

Day 2 - Education: Please sir, can I have some more?

As highlighted in our 'More Money More Problems' document, Warwickshire County Council is facing a series of tough choices: which departments – departments that provide necessary and much needed services for the residents of Warwickshire – will face cuts to their budgets? We've already looked at how taxpayer money allocated to the Bermuda Connection project could be better spent on road safety mitigation, in this document we aim to show you how it could be better spent on one of the most vital services that our community needs, education.

Between 2015-2016, WCC aimed to save £11.613million. Some of the areas – directly affecting the taxpayer– are highlighted below:

- Education £1.27million
- Localities and Community Safety £386,000
- Social Care and Support £2.628million

WCC has already estimated that £68. 848million worth of savings would need to be made between 2014-2018. That's a significant amount of money – money not available to pay for Safer Routes to School schemes, to subsidise school transport and to provide an Assessment, Statementing and Review service that meets the needs of Special Educational Needs children within the County.

Some of WCC's proposed reductions for 2016-2017 are:

- Reduction in special school transport - £350, 000
- Restructure of Assessment, Statementing and Review Service - £250, 000
- Reduction in the transport budget for Looked after Children - £300, 000
- Review of dangerous routes – £500,000

It's worth remembering that the Bermuda Connection plans directly the safety of children living in the Bermuda area.

The costs of the Bermuda Connection project are spiralling out of control – just under £6million. The Bridge Action Group estimate the true cost of the project to be nearer £9million.

What could £3million buy for the children of Warwickshire?

- Element 2 funding provides schools with an additional figure of up to £6000 in order to support children with Special Educational Needs - £3million could provide extra support, one-to-one tuition and speech and language therapy for an extra 500 students.
- £3million could make up the proposed reduction in the transport budget for Looked after children – our county's most vulnerable people – **for 10 years.**
- It could provide 6 year's worth of extra financial support for the review of dangerous roads.

If you visit our website, you will find a map of the walking routes that school children use to travel to local schools. Surely it would be better if the money being diverted into the Bermuda Connection project could be used to review the routes already taken by children to school and to mitigate against potential accidents? Or will it be spent on an unworkable, unsafe and non-cost effective main road that re-routes the traffic from the A444 through a residential area?

www.bermudabridgeactiongroup.co.uk/