

ISSUES/COMMENTS RECEIVED WEEK ENDING 01-03-2014

ISSUES

I feel it is very difficult to agree to this when we don't know what our start / finish times will be, which day the children will have a half day on - is it a half day if they don't finish until after 1.00pm? I don't think we have been given enough of a picture to make any decision.

1. Additional child care costs;
2. Provision of enough after school care – St Boswells is already at full stretch; it is not possible to set up an “after school club” without the necessary qualifications;
3. Pressure on after school activities;
4. Time available for homework/evening meal;
5. Longer day and the effect on the younger members of our community who are already exhausted at the end of the school day under the current system;
6. Parents will have to pick up the tab so SBC can save money;
7. The Lothians have been operating an asymmetric week for some time (c.20 years). Other regions are consulting/considering their options. There is no recent experience to draw on as to the effect of these proposed changes as they happen;
8. Is there really a ring fenced budget for IT requirements under the new system?
9. Threat to parents employment by having to reduce their working hours;
10. Doubt concerning travel costs. Some pupils rely on public transport, the timetables for which cannot be altered to fit in with the school day (particularly for high school)..
11. How will the school operate, both on the longer days and on the longer day (Friday preferred)? This relates to lunch, transport, playground/lunch supervision etc

The consultation period has been poorly advertised with many parents and carers not aware of the proposed changes and therefore not making their views known. The consultation period is followed by rapid implementation leaving parents and carers little time to make appropriate child care arrangements. I am concerned about the potential impact to the education of primary school children as a result of longer days - P1 to P4 in particular. The reasons for implementation have not been fully explained nor the benefits to primary school children identified. It appears that SBC are proposing poorer provision of education for primary school children as a result of pressure to implement money saving measures.

This is detrimental to primary school children. Longer days in class, especially for the younger ones, is not good for their learning....and for what? - SBC just needs to resolve transport issues and they implement this for secondaries without impacting on primaries.

I work on a Wednesday so having the half day then would mean id have pay for childcare (which I cannot afford!) and in in west Linton is very hard to get as OOSC is full

As a working mum, the proposed changes will mean I need to find extra childcare on the short day. The only nursery in the village will not have space to provide childcare and I have no relatives who could help out. I work in midlothian, so my employers already have staff members who have children in midlothian schools and need an afternoon off each. As a result I am very unlikely to be granted a half day off each week.

Childcare due to work commitments.

None-I think the move to an asymmetric week is a good thing.

I think the asymmetric week is a very good idea and I fully support it.

Childcare becomes a bigger issue as well as the cost associated to it. It is already very difficult to work full time and find appropriate childcare.

I see a number of issues. It removes consistency from the children's week, must have some reduction in teaching time and its balance with recreation time during the day, and requires an earlier start when kids struggle to get in on time as it is as well as sinter hours being darker a that time. However the main problem will be child care for working parents. This may provide a marginal cost reduction for SBC (although I struggle to see how) but will add a very significant further financial burden on families that are already being squeezed hard. In particular the proposal to have the half day on Wednesday when the majority of part time workers are in work is quite ridiculous, especially the reason being given that it suits the teachers. education to pupils will suffer because of this. I do not understand the logic of this, Who is this actually for? SO the teachers can have better training on Fridays? Surely if teachers are working full time they should be in school til 5pm and do what ever they need to do. There are plenty of holidays, in-service days, bank holidays to accommodate this. Also I work full time so I have 2 options: 1) start paying even more for childcare 2) Quit my job as employers can't

I only see disadvantages for primary school children. A longer day with shorter breaks would affect the children adversely, I don't think they get enough exercise in school as it is. Also, I work on Fridays so if that is the shorter day, there is an issue of childcare both costwise and also who would provide it.

Longer 4 days for kids in early primary years. I already think their school day is too long.

Childcare is the main issue as both my husband and I work on a Friday and there are no registered child care providers living near our very rural school (Eccles leitholm primary).

We moved here from East Lothian and the lack of an asymmetric week in this area was one of the considerations in moving to this area. I now work in Berwick and will move to England should this be problematic or financially unviable for us. I should imagine if we sell our cottage it will be to a retired couple from England (like most of the others in our row) who will use it as a holiday home and contribute little to the local economy or community.

You are making the Borders even less attractive and easy to live in for young families with working parents. The resilient school scheme caused us massive problems last year and the asymmetric week will this year. Our neighbours have reacted by registering their children with Longridge Towers next year so they can still keep their current working arrangements. Financially this is not an option for us, but moving out of the Scottish Borders is.

Lack of childcare in Earlston. If the nurseries increase their hours and there is an asymmetric week, where are children to go after school? Parents who work in Edinburgh (as many do) can't change their working days as parents who live and work in Edinburgh have already reduced their hours to accommodate the asymmetric week which was introduced there years ago - work doesn't stop on a Friday lunchtime, employers need staff at work for a full day.

The arguments for primary schools moving to an asymmetric week are weak. High schools could align timetables without moving to an asymmetric week. It has been stated that additional transportation costs of £500k if primary schools don't move to an asymmetric week along with secondary schools, however, it has not been made clear why these additional costs would occur.

I think that 6h 15min which my son in P1 spends at school at the moment is enough for such a small boy. He comes home tired and he can't focus long enough during the lessons.

My children are all in Primary school - so these comments relate to Primary School impacts.

- Any proposal that reduces outdoor time and physical activity (as this proposal will by reducing break times and starting earlier /ending later) has negative impacts on children's health and wellbeing, especially during winter months when daylight is scarce.

- Onus is on parents to cover childcare costs, which outweigh savings to the SBC.

- Lack of availability of childcare for the "short day" - this is partly about space, facilities and getting things set up in time, but also about the lack of available/qualified staff to service such clubs/groups.

this plan totally disrupts our afterschool childcare arrangements.. we are both professionals working in edinburgh and cannot change our work schedules so easily.. Disastrous idea

As a working parent, having a primary school age child at home on a Friday afternoon is not an option. We live in a rural area and there are no childcare options available, even if we could afford it.

My two primary school children attend the local Village Nursery for after School care on a Thursday and Friday each week, due to my wife and my work finishing at

5pm.

Having spoken in advance with the owner of the Village Nursery, there is

currently no spare capacity for a Friday to accommodate my children attending

from 13:15pm until 6pm. This situation won't change until a decision has been made and there is very little time for a viable alternative to be put in place.

In fact the Village Nursery have indicated that they have no spare capacity at

all any day of the working week, so this puts my children's care at risk.

Within the village there really is no viable alternative option with qualified

childcare minders capable of looking after my children when we require this.

Therefore, this proposal is a serious concern as it seems as though there has

been very little forward planning to deal with the impact of the move to an

asymmetric week for those using qualified after school club care.

Loss of Registration:

This means losing valuable first line guidance to all pupils which is an integral part of pupil care & communication. This could impact on the health & wellbeing of our young people with particular concern to the most vulnerable. The register teacher, (as a non teaching staff member to that class), can pick up on anomalies in pupil behaviour on a regular basis. The registration period also acts as a "buffer" period if there are transport issues (86% pupils EHS are bussed in). Losing registration has the potential effect of reducing the role of guidance & communication.

Shorter lunchtimes

EHS offers a large amount of extra curricular activities & pupil support during lunch break. The proposed shorter break may mean the loss of games practices (-not enough time to change etc), pupils are unable to stay after school for practices due to transport issues. Also, the loss of inter house competitions which gives all pupils the chance to contribute & builds team spirit. Staff are already hard pressed with more intense teaching time & pupils rely on their good will to give up their lunch break to run these activities. With one less lunchtime, activities will be reduced & pupils therefore will lose out.

Intense Teaching time

The proposed timetable means there is no "give" in the system & has the potential to cause stress & ultimately the absence of staff, which in turn could lead to more supply/extra expense.

Aligned timetables & Video conferencing

EHS is particularly concerned that a full alignment of timetables will mean that there will be a reduction in the number of subjects currently offered to pupils studying National 4s and 5s. At present EHS offers two years of general education in first and second year and eight subject choices to be studied over third and fourth year at National 4 and 5 level. If the timetable is aligned with other schools in the Borders, EHS may have to offer three years of general education in first, second and third year, with only six subjects studied at National 4 and 5 in fourth year. The notion of "one size fits all" may appear to answer financial questions but with the huge difference between the individual characteristics of each school in terms of academic achievement, this has the potential of reducing educational opportunities for young people.

