

## Minutes

### PETITION HEARING - CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING

16 January 2012

Meeting held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillor Philip Corthorne</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Linda Sanders and Nikki O'Halloran</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Councillor Allan Kauffman</p>	
1.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUBLIC. (Agenda Item 1)</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That all items be considered in public</b></p>	Action by
2.	<p><b>PETITION OBJECTING TO PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PHOENIX DAY CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES (Agenda Item 3)</b></p> <p>Councillor Allan Kauffman attended as a Ward Councillor in support of the petition and stated that it was important that a solution was found which addressed the concerns of the petitioners.</p> <p><i>Concerns, comments and suggestions raised by the petition organiser at the meeting included the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>The lead petitioner thanked everyone that had supported the petition and advised that the first that she had heard of the proposals was from the Gazette. As a result, she had submitted a petition with 1,812 signatures objecting to the proposed closure of the Phoenix Day Centre on 9 December 2011 (the consultation deadline);</i></li><li><i>The petition organiser stated that there had only been three consultation meetings and one Disability Assembly held in relation to the proposals. However, the petitioners had not been sent copies of any minutes from these meetings;</i></li><li><i>Parents attending the meetings had been confused, angry, anxious and distressed and clearly objected to the proposals. It was thought that issues raised by the parents at these meetings were either inadequately addressed or not addressed at all;</i></li><li><i>The closure of the three day centres had been presented at these meetings as a 'done deal'. Parents had not been asked for their opinions and no alternative options were offered – the only opinion that was solicited from parents was what facilities</i></li></ul>	Action by

*they thought ought to be provided at Queens Walk;*

- The petition organiser queried why three purpose-built day centres were being closed and why the Queens Walk venue had specifically been chosen to replace them;*
- Petitioners stated that the Council was closing the Parkview and Woodside Centres, shutting the Phoenix Centre and selling the whole Bourne Court site to raise money to build more supported housing. They believed that although Queens Walk had been identified as an alternative site, the site was not big enough so the number of eligible users would have to be reduced. Furthermore, petitioners believed that the Queens Walk site was miles from anywhere with poor transport links;*
- Concern was expressed that there would be a maximum of 70 people that would qualify for a place at the proposed new facility with only 30-35 being able to use it each day. It was thought that this number was a guesstimate as the service users and carers had not yet been assessed;*
- Further concern was expressed that, according to the FAQ document, even eligible individuals might need to reduce the number of days that they attended the proposed new centre. The petition organiser advised that some parents and carers would have to give up work if there was a reduction in the number of days a service user was allowed to attend the centre;*
- Although the Petition Hearing report implied that the Phoenix Day Centre was now less popular, the petitioners had read that service users in residential homes had been stopped from attending the Centre as their care homes were now supposed to provide for day care. It was queried whether these homes had the same facilities as the current day centres or whether these individuals were being left to sit in a room all day;*
- The petition organiser had been advised that there would be a directory of services available with details of alternative day centres for those individuals that did not qualify. Although there were 17 libraries, 15 parks, 3 leisure centres, 4 golf courses and 1 pool, there were no facilities listed on the Council's website which would offer a fraction of what was currently provided by the day centres for severely disabled people;*
- It was believed that, even with a personal budget, there were no meaningful activities available from the public sector for severely disabled people. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Council should not assume that charities and the private sector would provide these services;*
- The petition organiser stated that there were no arguments, other than financial gain, as to why the whole of the Bourne Court site could not be developed, with the Phoenix Centre being expanded and supported housing built there as well;*
- It was suggested that there were no good reasons why Parkview and Woodside could not be partly sublet and developed to offer community-based services, rather than the Council seemingly having no other sites for supported housing;*
- The petitioners believed that other options appeared not to have been considered;*
- The proposal appeared to put money and housing before the*

*needs of the most vulnerable people in society and created stress and worry for the parents and carers of these individuals. It was believed that the welfare of these people should be of paramount concern and that it was vital that the Council reconsider these plans; and*

- *A hand-out had been produced by the petitioners which identified their concerns in more detail and itemised errors that had been included in the Petition Hearing report.*

Councillor Philip Corthorne listened to the issues and concerns raised by the petition organiser on behalf of the petitioners and responded to the points raised. He thanked the petition organiser for her heartfelt presentation and advised that he had no power to make a decision about the proposal on his own, as this was a decision that had to be made by the Cabinet as a whole. It was noted that a decision on the proposals would be made at the Cabinet meeting on Thursday 26 January 2012. The points made by the petitioners would be considered by Cabinet as part of that decision making process.

The Cabinet Member stated that, in light of the growing number of people with more complex needs, all local authorities were having to look at the challenge of service provision for people with disabilities and that, as a result, there would need to be some degree of change. He noted that many of the proposals that had been consulted on had received support, including supported housing. Furthermore, Councillor Corthorne was encouraged by the fact that, during the consultation process, there were no suggestions made that there should be no changes to way in which services were delivered.

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Member:**

- 1. notes the views of the petitioners; and**
- 2. ensures that the views of petitioners are incorporated into the consultation feedback on the Disabilities Commissioning Plan 2011-2015, which will form part of the report to Cabinet on 26 January 2012.**

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Disabilities Commissioning Plan 2011-2015 was approved in principle by Cabinet on 29 September 2011, subject to full consultation. The proposals relating to the decommissioning of the Phoenix Day Centre are an integral part of the Disabilities Commissioning Plan and should be seen in the overall context of the Plan which includes the proposal to develop a resource centre for people with complex needs at the Queens Walk site in South Ruislip.

A further report will be submitted to Cabinet on 26 January 2012 providing feedback on the consultation undertaken, identifying any proposed changes and seeking approval for recommendations. The Cabinet agenda and this report will be published on or after 18 January 2012.

	<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>  The consultation programme for the plan has been extensive and has comprehensively considered all feedback provided by stakeholders.	
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 7.17 pm.	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki O'Halloran on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.