

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes. The following deputation has been referred from Council on 25 October 2012.

(a) Residential Services Closures - (Spokesperson) – Mr Jason Carlisle

I am writing to you with reference to the decision taken to close two residential services for adults with learning disabilities in Hove (with the option to close a third).

I am writing particularly to request that the report agreed at the Adult Care & Health Committee meeting on Monday 24th September be reviewed and the following points of concern addressed and if needs be a further report taken to the Committee to enable matters to be put right:

1. Capital spend information on the redevelopment of 20 Windlesham Road has not been provided to Members. What is the proposed cost of this redevelopment? How can committee members make informed decisions without proper full and correct financial information?
2. The financial information given about the annual cost to the council of running Ferndale Road was incorrect. It was claimed that annual spend on Ferndale Road was £300K; however £150K of that sum is provided by East Sussex County Council.
3. Due to this, the first report given to Members of the Committee in June was misleading. This means that if the decision had been taken then it would have been based on incorrect financial data.
4. The overall consultation process was unsound. Although timely consultation was given, the final document was published on Friday 14th September just 9 days before the Committee meeting. This document contained a significant change to the original consultation. Namely the following:
 - a. The options for councillors to choose from had been changed and renumbered without consultation of the focus group or parents and advocates. Specifically, in the original consultation, Option 1 referred to no change of service (which families and advocates favoured), but this was changed in the final document with just over a week to go, when Option 1 became the option to close Old Shoreham Road and New Church Road. This is both misleading and, I believe, procedurally incorrect.
 - b. This amended document was not advertised nor was it easy to find and was not a fair and proper reflection of the consultation previously undertaken.
5. The negative impact on the lives of those with a learning disability is incalculable financially and the likelihood of condemning individuals to heightened anxiety and negative self injuring behaviours as a result of this decision is not acceptable.

6. The decision making process at committee level was unfair and that on any other day when then standing committee member Stephanie Powell was in attendance and not on leave, the result of the vote would have been 6-4 in favour of the services remaining open. Instead Cllr Powell's replacement voted to the opposite way and consequently the vote was split 5-5 giving Cllr Jarrett the casting vote as chair, leading to the decision to close.

It is therefore in the best interest of the vulnerable adults, whose homes are at stake that members of the council agree to a further report being presented to the committee based on full and correct information.