As regards virtual learning; the notion that this is a workable is a long way off. The current IT refresh at EHS will only upgrade one quarter of the computers & includes no specialist equipment for video conferencing. Broadband would have to be up to speed across the Borders & specialist training for staff, integrated & paid for. No consideration has been given as to who marks papers/NARs & who has ownership of the subjects taught. Blended learning or combination of online & face to face comes from necessity of extremely rural communities. This is not a quick fix & may be inappropriate for teenagers without a lot of support. In our opinion, there is no substitute from face to face learning which is already delivered successfully at EHS.

Day to long for young children. New proposal means breaks too short.

The cost of childcare or loss of wages to working parents.

If the move to an asymmetric week was being initiated for good educational reasons I would support it, however, for Primary Schools there appears to be no benefit educationally or from a cost saving basis. I was originally ambivalent to the changes, but have recently been made aware that (contrary to reassurances at the Peebles public meeting) teaching staff may well just be allowed to go home on the child free afternoon rather than use it for training, and that teaching time will still be interrupted for training / meeting purposes. I believe these interruptions are currently covered by the scheduling of specialist classes (eg music, PE) but where does that leave us if/when these specialist roles are cut in the further cost cutting measures that are still to come? The apparent requirements to provide a meal on the half day also seems to be leading to an exceptionally long break on that day. Assuming the half day is a Friday, and believing that the 'golden time' element of the day will be retained, the resulting learning time on that morning will be minimal. This does not feel like an educationally beneficial approach. I am left feeling that we have not been given the full story. As a full time mum I would actually love more time with my

I think the children have a long enough day at school as it is. This means extra child care for a Friday afternoon. I think it is better to keep with consistency and have equal days each day.

Me and my husband work my husbands work is 8.30am-4.30pm mon-friday my work is 10am-2.30pm I have managed to work this with my employer so it fits in time to pick my children up from primary school without having to pay any additional childcare fees this new proposal would not be an idea for my family's working life. My eldest child has special needs and benefits from a routine this may become quite distressing for him.

Working on a Friday will introduce childcare issues if they introduce asymmetric teaching.
School hours are too long
The school day is already long and tiring enough for the younger primary school children.

There will be less time for homework and out of school activities eg, swimming lessons.

Earlier starts in the mornings mean earlier transport times and the difficulties associated with this.

Will there be an impact to the quality of work conducted on the shorter day? Is this likely to be viewed as a bit of a non working day, by staff & pupils, particularly if it's a Friday?

I am completely opposed to the change in the school week to an asymmetric system for the following reasons:

1. Children's education will suffer through the removal of specialist teachers (music and PE).
2. Loss of lunch time activities due to shortening of lunch hour.
3. Longer days for children, they will be tired and less able to learn.
4. Loss of critical teaching time on Friday afternoon and eroding of quality of teaching on Friday morning (as has happened in Edinburgh and Lothians)
5. Economic impact on families - I will have to cut my working hours to pick up children on Friday.
6. Lack of childcare provision on Friday afternoon - resulting in loss of paid working hours for parents/carers.
7. Loss of 1 school meal per week for those entitled to free school meals.

- what activities will be available for pupils to do on a Friday
- how will those activities be accessible for all i.e. not only those with the money to pay for them
- how will the changes to the length of lunchtime affect extra-curricular activities (w

Availability of childcare

Cost of additional childcare

Tiredness of children and affect on performance of longer days.

Tiredness of teenagers by losing 10 minutes sleep in morning - this type of small change in school hours has been researched and shown to have a negative impact on pupil performance - has this been taken into account?

Why isn't the education budget better protected?

Has the council considered a change in working arrangements for teachers to reduce annual leave in order to make time for training as a way of achieving the same end point?

A very long school day for primary children and those secondary children who have to travel the furthest.

Childcare

Provision - unlike others areas that operate an asymmetric week I believe that the Scottish Borders does not have sufficient childcare provision to accommodate working families. If the asymmetric week is implemented in August there is insufficient time for new childcare providers to be registered between then and now. Clearly this will put many parents in a very difficult position.

Cost - As I understand it the asymmetric week will save some funds at high school level but not at primary. The cost of childcare will be significant for many families and given the current financial climate it will be very challenging for some families to fund this cost. As the saving is modest I would suggest this is not the right time to make this change.

Increased subject choice at secondary school - this is something I support strongly. However, as I understand it Berwickshire High operates a 50 period week at the moment - without an asymmetric week. It was stated at the public meeting that this is the optimum timetable structure. Given the cost and childcare issues for some parents would it not make more sense for other SBC secondary schools to mirror the BHS structure hence negating the need for an asymmetric week.

Staff collaboration - I support staff having the time to collaborate with colleagues. However, I wonder if the time offered by the asymmetric week will allow meaningful collaboration given my above concerns.

In summary, on a practical level my personal circumstances make it relatively simple for me to accommodate the changes resulting from an asymmetric week. However, it seems to me that the positive aspects (pupil subject choice and time for staff collaboration) can be achieved in other ways. Clearly there is a cost saving to SBC but these savings are simply being passed to be working parents many of whom are facing challenging financial pressures at the moment.

Following a review of the proposal to adopt an asymmetric school week I am against the proposal; my concerns are:

• For working parent the implications of an earlier finish on a Friday has major childcare implications, especially in areas where there are already significant shortages in provision

• The travel implications where bus services are shared with secondary schools are not clear in relation to how this will work

I have young primary school children - P.1 and P.3 and I am a working mother. I feel the school days Monday to Thursday will be quite long especially for P.1 age. Also Friday afternoon will either create child care problems, or be further time to find productive activities for the children which can be difficult especially in the Winter months.

Understand will only be able to offer 6 topics at GCSE replacement grade. This will severely limit choice of topics that child will be able to take forward to higher level. Other schools out with the borders are offering 8 which will put our youngsters at a disadvantage. I live in the Earlston catchment because of high school reputation and fear that it will be compromised. Feels like Earlston has to fit in with Borderswide scheme rather than pushing to be support it's kids.

More difficult to arrange pick up on Friday

Childcare is the main issue.

Concern that the Friday morning is very long especially for infants if lunch isn't included in the 1.15 finish.

Childcare for my two children who attend primary school. I will have to reduce my hours of work - therefore losing money or I would have to pay for childcare.

1. No attainment benefit to Primary Schools. Not convinced that there are any educational benefits for primary schools.

2. Issues of working parents, childcare costs, impact on local economy, etc all a concern

3. Rural school pupils already have a long day - our school already starts at 8.30 am - with transport changes this could be earlier. Day too long for younger pupils.

4. No appropriate childcare provision in rural areas particularly

5. Do not believe, given this is driven by need to make savings that other departments will have funds to offer additional sports and leisure / childcare / OOSC provision on the half day.

-School dinner / free dinner provision 5 days per week ?

Do not see examples of successful Asymmetric Week e.g. Edinburgh as convincing. You only have to visit the cities McDonalds on a Fri afternoon to see where all the pupils are !

-No focus on attainment within these proposals.

-Evidence from teachers who currently operate Asymmetric week is that Friday am - high levels of absenteeism, sickness and Friday viewed as a bit of a wasted day with assembly / golden time and very little curriculum teaching - not a good model.

-concern for working parents and lack of alternatives - with parents who have several young children it will be more economic not to work Fri afternoon that pay

Childcare availability & cost on afternoon of shortest day.

Perception that teachers have a 'free' afternoon (especially if it is Friday).

Teachers already have 5 in-service days, asymmetric week gives them further 19.5 development/planning days - that is more than most workers get for annual holidays.

Length and composition of proposed change to the school day. How can two separate periods of ten minutes equate to the teaching currently completed on a Friday afternoon?

Length of half day on Friday - too long without a break - children will need lunch if this is the case this would impact on the finish time. Need to recognise the research available on how long children are able to concentrate without a break.

Childcare - employment unable to facilitate a continued change required to working patterns to enable being off every Friday afternoon. Requirement to source and fund childcare which is presently not required. The effect of children having to attend childcare currently not required.

The effect of clubs which children attend outwith school - start times will need to recognise the change in the school day this will affect all children and parents/carers.

The effect on current Friday after school activities at High School eg hockey practice on a Friday - would this still be able to be facilitated by teachers and would pupils return to school to attend?

