

## Consultation meeting for service users and relatives

Newent Resource Centre  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2007

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**Question/issue:** You can't put a quart into a pint pot! And how would staff be affected if the Centres were merged?

**Response:** Service users would still be transported in the usual manner and both sites could accommodate similar numbers, roughly 75 to start with but with numbers reducing slightly over time.

**Question/issue:** Hobkirk was smaller than Newent, the layout was more closed in. Newent was roomier and a much nicer building and provided weekend day care.

**Response:** Whatever decision was made, weekend day care would continue to be provided for those who currently receive it, even if the service moved to Hobkirk.

**Question/issue:** What do you intended doing with Newent if it closed?

**Response:** The Council has other potential uses for the building.

**Question/issue:** Four Councillors attended a Kingston Pensioners meeting recently, but they have not come to this meeting, why?

**Response:** We will pass on your message to councillors.

**Question/issue:** What are your Terms of Reference?

**Response:** To give people the opportunity to ask questions and make their points and views known. Each meeting is being minuted and put on the Royal Borough of Kingston's (RBK) website and will be fed back to the councillors.

**Question/issue:** Councillor Penny Shelton should be here as she is the "Champion for the Elderly". This consultation is not about modernising the services but destroying services. It had taken 40 years to get to this stage of welfare for the elderly and one-year to destroy it. It was a half-baked idea to close Newent Day Centre and staff would be used as scapegoats and told to apply for their own jobs.

**Response:** Councillors do not have a fixed idea of which centre to close. With regards to staff, they had been consulted and advised that they can be moved to other jobs to avoid redundancy if necessary.

**Question/issue:** What will the carer/service user ratio be in the new Centre as certain people need specialised care?

**Response:** If the Centres join together, the ratio would be maintained. Ratio's are not specified for day care by the Government, only in residential care. The Council will support staff and make sure the ratios are right. People using the Centres have a mixture of needs from low to high and perhaps the people with low need users would have their needs met more appropriately by a different service.

**Question/issue:** What happens to those who do not need as much care but who can't attend other centres/services as they won't take people who use wheelchairs?

**Response:** Alfreton or Age Concern may be able to help. Whatever decision was made about the Centres, RBK will make sure it's service users were looked after.

**Question/issue:** RBK spent £165,000 on a fountain, had this been subject to a consultation process? Its astounding that RBK was considering cuts on day care services with a growing number of elderly in the borough!

**Response:** We can't really answer that question! It is very important to put views across in the next three months so Councillors can consider them.

**Question/issue:** Would a letter be sent out about the changes?

**Response:** Everyone would be made aware of the proposals.

**Question/issue:** Where do the elderly go with an ever-growing older population?

**Response:** Alfreton and Age Concern provide services too, in addition to RBK Day Centres. RBK tries to keep a balance but it is a political decision on how money is spent.

**Question/issue:** Newent's facilities are amazing!

**Response:** Yes!

**Question/issue:** The questions being asked should be directed to Councillors, not staff! RBK is reducing the eligibility banding for services from four categories to two – critical and substantial. RBK is only considering costs and not people's views. Money is being wasted by RBK, for example the "Living Kingston" magazine", costing £160,000 for two issues, £6m spent on the Rose Theatre that has never opened, and a 17.5% rise to the senior managers in the Council. RBK is using charities to serve the needs of its elderly and the charities were in meltdown due to this.

**Response:** We can't comment on political decisions but for the record, Age Concern and Alfreton are substantially funded by RBK.

**Question/issue:** But are funded below cost and made up with voluntary contributions. RBK was spending its money on the wrong things.

**Question/issue:** Can you guarantee that all comments will be read by Councillors and others?

**Response:** Councillors will no doubt read people's comments. These will be out on the RBK website together with people's letters.

**Question/issue:** Why has there been publicity about Hobkirk but not Newent?

**Response:** Service users and relatives mounted a campaign and got Hobkirk into the press. It is important to put your views to Councillors. No decision has been made by RBK on which centre will close.

**Question/issue:** Why was the Press not at the meeting?

**Response:** It was not RBK policy to invite the Press to public meetings but people could talk to the Press themselves if they wanted to. A letter would be sent to all service users incorporating this afternoon's minutes and RBK's website address would also be included so people could view the correspondence to date regarding the consultation. There will be further meetings as detailed in the letter received by service users last week and anyone can attend. The next meeting is Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm. We will get a message to Councillors asking them to attend

**Question/issue:** Service users cannot give an informed answer to the four questions asked in the consultation document regarding which of the two centres would be best suited to offer the care for people. This leads to the belief that a decision may have already been made.

**Response:** We do have information on the level of service users needs at Newent and at Hobkirk and can discuss these levels of needs in a general way if this is what people want. Regarding the state of the buildings, both are in very good condition as they are regulated and have to meet rigorous requirements.

**Question/issue:** People going to Day Care are also giving their carers a break.

**Response:** Yes, we have to think about the services we provide for supporting carers and how we can maintain these.