



Merton Centre for Independent Living
Room 22
Wandle Valley Resource Centre
Church Road
Mitcham, CR4 3BE

Date: 07/12/2015

Open letter to Merton Council

To: Stephen Alambritis, Leader of the Council, Ged Curran, CEO of the Council, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Simon Williams, Director of Communities and Housing

I am writing to you on behalf of Merton Centre for Independent Living to express our deep concern over flaws to the 2016-17 budget setting process which is currently taking place.

While the Adult Social Care team should be congratulated for running a comprehensive consultation process, which is vastly improved compared to last year, we are extremely concerned to note that there appears to be no mechanism by which councillors can act on this consultation.

Currently the business plan, on which councillors base their decisions, only contains £1.67 million of Adult Social Care cuts for deliberation and decision-making. In contrast, the full scale of cuts is £5.06 million.

We, our members, and the wider voluntary sector and public have participated in this consultation process in good faith. Unless councillors can act on the results of the consultation, then the entire process is not only null and void, but arguably an exercise conducted in bad faith, by you, the council.

We are now in a position where if, on the basis of the consultation, councillors wish to turn down a specific cut to services, how can that take place if it is not included in the business plan in front of them? For example, the following cuts are not in the business plan:

- CH04
- CH05

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- CH21
- CH22
- CH24
- CH25
- CH26
- CH27
- CH28
- CH29
- CH30
- CH31
- CH32
- CH33
- CH34
- CH58
- CH59
- CH62

We have raised this concern on numerous occasions already, and have not received a satisfactory response. In our view, genuine consultation is a process which decision-makers can act on. Unless every single cut to services planned for 2016-17 is included in the business plan, this will not be a genuine consultation process.

We insist that Merton council carries out this consultation process properly and that the business plan under review by councillors includes every single cut to services planned for next year.

Furthermore, we will be expecting to see each individual cut given thoughtful and robust consideration by councillors in terms of the impact of this cut individually, and bearing in mind the combined and cumulative impact of what is proposed.

Kind regards



Roy Benjamin,
Chair, Merton Centre for Independent Living

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