Change in timings for lunch will not facilitate continued lunch time clubs and activities.

Current lunch provision within High School canteen unable to cater for the school role - how will pupils be able to purchase lunch within these timescales outwith the school provision?

No issues with primary going asymmetric but feel consideration should be given to whether Nurseries also go asymmetric " perhaps a survey should be done as to uptake and attendance of Fri pm sessions " they are already a quiet session.

* Childcare on the afternoon the children are not at school.

* cost of childcare or cost of activities on the free afternoon.

* there is no way there can be enough activities put on to accommodate all children on the free afternoon

* a lot of schools don't have adequate space for lots of Friday afternoon activities.

* The need for re-scheduling after-school activities eg swimming lessons to accommodate the later finishing time.

* consideration needs to be given regarding the amount of homework given out and when it is to be completed by - the longer day has a knock on effect on what can be done after school. We need to remember children need their time to play, attend clubs and activities.

* the impact it will have on part time teaching staff

I can understand the need in secondary schools but not primary. Particularly in rural communities where childcare on the half day becomes a definite problem. Parents cannot magic childcare provision and not all employers will be able to be flexible to accommodate the change. It is not such a problem for the older secondary school pupils.

- 1 my daughter only started high school 2 years ago and has had to suffer changes to the school timetable this year - shorter lunch breaks, school started at different times and finishing at different times
- 2 you want to extend each day - my daughter comes on a monday exhausted
- 3 why stop at a 4 .5 day week - how long before it becomes a 4 day week
- 4 where is my child expected to go every friday pm

I am concerned that the long school days will be too long for pupils to concentrate, by the last period many will lack the concentration take any more information in. I am also concerned about an earlier start already struggling to get a teenager out on time for the bus for current 9am start. I am also concerned about doing away with registration as the our school bus (E20) has frequently broken down or been late and registration provides a buffer to missing class. I also feel for classes such as PE, home economics, woodwork the reduced period time will not allow for sufficient time to undertake tasks

I am concerned about the narrow range of options that will be offered to S2/3 pupils if the school week is reduced. At Earlston High school pupils are allowed to select six subjects which give a broad range however, if this is reduced to four it will impact on future choices. I am also concerned about extra curricular activities that are currently held after school on a Friday that will end because of the changes. I am also aware that some families will struggle with child care.

After school care

I strongly object to the asymmetric week because only the larger schools would be able to afford to offer alternative child care arrangements for primary school children for the Friday half day. The smaller, rural schools do not have such facilities as there are not enough children to make it economically viable. This yet again puts working parents in rural areas at a disadvantage compared to their more urban counterparts with larger schools.

Loss of registration time

For senior pupils, I understand that there will no longer be a time for registration. As Earlston High School relies heavily on buses for transporting pupils to school, the time for registration is a buffer against delayed transport so that lessons are not disrupted. I would back an even earlier start to the day, to retain this, rather than see it disappear altogether. It also serves an important social need. It is the only time when the same teacher sees the same pupils every day and hence any problems affecting pupils can be quickly spotted and acted upon.

Registration time serves more than simply a means of communication of events and school notices. It gives pupils a sense of belonging to a "class", which for some less sociable pupils, is a fundamental source of "belonging" to the school group or class. This will not be possible when registration ceases.

Alignment of timetables across the Scottish Borders

The High schools in the Borders serve a diverse range of community needs. This is very clear from the metrics on school performances in the region. For this reason alone, I would see it as unwise, a move to 100% align timetables across these obviously very different schools. It would mean a loss of

flexibility to maximise the educational performance of their pupils.

I understand the need to cut costs in education, but I have considerable experience of trying to teach via video conference to groups of young adults in Higher education, and so I know the limitations of using this technology in teaching. As the current technology stands, there is no way I would be happy for my children to be taught via video conferencing. The pupils I think would second that, and this is evidenced by students already having wall

Shorter lunch times

Lunchtime is the main time for extra-curricular activities and shortening them will impact particularly for clubs that need pupils to change (e.g. sport) or set up c
I am also concerned that pupils entitled to free school meals will not be given them on Fridays. What will happen to their lunch?

Also, other children going home on the bus won't get home until after 2pm – this is very late to eat lunch particularly for children who catch the bus at 8.1
Surely there must be a way such that the registration and lunch hours are retained ?

My concern relates to those young people in Secondary Education who use the valuable registration time at the start of the day to make connections with those who are able to support their health and wellbeing.

I am also concerned about the proposal to offer learning via video conferencing facilities. I think the costs and the practicalities of this need to be looked at further before they are used as a resource to provide effective learning and teaching. My experience does not suggest that this would be the case.

The proposal to reduce lunchtime will have an impact on extra curricular activities at lunchtime which very supports the main principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

Leaving school on a Friday after 1pm, with no lunch, not being allowed to eat lunch on the bus home and not getting home to have lunch until 2pm will not be supporting a healthy approach to ensuring our young people are well nourished.

There will be significant loss of quality of the pupil learning experience:

- As part of her all round educational experience my daughter currently has the opportunity to participate in several lunchtime activities run by members of staff.
- In the pursuit of excellence she currently attends lunchtime subject support sessions which will impact positively on her SQA results
- The removal of the morning buffer zone used for registration and assemblies together with the earlier start time means that the first period will be characteristically disturbed a number of times by late arrivals
- Reduced subject choice will prevent pupils from following the best course combinations for competitive academic profiles
- The intensity of teaching time and loss of flexibility in teaching capacity in the school will result in increased staff absence: this additional stress on teachers will be disastrous for pupils - reduced teacher input will impact negatively on pupil results.

The consultation event at the school was well managed and helpful. However, whilst the rationale for moving to this model is explained, along

with the benefits, the consequences and impact of reducing teacher numbers in the future has not been. There is a suggestion that you employ more teachers than is necessary because the style of the school week dictates this. I am not sure that I have had enough information about exactly what the teacher - pupil balance is and whether or not there will be less choice about subjects etc in the future. I fail to understand why it has taken SBC so long to propose this given that according to senior management it has been a proven success in the Lothians for years. So in summary, we need more information about what you intend to do with teacher numbers after this structural change has been achieved. In effect, we are being asked for our view without a clear idea of what the potential negative consequences are.

The proposals appear to be motivated solely by the need to make financial savings, with no obvious educational benefit to pupils.

My particular concerns are:

1. Impact on pupils' wellbeing. The proposed asymmetric week does not allow enough time for pupils to have a proper break at lunchtime. There will barely be enough time to get to the canteen, queue, eat lunch and get back to lessons - certainly no time for them to relax, play, socialise or get any physical exercise or fresh air.
2. Impact on extra-curricular activities. Lunchtime is an important time for extra-curricular activities such as chess clubs, maths/science clubs, additional sports training or practice, as well participation in student committees and a time to meet teachers for advice or additional support. If these are to continue they will need to be moved to the end of the day, but this is likely to result in reduced uptake and opportunity for pupils as many will simply need to go home. It also disadvantages those who live far away from the school as their travel contracts only allow travel at designated times, so if they choose to stay back for extra-curricular activities they will have to pay the full bus fare (if there's a bus which there may not be) or rely on parents to come and collect from school.
3. Impact on parents/carers. The early finish on a Friday will cause particular problems for parents who work. Some may be able to vary their

working patterns or ask for flexible working, but many won't. Even employers who are sympathetic to such requests may not be able to grant them while the school can close early on Friday, they can't.

I do not agree to the proposal for moving to an asymmetric week as follows:

I think that registration is an important part of the day for giving out information, forms etc. Also for pupils who are late it doesn't disrupt a class.

Obviously, the knock on effect of child care for families whose parents work. The rising cost of living is enough to cope with without having to take an afternoon off or pay for extra child care.

Buses would have to have to have contracts changed. At what cost?

It would seem according to you that teachers will stay at school on the Friday afternoons for training/meetings. What is the point? Where are the savings? Is that not what in service days are for and if not what do the teachers do on in service days?

Shorter lunchtimes will impact on extra-curricular activities thus penalising the pupils.

If classes are shorter they will be more intense thus putting extra pressure on pupils and teachers alike. This can lead to more sick days. With a loss in time will they have enough hours required to complete the subjects in the curriculum?(which is a problem in schools which currently have a shortened week).

