

Letter from Haynes Relatives Support Group to Councillor Pippa Connor

20 Jan 2015

Subject: Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel 22 Jan 2015: Item 6 - Further information to support the Budget Scrutiny process

Dear Cllr Connor,

On Thursday H&W Scrutiny Panel will be receiving further information on the Council's Three-Year Budget savings proposals. We are concerned that the reports do not adequately describe the proposals and their impacts on the current users or their carers.

It is proposed to roll out borough-wide the Neighbourhoods Connect model from 1st March 2015 on the basis of experience of 4 months pilot covering a rather small sample to a whole range of direct care services; further it seems that it is also proposed to close current provision and dispose the land and buildings before the new model of delivery is fully developed, tested and its success is proven. The consultation on this approach have been wholly inadequate. Health and wellbeing of thousands of Haringey residents would be risked, they do not support the proposals. NHS amply shows that when untested and wide ranging changes are introduced to a service crisis is the result (as predicted by many) with huge impact on users and costs.

The adult social care services currently provided by the Council will be replaced by an signposting advice and information service to ever decreasing activities and services through cuts, plus a volunteer recruiting service to deliver any direct services – it is not clear what other support will be provided by Neighbourhoods Connects. There is no assessment of adequacy of “currently available” services or potential capacity of volunteering to meet needs that are projected to grow due to “demographic pressures”. The pilot was based on 41 volunteers, but no information on their availability, how many hours a day/week they can commit, and how this compares to what support is needed, how regular and how reliable information is not given in the report. It is not possible to assess suitability and adequacy on the basis of the information provided.

Para 5.1.1. 1-4)

The report does not provide adequate information on the pilot, how many residents who currently receive social care with conditions listed in the report participated in the pilot, what were the actual breakdown of numbers of users and the type of support provided compared to the support they currently receive, and their views.

Para 5.1.2. 2)

What is meant by the service objectives at the individual level list (sub-para a)) is not clear at all, for example, what support exactly will be available to people with dementia who are on a degenerative path or people with long-term health conditions who are very vulnerable, as they cannot look after themselves and fully dependent on others. There seems to be an

assumption that Neighbourhoods Connect can deliver to all whatever their health or disability conditions on the basis of a limited pilot – a 'one size fits all' approach that is unlikely to work. This will result in damaging people who are already vulnerable with high levels of needs. The Council may fail in its duty of care and will be open to challenge.

Para 5.4.

Under the proposed social enterprise model to deliver specialist dementia service, the report states that “one of the current day centres will no longer be required to deliver this service”. It is most difficult to understand the justification for this: the current users are all assessed to be at critical and substantial stage of their disease and they will only get worse, we know that there had been long waiting lists for these centres and the Council acknowledges that dementia numbers are projected to increase. So what will happen to those who will not be attending the sole remaining dementia day centre? The Council risks its duty of care to people with dementia and their carers.

The proposal does not make financial sense either: providing a similar level of service at home will be a lot more costlier as the unit cost of home care is greater, many would likely to need residential or nursing care sooner at much greater costs. The saving of £200K will soon be exhausted to meet these consequential costs. Enabling and re-abling simply will not apply to people with dementia at an advanced stage. Volunteers cannot provide high level needs of this nature. Who would volunteer to look after my husband who is doubly incontinent, lost all language and communication, who cannot do anything for himself, who cannot be left on his own, or better still how he is going to be enabled or re-abled. Without the day care centre and the care support he will be isolated at home, his health and wellbeing will suffer, as his 24/7 carer I will be isolated and will not be able to cope, my health and wellbeing will suffer and we will both become costly clients for the Council, NHS and others – but why?

Paras 5.5-6

The same would apply to people with Learning Difficulties.

Para 6.2

Savings from day centres and day opportunities total to £2.78m and proposed to deliver day care services via the Neighbourhoods Connect model; is this the amount expected from volunteer contributions, is the viability of achieving this level of volunteer contributions assessed, or financial viability and/or impact considered.

Please do not support the proposals to close day centres and day opportunities. Please continue to support the needs of people with dementia and people with other long-term conditions.

Neighbourhood Connect may have benefits and may help with community cohesion or social inclusion but it is unrealistic to expect to deliver a whole range of social care through this model, or to meet high level needs. It can be a complementary provision and not replacement

of existing services which are already under pressure. In any event the services should not be closed on the assumption that it will be viable, successful or adequate.

We are aware that the panel will be attended by LD and Autism groups on Thursday. You met us on 18 Dec before the OSC to hear our concerns, however we would be pleased to attend the H&W Scrutiny Panel on Thursday if you feel this would be useful for the discussions at the Panel.

Thank you very much for your attention and support.

Emel Teymur

From the Haynes Relatives Support Group