

Verbal Question from Marija Nicholson to Cllr Alan Charles at Derbyshire County Council Meeting on Wednesday 1st November

Definition of Isolated Small Derbyshire Schools, re Stoney Middleton CE(C) Primary School

I speak as a parent of a child at Stoney Middleton Primary School, currently going through the process of becoming a governor. One of the reasons we were all so shocked at the news that the council wished to close the school was that we believed that the Council's policy was to support small schools, as stated in the School Organisation Plan, where it says "the Authority has committed itself to supporting small primary schools, unless school governors themselves take the view that a small school is no longer viable."

Councillor Charles stated in an email to my fellow parent. Mrs Dulcie Jones that this commitment only extended to schools serving isolated village communities, and that Stoney Middleton was not isolated because there was an alternative school within 2 miles.

Could you confirm that this constitutes an official definition of Council Policy, and that other small village schools in Derbyshire that are within 2 miles (for infants) and 3 miles (for juniors) of another school are not protected by the commitment in the schools Organisation Plan.

(Cllr Charles's answer to DCC is not available in detail until the minutes are available)

Supplementary Question.

Councillors will be interested to know that, by this definition, many other small village schools in Derbyshire now are under threat. Just a few of the small schools, with vacant places, that could face rationalization against the will of their governing bodies and their communities, are

Crich Carr Infant - in the Amber Valley ward of Councillor Chris Jackson

Buxworth - in the High Peak ward of Councillor Barrie Taylor

Westhouses Primary - in the Bolsover ward of Councillor Clive Moesby

Wessington Primary School - in the NE Derbyshire ward of Councillor Derek Cotterill

Apperknowle Community Primary School - in the NE Derbyshire ward of Councillor Janet Hill

Litton Primary - in the Derbyshire Dales ward of Councillor Judith Twigg

Elton Primary and Biggin Primary - both in the Derbyshire Dales ward of Councillor Ray Caswell

and more...(all small schools, with spare places, less than 2 miles from alternative school)

At a time when school rolls are falling everywhere, what advice can Councillor Charles give to villages at risk, like Stoney Middleton. of having their hearts ripped out?

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