Reduced capacity for lunchtime help/support sessions and clubs/activities. Individual lunchtime support is invaluable to all pupils. An increase in intense teaching time with no give in the system will have a significant impact on teachers' capacity to provide such support. Such intense teaching time will cause more stress for teachers and potential for increased absences, with fewer teachers available to cover. We cannot jeopardise children's education further by reducing the number of teachers, as planned, particularly as CfE is yet to be firmly embedded.

My daughter has benefited hugely from attending a variety of music groups. DofE, MUN and sporting sessions at lunchtime, which has increased her confidence and given her a broader more rounded school experience. Such activities will be drastically curtailed by reducing the length and number of lunchtimes.

The loss of registration will mean losing first line Guidance, key to picking up issues early and first lessons will be continually disrupted with latecomers. 24 valuable minutes of lesson time will be lost each week due to change in classes.

Virtual learning and video-conferencing as proposed has not been tested as to its efficacy, the staff have yet to be trained in its implementation,

the equipment will be costly and is not suited to the limited capacity of the local broadband facility which will be put under increased strain. Pupils gain enormous The proposed changes were abandoned recently due the cost of transportation changes, yet no costing has been done for a current figure for changing the bus times. The Borders have totally differing needs to more populated areas, where the asymmetric week is in place. Those on free school meals will be sent home at 1.15 without lunch.

1. Loss of extra-curricular activities currently run at lunch-times. Exclusion of children who have to take the school bus home if activities are moved to after school hours. Too much to expect of teachers to run these activities if they have already had their teaching hours increased.
2. Far too long a school day for primary children if concerns about school bus costs mean they have to have the same school day length as secondary schools. Too long a day for secondary school children who have a distance to travel to and from school.
3. Child care for the afternoon when children are not at school has not been addressed by the council. Providing this cost-free would cut down cost benefits of the asymmetric week. If it is not free, it will impact on parents who need to work and cannot afford extra childcare costs. Possibility of children simply being left alone if parents have no alternative.
4. Job losses for teachers and increased work-load for those who remain - impact on staff moral and quality of schooling.
5. It is not clear how courses can be shared across schools given the distances between schools.
6. The scheme may well work in Edinburgh but the issue of long distances to be travelled to school does not arise there while it critically affects children in the Scottish Borders.
7. It seems from what was said by the councillor at the school meeting that the decision has more or less already been made and views of the community will be ignored.

A shorter lunch break would mean there may not be time for lunch time clubs.

Following a review of the proposal to adopt an asymmetric school week I am against the proposal; my concerns are:

• For working parent the implications of an earlier finish on a Friday has major childcare implications where appropriate, especially in areas where there are already significant shortages in provision

• Will the changes to the working week and length of days have an impact on staff moral and welfare resulting in more lost classroom time through staff absence

• Given there are already difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced teachers for certain subjects will the changes to the working week further hinder this and result in a loss of subject choice for pupils

• The loss of registration for pupils may result in a lack of first line guidance for pupils and mean potential issues are not identified and addressed

• The shorter lunch break, and loss of Friday lunch, will have a negative impact on extracurricular activities

• With the school ending early (13:15) on a Friday with no lunch, combined with the earlier start, this will work against pupils who have transport in relation to their lunch (and ability for healthy eating)

• The earlier start to the day, and earlier transport, may compromise pupil safety during the winter months and dark morning

the cut in teaching time, cut in subjects being taught resulting in less education. Children have always been advised to take wide selection of

subjects to keep employment opportunities open, I feel that this will narrow. I think having registration in the morning is valuable for pupil teacher contact without invading teaching time.

Too long a school day – too tiring, not enough time for other activities or homework so too much stress too early in life.

Too short a lunch break and inadequate facilities for whole school to eat in school canteen (PHS).

Too long a morning session (too long a gap between proper meals).

Too early a start (cold and dark mornings) – and even less chance that breakfast will be eaten, with associated impact on school performance. You must give due weight to the importance of proper meals and their role in performance at school, and not ignore it.

Childcare issues – I work part-time so that I am around for my children. I cannot change my work hours to fit with an asymmetric week.

My son has medical issues and extending the school day will impact on the management of his condition.

Disruption to working parents, childcare costs, too long a day for pupils. Concerned that once this is in place the next step will be to reduce teaching time.

My kids go to Earlston high from Galashiels , so the buses r my worry

I work 4 days out of 5 in a secondary school in pupil support and if Friday is my day off I will miss out on all meetings and planned development time. If it is not Friday then I will be spending proportionately less time with pupils.

Having worked in other schools in other regions, the timetable here works so well, it is balanced throughout the day with appropriate breaks and enough time at lunchtime for activities. It is a long enough day as it is without adding more time onto the end. I feel that the monetary savings will not be enough to outweigh the added stress on pupils, staff and parents with the changes proposed.

Childcare

I am trying to get back into work. Local opportunities are very limited and I am looking to commute to Edinburgh, most jobs I apply for are full time as part-time opportunities are very limited. I have primary school age child and secondary, but secondary are not old enough to be left at home for a whole afternoon but I would consider leaving them for an hour or so after school. There are no child care options for them, and I couldn't afford it anyway as we get no help with childcare costs.

For my primary school aged child I would have to pay more for after school club each week, assuming there was a space available.

Given the local economy and lack of jobs, you are making it harder for parents to work. For those that do already, child care costs will increase. This is not good for the local economy, the Borders needs families with more disposable income to spend, to support local businesses and help these business expand and create jobs!

I am also very concerned about cuts to education and the effect on my children's future. There are too many new initiatives from central government being forced on local authorities which make no sense in a context of general education budget cuts.

School hours should be spread over the week to give most benefit to children, not crammed into less days.

~~Since our children have a long bus journey to and from school, I am not in favour of extending the school day as this is already long enough.~~

At Peebles High School, we have a number of lunch time clubs which have a very valuable part to play in my children's education and I would be concerned that if time is taken off the lunch hour there will not be enough time for these clubs to function.

If clubs are moved to a Friday afternoon then our children will be disadvantaged because by going to the club they will miss the school bus home. They would have to pay for a service bus and there is only one of these after 1 pm and that is not until 5.30 pm, so there may be a lot of hanging around waiting for this one bus!

I do not think it is right to have children roaming the streets on a Friday afternoon because they have no-one to supervise them and don't know what to do with themselves. This will lead to problems with behaviour in our towns and villages on a Friday afternoon.

I am very concerned that an asymmetric week will be detrimental to learning, by students and parents starting to see the half day as a 'wasted' or

unimportant day. I am also concerned about being able to arrange suitable child care for the half day, since both myself and my partner work full time.

Longer day for children is not ideal and loss of registration at high school

First of all the reason- the amount of money
Bring cut from education- there is still waste- how
About the cost if disclosure across Scottish counties
For teachers resulting in requiring locum temporary teachers- also what happens to kids in High school in the
Free afternoon- crime?

I am happy with the proposal

The key issue for us is one of childcare, in respect of which I would imagine we are not alone. This raises the issue of additional cost to us, but perhaps more fundamentally, with a greater pressure for places, we may not be able to get child care at all on a Friday afternoon.
~~Decisions on education for our children should not be made based on cutting spending.~~

I don't see how the savings will be made if the teachers' hours are not reduced and no posts are to be cut.

I work full time and my children go to a childminder after school. There is no guarantee that she would be able to have them on Friday afternoons as she has other children. I do not want to have to look for alternative childcare as my children have been going to the same childminder for many years. I would also have to pay more in fees.

The changes would result in long days for children. I can't see how this change would benefit them. They would have a very long Friday morning as their lunchtime would be so much later.

What will happen about school dinners on a Friday?

The school hours would differ from the nursery hours.

I have no major issues or concerns - as a disabled, stay-at-home mother, I will personally have no additional childcare costs resulting from the change. However, I do recognise that this will cause all sorts of problems for working parents and the decision cannot be made in isolation, purely from the point of view of SBC. My only request is that the school bus - which already leaves West Linton at 8am, getting to PHS around 8.30 - is NOT made any earlier!

