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Dear Bob Harris
Executive Member, social Services and Health River Park house
225 high Road
Wood Green
N22 8HQ

RE: Council Budget Pre business Plan review.

I am writing to you regarding the pre business plan review. As Social Services convener for UNISON I have the opportunity of being able to visit some of the placements concerned and find out how these decisions make affect the services users.

These include the elderly and adults with physical disabilities and those with Learning Disabilities. Many of the users are very vulnerable and may not have the 'voice' to express their concerns.

I would like to bring to your attention some of my observations.

Closure of Ops Drop in's I don't understand why this is even being considered when even more vulnerable elderly people and being asked to access community services. For many service users this is their only opportunity of meeting other people in the community.

Merge of Winkfield and Haven Centre. It is claimed that these centres are not fully utilised. This is not correct. Winkfield has a maximum number of service users every day and increasing number of other service users using their drop in facilities (the service users who use these facilities are not eligible for the day centre as such) The Day centre is host to other council and voluntary groups such as those for the visually impaired and the hard of hearing. It is also used by a voluntary carers group and will have staff from the direct payments team. There is no possibility that the service users from Winkfield and the Haven could use the Winkfield Day centre with out a dramatic drop in staff and or the number service users from each day centre using the service. Alternatively they would have to reduce the number of days a service user could attend the day centre. This might place some service users at greater risk if they could not attend the day centre full time. They would then require residential care. This is because it would double the number of service users and staff in one building and would make it a health and safety risk. As the day centre would be literally bulging at the seams with every available space used. At present there is only limited capacity e.g for the toilets if a wheel chair user has an accident it

can take over half an hour to change them. What would the other older service users do whilst they wait to use the toilet facilities.

It should also be noted that the needs of the service users in each day centre are different at some level and it may be difficult to meet those needs. Facilities having a quiet environment. As one is for younger adults with a physical disability and the other is for older service users..

Move mental Health clients to supported living No thought seems to have been made on how this will impact on the already over burdened Social work and health staff who already are unable to deal effectively with the number of service users they have.

Review mental Health opportunities I assume this is an understated way of saying there will be a cut services. Here again this seems absurd when more mental health service users are to be put in supported living type accommodation.

Learning Disabilities Team there is an intention to close Keston Day Opportunities. whilst this may sound a good idea on paper. It is not clear what service is replacing Keston day Opportunities. And what the impact will be on other resources. I'm sure you have been told that this service is old fashioned and service users need more community based activities. However to achieve this more out reach staff will be required. Keston services have already a large number of service users who are unable to attend the number of days they would like. At present there is very little support to be able to help them to access other services in the community. As a social worker in The Learning Disabilities Team I found it very difficult to obtain Services in any way for day opportunities. I also found it difficult to access other out reach services such as those set up to help people find employment. I can only see these reducing services even to a vulnerable section of the community with out enabling them to have any form of a replacement. This also ignores the needs of the carers who depend on their offspring having a set number of organised days to have somewhere to go in the day. I argue that the building should not be lost but money used to modernise it.

If you require further information please contact me at the above address.

Yours Sincerely

Simon Joseph
Social Services and Children and Younger Person Convener
UNISON.