is not down to the buildings in which provision is delivered alone – it is about the dedicated and committed professionals who work with our children and their communities, supported and directed by effective leaders, as exemplified in this particular case. This leadership has resulted in the proposal before Cabinet today, which is about securing a sustainable quality of education for the children of Stiperstones at Norbury and Chirbury primary schools, which Cabinet recognises and fully supports.