It's very difficult to comment on the specific issues as parents haven't been told what they are actually commenting on, ie, when will the day start, when will the day finish, how long will each period be? We have been given an example but not an actual schedule. From what I can gather they day will only be about 20 minutes longer so I assume the periods for teaching will be shorter and the lunch break will be shorter. However, SBC hasn't been able to tell parents what they are actually going to be experiencing. It seems to me, the whole thing is rushed without any exact idea of even if money will be saved. The person pushing it through is taking voluntary redundancy shortly after it is implemented or even before, so he won't be around to be accountable. My top concerns are whether this is appropriate for primary children; how will all students in the HS be accommodated in the lunch room; what will happen with lunch time activities; what about schools that already start at 8:30; how long will the HS periods be?

The move to an asymmetric week will lead to a further depopulation of smaller rural schools as the lack of after-school care will force more parents to take their children to town schools to allow them to continue working while their children (especially primary age) can be looked after. Also the cost reduction for the council is being passed onto parents as they will have to find additional means to pay for the care of their children on the free afternoon. I can see a lot of parents, especially in lower paid professions having to consider giving up work or at least reducing their hours (if that is indeed possible) even further to make sure their children are looked after.

It also seems that the issue of school transport (not under the auspices of the education department) has not been considered in this move. Currently the timetables for many (town) secondary schools that also have a considerable rural catchment take the transport issue into consideration, where the school transport provider collects the primary school children first and then returns to pick up the secondary children. If both primary and secondary school finish at the same time - will there be separate providers for both or will children, who already quite often have along and circuitous route home, have to wait even longer before they are picked up?

Also there are many families that live further than reasonable walking distance from the school bus pick-up, and even older children have to be collected from the bus stop. With a lunchtime school finish it will even make the secondary school age families having to change their working pattern to allow getting their children home.

The move to an asymmetric week especially at high school age is not a good preparation for the working life - after all the vast majority of jobs now require people to work until 5pm on weekdays, and often even at weekends.

My research is based on statements which were made at some of the High School Asymmetric Week meetings.

Statement 1: "Children being restricted to 6 choices at S4 is not an issue where the asymmetric week is concerned."

This is incorrect. A significant amount of time was given to explaining the reasons behind moving to the asymmetric week: cost and efficiency, admin time and inter school connection for staff in larger time slots on a Friday afternoon, alignment of timetabling between high schools leading potentially to greater choice of subjects available particularly in S5/6 (when/if IT infrastructure becomes available and is affordable), the 33 period week, and the reduction of choices in S3/4 to 6 column options were, I believe, the main points. The reduction to 6 choices in S4, for me personally, is the main point of concern. It was stated as one of the reasons/inclusions of the asymmetric week model and therefore IS an issue.

Statement 2: "All schools in Scotland will be moving to 6 choices."

This is incorrect. SQA guidance states "The number and range of qualifications undertaken will be a matter for schools, education authorities, colleges, par I take this to mean, as with other schools I've looked into outwith the Borders, that those who are willing/able can take 8 subjects in S4 and those who aren

Statement 3: "The very academic students may be able to take 2 options from one column to make their choices up to 8."

This is incorrect. Paul Fagan, Depute Rector at Peebles High School, says, "We do not offer part of courses where a students (sic) takes two courses from one column. If this were the case the students would have to self direct stuc

Statement 4: "All schools in the Borders will be taking 6 choices in S3 and S4."

This is incorrect. See SQA guidelines above from Statement 1. Nowhere in these guidelines does it state that all schools in Scotland will aim to study 6 choices "Pupils' (sic) at EHS are following eight choices and our current S2 cohort will follow this format - they are in the midst of that process at present."

Statement 5: "All Borders head teachers asked if we could move to this model."

This is incorrect. They may now be compliant with the suggestions and model put forward but they did not ask en masse for this model prior to its proposal.

I am particularly concerned about losing the choice of 8 subjects in an already quite narrow Curriculum. Also too much intense teaching time for pupils and teaching staff and the loss of registration time/pastoral support.

Childcare

I can see many benefits to the asymmetric week and I support the proposal in principle. I do not have an issue with childcare, or the length of the school day. However, I do object to the proposed alignment of time tables between High Schools in the Scottish Borders. I am aware that there will not be a separate consultation on this. I am particularly concerned about the effect will be on my child's choice of subjects, if this goes ahead.

I am particularly concerned that a full alignment of timetables will mean that there will be a reduction in the number of subjects currently offered to pupils studying National 4's and 5's. At present Earlston High School (EHS) offers two years of general education in first and second year and eight subject choices to be studied over third and fourth year at National 4 and 5 level. If the timetable is aligned with other schools in the Borders, EHS may have to offer three years of general education in first, second and third year, with only six subjects studied at National 4 and 5 in fourth year. EHS has chosen its current curriculum model in conjunction with teachers, parents and students. The Government's advice is the Education Authority should not be imposing a one size fits all, to all its schools, rather they should be allowing all schools to have the autonomy to choose a curriculum model. EHS has an outstanding academic record and it is completely unacceptable that SBC are intending to impose a curriculum model.

I also have reservation regarding the concept of virtual learning. The infra-structure for virtual learning is not yet in place, so the concept of students studying virtually across schools is not currently viable.

Childcare responsibilities and costs.

Increased number of lessons in a day could lead to poor motivation as the day will be longer and more tiring.

Saving costs in this way is not necessarily beneficial to children and their education.

Longer day raises concern over tiredness and concentration levels.
Shorter lunchbreak means less time for extra curricular activities and study sessions.
Concern over supervision if interactive teaching of some subjects and the effectiveness of this type of learning.

I have no issues with the move to an asymmetric week, in fact I welcome it as a positive move.

I am concerned that extra curricular clubs and activities which mainly run at lunch time in secondary schools will be lost as lunch time will probably be reduced. As most pupils in secondary schools travel by school bus in SBC clubs cannot run at the end of the school day. In Edinburgh, where pupils attend for a 4 and a half day week, High Schools tend to have 40 or 45 minutes for lunch compared to the hour that my children have in primary and secondary school here. Pupils cannot have food and attend a club in 40 minutes and these fun, educational, and sporting clubs will not be able to run in the same as they do currently.

I am also concerned about less motivated pupils having a 'skive' on the half day, possibly colluded with by parents, and therefore there will be more unauthorised absence on the proposed half day. Some parents also take children out for a 'long weekend'. This is my experience working in Education in Edinburgh.

I am also concerned about childcare and worry that parents who currently don't arrange childcare for their children after school as they arrive home from work within an hour or so of their children will also not pay for childcare on the half day. Therefore there will be a proportion of children and particularly High School pupils who will be left unattended for hours while their parents work. I am also concerned that there will not be enough suitable childcare available to those who want it.

Concerns at the length of day for Primary School pupils .. especially those who travel by bus.
Concerned about lack of childcare and children being unsupervised on Friday afternoons
Concerned about cost of childcare

As a working parent my main issue will be child care on the half day, there are very little provisions for child care within our small community. This will also be an added expense in these already difficult financial times.

Loss of guidance opportunity daily, EHS may lose option of 8 subjects, inconvenience to working parents/childcare.

Getting on school bus in the dark for greatly expended period of the year (currently about 2 weeks either side of Christmas break, this will extend to about 6 weeks either side), bus stop is remote road end with no street lightling and poor visibility for bus driver on approach. At end of school day pupils have to cross A7.

Don't benefit from a true half day as remote pupils wont get home until about 14:00.

Will have to change/cancel current after school activities, my children have established classes/clubs with friends that are not from their school group i.e. outwith Borders region, unless I take them out of school early then they will no longer be able to go to these classes

Childcare on a friday afternoon is a big concern and will require me to change my working arrangements. I am concerned that if my employer is not agreeable to this I will need to find childcare which will be in great demand. Even if I find childcare for my son who is at primary school, I will have problems transporting my daughter from the bus stop at Lauder to Stow as she attends Earlston High School under a placement request. My main concern is the alignment of timetables and the impact this will have upon the options available to Earlston High School pupils. I understand that it will potentially result in pupils having 6 subjects at Nat 4/5 levels rather than 8 as at present. I feel it is too young for the children to specialize. I am also concerned about teenage children "hanging around" on a friday afternoon, and that the time may not be used constructively.

Educational disadvantages outweigh any advantages particularly primary sector.

Simply do not believe that in such a rural area any increased subject choice is possible as a result of "sharing" secondary teachers.

Politically driven as well as financially - most parents would prefer to pay extra council tax for education.

Those parents having to pay extra childcare costs significantly disadvantaged.

Lack of childcare.

Lack of opportunity to work flexibly as all working parents will need same afternoon off.

Headache for employers with part time primary parents as employees.

The longer working week will be detrimental to the childrens learning. it is a proven fact that teenagers do not learn well early in the morning and an earlier start will not help or encourage learning. Children that have to be bussed to school will need to get up earlier. My daughter already gets up at 6.30. She will have to be up at 6.00am. What about lunchtime and after school activities, will these have to cease due to lack of time if the school finish later. What about child care on a friday, are we moving to a state of latch key kids. Most parents have to work these days. For most primary schools there is already a problem of after school care, is the council going to provide the care staff required on a friday and cover the extra cost. I am concerned that a full alignment of timetables will mean that there will be a reduction in the number of subjects currently offered to pupils studying National 4s and 5s. At EHS this is currently 8. I do not want to see this reduced to 6 as i feel this will be detrimental to my childrens education. For primary school children the longer working day will be exhausting, the children are already tired at the end of the day. What about after school activities such as swimming. For people who have to travel long distan

Childcare - we do not have family to support us in childcare and both work. We do not have money left at end of month to pay additional childcare for an afternoon.

we have been told there are not enough childminders in kelso as it is so could not get care if we could afford it

whilst understanding the need to save money the timescales set are not supportive of families - if this was to go ahead in Aug 2015 it would be easier to arrange. it is causing us great stress not knowing how we will manage and if we will need care or not.

None, it seems a sound plan. That said I am firmly in favour of the "short day" being the Friday rather than any other.

-Times for outer-school sports will have to be changed and possibly cancelled

-Parents may not be able to pick their child up from school, this results in having to spend money on childminders etc...

The length of school day for young children.

A possible very early start for young children.

Shared placement of pupils in Spectrum Support and mainstream classes. If schools decide on different starting/finishing times, how will placements be worked out, transport etc.

Proving a positive benefit to Friday afternoon not being spent in school.

I am a Manager of Out of school care and the impact Monday to Thursday would mean my staff would have less hours and on a Friday more hours. Pricing structure would have to change. Other concerns are that staff already employed may have other jobs and this could have an impact on a Friday.

I work for Kidzcare Ltd attached to Broughton Primary School and we share the same premises as Bananas Playgroup. As far as I can see there will be an overlap between the time Bananas finish (if they have to lengthen their weekly hours) and we have to start. Childcare while we are working, but also how my child can get the best out of their schooling.

Impact on parents, and in particular the impact on other employees when parents of school age children will wish to change their working hours to not be at work on Friday afternoons.
In addition I consider that there will be necessarily an increase in energy use at homes across the Borders on Friday afternoons which contradicts the strategy for Low Carbon emissions.

issues listed in our response

This is the response from Galashiels Academy Parent Council. We discussed the A-W proposal at our recent meeting. As there was a wide range of opinion, it is not possible to present a representative view. All parents have been urged to submit the online consultation.

COMMENTS

RESPONDENT

I can see the benefits to the overall plan allowing CTs to use the time without children to cover CPD, also to facilitate the possibility for senior pupils to share a teacher over the whole authority and have remote lesson.

school support staff - SBC

It is clear that the asymmetric week is a "given" whether it is or not. It has not been handled well. Perhaps more time and effort explaining the consequences of not making these changes would have been beneficial in helping parents understand the process.

Being consulted on the implications, with an extremely tight timescale, for the introduction of the asymmetric week leaves a lot of unanswered questions. Parents, employers, providers of leisure facilities and child care and many voluntary groups will have little time to plan and put in place alternative arrangements. This short timescale will give rise to decisions being taken independently by these groups rather than collectively. It is highly likely that some of the decisions taken will have conflicting outcomes.

My wife and I feel that SBC should only go ahead with an asymmetric week if they are satisfied that the shift will not affect children's education and care adversely, in the short, medium and long term. They need to consider both the impact of the asymmetric week and the impact of the short time scale of implementation.

The benefits of the asymmetric week set out thus far have been predominantly financial, and SBC needs to make either a stronger case in terms of any qualitative improvements that will come through or provide greater reassurance to parents regarding perceived negative or unequal outcomes.

Also, it may be that the asymmetric week is the correct outcome, but that in the short-term there will be negative consequences that could be alleviated by setting a later start date (eg January or August 2015) and so having a longer lead time. If that is the case then, given that the benefits of this change in terms of cost saving are not expected to come through in the short term, SBC should have an open mind in considering whether August 2014 or a la parent/carer - primary school

The information provided by SBC is poor and does not adequately set out the rationale for moving to an asymmetric week. No information has been provided with respect to other options SBC considered to mitigate the impact of reduced budgets. What other cost saving measures were considered, what decision process was undertaken prior to determining that the asymmetric week was the most beneficial option?

parent/carer - primary school

Too soon! August 2015 would be better to allow childcare providers to respond. If you must do this, the short day should be a Friday as this generally fits in better with those who work part time. I fully support all the comments made by West Linton Parent Council in their written response.

parent/carer - primary school

Can't see any point in increasing the length of the school day.
Longer days = more tired than normal children!

parent/carer - primary school

The proposed changes will not financially benefit primary schools, so it seems ridiculous to enforce an asymmetric week on schools with independent transport e.g. West linton primary school.

parent/carer - primary school

A half day on a Friday would benefit quality family time at weekends.

A mid-week half day would have no positive benefit.

parent/carer - primary school

I work mom-Thursday. My children go to childcare on a min and tues and hence have a longer day on those days. By having a short Friday, this would help balance this. Also starting 10 mins earlier and finishing 10 mins later means that parents have slightly longer to get back to the school for pick up.

parent/carer - primary school

It would need to be complemented by a reduction in homework, as esp young kids already have only around a couple of hours free time after school (outwith meal times, going to bed etc). Numerous research has shown that kids need this free/down time, to develop their own interests, and also to be fresh and well slept for the next day at school.

I think the benefit of the asymmetric week is that kids can have a healthier weekend, as they are more fresh to go outdoors, visit a museum, play with friends etc. These are all vital for healthy child development and help them concentrate when they are in school.

In the current set-up, kids are tiered during the week and exhausted when the weekend comes, too often little able to use their time in a constructive way.

parent/carer - primary school

I cannot see any benefits to children and parents. Teachers will have an even shorter week and we as parents will pay for the council's savings

parent/carer - primary school

I do not see any benefits at all to this move.

parent/carer - primary school

I see no benefits what so ever.

parent/carer - primary school

Would it not be possible for West Linton to opt out of the asymmetric week? parent/carer - primary school

I would greatly appreciate those in p1 to p3 finishing school earlier than the older children, as done in schools such as south queens ferry and morningside. Thank you. Also, I appreciated the councillors taking time to come to West Linton to hear parents views. parent/carer - primary school

Please delay the decision until there is enough registered childcare options in rural areas or after school clubs. Of course these will naturally happen due to demand, but our children and families will suffer from inadequate provision in the first 5 or so years, perhaps leading to more unemployment and and / or an exodus of young families from the area. Why should our employers facilitate this change.

I think that there is a huge song and dance being made about the improvements to the curriculum by having primary school and secondary school teachers available at the same time on a Friday afternoon. Surely there will be a cost attached to this in terms of travel costs, utility bills etc. It seems like a luxury for speculative benefits when you are asking parents to make huge sacrifices.

There are many other things I would like to see cut first eg the mobile library service which I gladly avail of, or free school meals which 2 of my children will be eligible for next year. I would also be willing to contribute to transport costs and books / pe and music classes and ke parent/carer - primary school

Why not make Wednesday the short day instead of a Friday? The younger children are tired at the end of the week, a break in the middle may be beneficial. parent/carer - primary school

Parents who work will have to pay more for Friday childcare, some parents don't need it at the moment at all (work from 9-3, for example my office hours are 9-3pm Monday to Friday and for my boss extending working hours Mon - Thu but closing early on Friday will not be an option, which means that my colleagues and will have to find childcare for 1,5h on Friday) parent/carer - primary school

Assuming it is a Friday that is the short day, my children could participate in activities in Midlothian/Edinburgh that afternoon. Possible opportunities for inter-school sports activities all on same day - but will this really happen, as the teachers should be doing their collegiate activities and there is no budget. parent/carer - primary school

parent/carer - primary school

I would like to know how the Council has worked out the level of savings if the children are to have the same number of hours in the school week.

The inference is that teachers will use the time for CPD - does that mean we no longer need in-service days?

parent/carer - primary school

I don't really see any viable benefits for the primary school children, as my view is that teachers wishing to network and attend joint training initiatives should have sufficient time during their contracted hours to do so without any adjustments to their working week.

I also feel that my youngest child would certainly be more tired for four days of the week, which may impact on his ability to learn.

Early finishes one day a week doesn't provide any benefit at all for the majority of hard working parents, with children in primary school who simply have to take on the additional burden of change to their hours and potential loss of salary so that the education budget gap can be reduced.

parent/carer - primary school

I appreciate there does need to be cuts and I do not think that the asymmetric week will be a problem in time especially for secondary schools - there are possible positive outcomes for Friday afternoons too. My main concerns are that many of the good education described above aren't lost too - I believe this to be possible.

parent/carer - primary school

Childcare is also more of a difficulty under the new proposal

parent/carer - primary school

I can see the benefit to secondary school pupils but this benefit does not apply to primary school

parent/carer - primary school

I appreciate it is a separate issue to the asymmetric week, but I also wish to raise my opposition to the use of funds to increase early years hours and free school meals for all early primary pupils. My family will directly 'benefit' from both these initiatives, but we, in common with the MAJORITY of others, have absolutely no need for them. Please use this money to retain the services that you will be cutting in your further cuts. Lobby the Scottish Parliament to achieve this - you WILL find a huge amount of support to reverse these decisions which have clearly not been made in the overall context of our children's education.

parent/carer - primary school

I do not see why teachers can not use some of their holidays to have meetings they get enough paid holidays rather than disrupt the school week and parents working week. Not to mention all the other days the children have off for inservice days. I am not in favour of the asymmetric week and school hours should remain as it is. parent/carer - primary school

The longer hours Monday to thursday would be more beneficial but the friday is just not practical secondary school children can look after themselves but primary school children cannot and would mean trying to find suitable childcare or trying to work it with my employer. parent/carer - primary school

They have used this in a East Lothian for a very long time-do we really have to change?!in the winter from Monday to Thursday it will be much darker and later getting home in the school bus. parent/carer - primary school
Half days on Friday give the children a longer weekend which will be a parent/carer - primary school

I am not clear how schools will benefit financially, though this would seem to be the only real benefit. parent/carer - primary school

I attended the consultation session at Peebles High School. The Head of Education could not:

1. demonstrate how a saving will result by imposing this change on Primary schools.
2. could not justify why this change was 'better' for primary schools.
3. Could not illustrate any of his claims with figures on savings.
4. The only justified fact he could give is that it would cost less for busses, as if Primaries did not transfer to the asymmetric week additional bus provision would be required. parent/carer - primary school

This could be beneficial for other activities e.g. sport/music/drama however only if there are people to offer these and how would they be paid for? parent/carer - primary school

SBC don't appear to have done a full assessment of either options, or costs and benefits of options for achieving the stated objectives for this policy. As such, SBC are at risk of not fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for fully considering the impacts of their policies and are likely to be at risk of legal challenge on this basis.

parent/carer - primary school

We should not be encouraging the culture of the week ending at Friday lunchtime. That teachers will use the time properly is naive in the extreme: the reality of the asymmetric week in Edinburgh tells us that.

parent/carer - primary school

parent/carer - primary school

parent/carer - primary school

I would be concerned that the proposed advantages of doing training on a Friday afternoon may not actually be possible due to teacher's terms and conditions and their reluctance to embrace this change.

parent/carer - primary school

Real concerns around extra curricular activities particularly music

and art. This is what Earlston is known for. My children had no opportunity to learn instrument in primary school, is this known to be the same in secondary school.

parent/carer - primary school

parent/carer - primary school

My two primary age children are delighted at the thought of finishing at 1.15 every Friday!!

parent/carer - primary school

I do see the benefits for the secondary school. As for primary I think it is ridiculous that teachers will still have RICCT as well as a half day for the asymmetric week. I feel the region could save more money by making the half day their RICCT time. I feel there isn't enough continuity with class teachers being in their own class teaching due to them getting their RICCT. I know they have to do so many hours and have so many collegiate hours but I feel the region doesn't save in the most obvious ways. Primary teachers taught their own pupils all the time 10 years ago - why can't they go back to this??????

parent/carer - primary school - school support staff - SBC

1. Broadly supportive of Asymmetric week for secondary schools - have been convinced of the educational benefits for secondary schools - but not supportive of the change for Primary pupils.

2. Still can't see where the savings required are actually coming from? Public meeting did not address these concerns. Teaching / admin resource savings from Asymmetric week are £0 from Primary, £half Million from transport savings - only if Primary and secondary schools convert and no hard figure could be offered for secondary but nowhere near the total savings required so not left with confidence in this proposal.

3. Why not add an alternative proposal that we pay a bit more Council Tax? Individual costs to working parents will be significant and no appropriate childcare provision is available anyway. No one wants their child in 5-6 hours after school care on a Friday afternoon. Aside from childcare concerns, there are two main reasons you are getting pushback from parents - a) people see teachers getting a long weekend every week (with the best will in the world it is going to be hard for Heads to motivate staff & deliver meaningful development on a Friday afternoon - human nature is to 'tail off' at end of week), and

parent/carer - primary school & secondary school

parent/carer - primary school & secondary school

This feels a very rushed consultation which would have had more value if there had been time available for parents and parent councils to have been more widely consulted. There is concern that there are a number of initiatives being introduced into education and how will we know what is working/not working.

There is an acknowledgement that there requires to be a saving however we have a significant number of buildings especially within the more rural areas where the school role is small however there still requires staffing resources and costs for upkeep which in comparison with the bigger schools is not comparative.

parent/carer - primary school & secondary school

Feel the original plan of 22.5hr week with no RICCT provision in primary should be reconsidered. This option would be to me much more preferable to making cuts in other areas which would then impact on teachers and pupils throughout the week e.g. reducing management / ana time.

Also think the role of a nursery teacher should be developed into a supervisory one as it is obviously v complicated with their current contracts to assimilate them with the new 600hours. Feel the Nursery teachers numbers should be reduced, with each teacher having a larger number of nurseries, being paid as a super numerary and PT salsry scale. This would also allow them to access development work on a fri pm which is going to prove a challenge under the model for 2014-15 as even if there is a budget attached to release them on a fr pm, it will rove difficult to staff this, as I know from experience working in Edinburgh.

parent/carer - primary school - teacher - SBC

* the benefits seem to be for the secondary schools rather than the primary schools.

* if it is a Friday that become the half day, it appears it will be a long morning. How can schools make sure they are getting the best out of their pupils during such a long morning, especially the younger ones?

parent/carer - primary school - teacher - SBC

There is not enough time or thought going into how parents can cope with this change. As a childminder it could provide potential new business but with limited numbers demand far outweighs what I could supply.

I am a parent/carer - primary school & childminder

benefits - to whom - not to the children

What are the in service days for? when i was at school there was no such thing as an in service day - does this mean they will end?

parent/carer -secondary school

I do not have primary age children anymore but feel that the proposed schooldays is too long especially for primary one and two and would not have liked my son to have been in scholl for that length of time.

parent/carer -secondary school

I am aware that savings will be made but this will be at a cost to the lives of pupils and their families.

parent/carer -secondary school

I see the only benefits as being for the teachers to improve their knowledge on Friday afternoons, but there are no educational benefits of moving to the asymmetric week

parent/carer -secondary school

parent/carer -secondary school

- There are no benefits to the pupil.
- Many pupils will find themselves alone at home on a Friday afternoon and vulnerable from a security point of view
- The earlier start will create additional time stress for families including the pupils, particula

parent/carer -secondary school

parent/carer -secondary school

It's not clear why the asymmetric week is needed in order to align timetables - existing patterns could be used as the basis for an agreed timetable across all schools, without the adverse impacts of the asymmetric school week.

parent/carer -secondary school

It's not clear why timetables can't be aligned simply by adopting

a uniform timetable across all schools based on existing patterns (no need for the asymmetric week).

parent/carer -secondary school

parent/carer -secondary school

parent/carer -secondary school

It is really not clear what benefits there would be for school children and families. There could be creative use of the free afternoon for children, but given problem of lack of money, it seems unlikely that the council will do much about this and only the better-off parents would be able to organise it for themselves.

parent/carer -secondary school

In Primary Schools Friday i.e. the short day may be seen as an optional day especially in bad weather

parent/carer -secondary school

I am against the change to an asymmetric week.

parent/carer -secondary school

If employers don't allow staff to amend working pattern for Friday afternoon, please advise where you can obtain childcare for secondary school children age 11, 12 and 13?

I feel that you are only shifting expenditure from education to social work. I don't think there is any joined up Government to get all adults working.

I don't actually feel that this is a consultation rather a done deal.

parent/carer -secondary school

I didn't appreciate Glen Rodger threatening that if we didn't agree to this then there would be even less savoury changes to come.

Many of the problems with this model (acknowledged by Glen Rodger but no solutions given) are due to the Borders being a large geographical area. The Council may have to accept that this model may work in a smaller area but is just not suitable for the Borders.

I do not agree that a wider curriculum is a justification for the asymmetric week. I would much prefer a smaller curriculum WELL TAUGHT. I have no desire for my children to travel to other schools for lessons nor do I see how teachers travelling between schools can be cost effective.

parent/carer -secondary school

parent/carer -secondary school & school support staff

parent/carer -secondary school & school support staff

Also my youngest is in nursery hiw does that work wi them,

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I am a parent/carer - secondary school - teacher - SBC

This is expensive and not available where I live. I am a provider of said childcare, and we no longer have sufficient time to obtain Care Inspectorate clearance -- particularly given that the CI are having to re-register every single early years setting because of the extended hours from 475 to 600. We have been warned that this may take 20 weeks.

many parents I have spoken to are not responding because they think the decision is already made. I hope this isn't the case and that elected members consider the views of their constituents.

I am very concerned about what is still to come in terms of cuts, what will be next. Most people seem to think that this change is the saving when clearly it isn't. I don't think your survey is very well thought out and should have had more facts and questions to encourage responses.

parent/carer - secondary school- manager of Early Years Childcare setting

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I do not see many benefits in the move to an asymmetric week. The main driving force for this is money - not what will benefit the children. It is not right for the council to put money before our children's well-being and although this is going to save the council money, it is going to cost many families a lot of money as a result in childcare.

It seems wrong that in order to save the council money they introduce something which will cost almost every parent a significant amount of money.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I cannot think of any advantages to my family. However, if in the end the decision is made to go to an asymmetric week, I would much prefer the half day to be Friday.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

It is a poor choice for primary schools there
Is a high probability of a lack of children's ability to concentrate at
young ages - extended days are not as effective- also in secondary
school the efficiencies expected and thought to help CfE will be
taken

By SBC as savings and not used in the school.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

Feel it is a reasonable response to the financial realities

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

It is difficult to see how the savings arise and therefore whether
the cost benefit can truly be said to outweigh the considerable
disadvantages to parents. The teaching time would appear to remain
as present and teachers would still, as I understand it, be at school
when the children leave on the shorter day.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I cannot see how the benefits (not adequately explained) will
benefit the children and outweigh the considerable disadvantages to
parents and children.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I like the fact that there will be more choice for secondary pupils.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I can see no benefits to me as a parent resulting from the move to an asymmetric week.

I also struggle to see where the benefits will be for teachers - they will still have to teach for the same number of hours per week but longer on 4 days than they have to now, and will therefore be forced to stay longer in school to allow for preparation for lessons, marking etc. The teachers' family life, especially with younger children will be made even harder by this move.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

As stated at the beginning, the reduction to 6 options at S4 is the big issue for me and my children. This is why I have concentrated on it and researched it pretty thoroughly.

Other aspects of the asymmetric week don't really concern me personally.

I am happy to have my children home on a Friday afternoon and think the opportunity for teachers and other school staff to use the long Friday afternoon period for their admin or professional development together if needed is a good idea.

I think the timetabling alignment for all the high schools has some merit and would hope that the budget constraints don't pare this down further. This should be an opportunity to better the education of Borders children not something which is used as an excuse or easy option to make further cuts in the future.

In principle I am in agreement with the asymmetric week but not with the reduction in choice.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I can see the benefit of a concentrated time for staff development. I don't think cluster work arrangements will work.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

No real consultation despite given the opportunity to feedback.
start to fit in with High school bus. Already starts incredibly early at 8.30 - children living up the valley will be on the bus at the crack of dawn.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I feel that the schools can work more effectively once the times

are aligned. I have a child who attends a sport club in East Lothian, it will really help to be able to join them on a Friday afternoon.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I understand that there will be savings on school transport for the proposed half day, however think that savings can be made by combining more routes and negotiating better deals with bus companies.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

Concerned that young children will not have 5 day a week lunchtime routine .. 5th day may well be different. Children need routine and many find it difficult .. especially youngest

Concerned that shorter lunchtime ion secondary school will mean an end to lunchtime clubs and more time spent hanging around up the street

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

I do not feel that this will have any benefit to the pupil. they will loose a full afternoon of classes and making this time up 10 minutes here and there will be of no real benefit. As we live some distance away from the school this will increase an already long day for the pupils I feel this would have a detrimental effect on their studies.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

Will cost parents more in after school care on Friday so false economy.

Alternative is to get changes to working hours, very difficult in my current situation as I teach in higher education and have student classes on Friday afternoon that cannot be changed.

Doesn't help being able to leave for work earlier as just end up in rush hour traffic in Edinburgh so still get to work at similar time.

Meal on the Friday? 14:00 is too late for pupils to be getting home for lunch.

Pupils will need to be at bus stop at 0735 so getting up at potentially 0630, A long time between breakfast and morning break

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

From Personal experience, I believe that a half day on a Wednesday would be more beneficial than on a Friday. As this is less disruptive to employers and would give children a chance to recuperate mid week ready for the second half of the week.

I recognize the advantages from the teachers perspective.

I believe that the afternoon off should create opportunities for children to become involved in other activities, such as sports which require greater travel time, Duke of Edinburgh, drama etc. The Council in conjunction with Borders Sport & Leisure etc should actively promote and assist the creation of alternative worthwhile activities which enhance the opportunities available to children and young people.

I think that the Council should delay the changes for a year to allow more time for such activities to be set up and to allow parents time to make arrangements for childcare.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

Disgusted that Cllr Aitchison stated that the asymmetric week is necessary for the success of Curriculum for Excellence - for the Chair of the Education Committee to state such rubbish shows either a fundamental lack of understanding or incompetence.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

From reading all the information supplied by the schools and council i cannot see how you can actually be saving money when it appears you haven't done all your costings. What about the cost of moving all the buss times. From what i understand the move to the change in school times was shelved in previous years due to the cost of the bus changes. has this miraculously solved itself or has it conveniently been omitted to get the change approved.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

Extent timescale to help parents workout childcare and for people to train to become childminders

Information is not clear about money being saved through this. having spoken to staff in local schools in kelso _ primary and secondary neither school seems to be cutting staff hence no financial saving - yet this was supposed to be reason for it

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

Having read the reasoning, I am only puzzled as to why this has not been adopted before.

There will be huge scope for after school/extra curricular activities to take place, which is particularly pertinent during the short daylight hours of winter.

In addition, those families that like being with their children will have better scope for trips away and for spending time together.

parent/carer - primary & secondary school

You have not thought this through properly...

How long before its a four day week?

I am a school student

I understand that this will have benefits for Secondary schools but I am concerned about the loss of jobs within the Secondary sector. I understand that the proposal is that Primary and Secondary staff would have more opportunities for collaboration. I hope that this opportunity would be taken up.

teacher currently employed in Scottish Borders

It would be beneficial to have the short day on a Friday to allow for planning for next week and reporting on current week. I would not see it as beneficial on any other day.

I am a teacher currently employed in Scottish Borders, Other

We feel there is a positive opportunity to be gained by not spending Friday afternoon in school if it can be utilised for developing children through, for example, sporting activity. Every effort should be employed to take this opportunity.

Other

Although I will have a problem with hours and staffing I think we will gain children on a Friday but only for the short time between 1.15 to 3pm when they used to leave school.

Other

Other

It might well be that a longer weekend is best for all the family in

that we can have more time together and more time to rest amongst other activities. As a family we would focus more on the work side of life Mon-Thurs and really aim to make the most of the half-day on a Friday.

Other

The decision to introduce the changes school hours has already been made!

Other

response e-mailed to enquiries@scotborders.gov.uk

Other

Other