

## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR INDIVIDUALS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **DAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES TOPIC GROUP**

Following the requisition of the Cabinet Report on 18 May 2011, and the subsequent Individuals Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed that a group be established to look at the process of the consultation.

The group met on two occasions and individually met with clients and carers on visits to day opportunities.

The consultation concluded on 22 August, and over 100 questionnaires had been distributed to Carers and a similar number of easy read version were sent to clients of the service. 31 responses were received, 28 of which were received in the first week. The group felt that this was a very low number. Responses were mixed but predominately against the closure. There had been little use of the dedicated phone line and e-mail account provided.

The group were informed that Mencap and People First had provided advocacy for individual clients through the process and both had submitted reports of their overall findings. People First had also conducted open sessions culminating in a meeting where questions that had been prepared were put to the Council representative. Sessions had been held with the 3 A's group (Representative users of the Centres); The Quality Circle at Nason Waters (which also involved Carers and Staff), four open meetings with service clients (two with HavCare support) held at Western Road and Nason Waters and individual conversation where requested at both Nason Waters and Western Road.

The group were informed that there had been overlaps between all sessions and the main concern was reassurance for clients that they could continue with activities they liked and that they would not be forced to "work". They would still be with people and staff they were familiar with, and can travel on the same coaches. It was explained that they would also be able to choose new activities if they wished.

Members had visited the different day opportunities and the following issues were highlighted:

The majority of users were not against moving, they just had concerns about what activities would be available, the familiarity of facilities and transport issues.

#### **St Bernard's**

- It was felt that the parents/ carers were transferring anxiety to the clients, who would not be against the change, but were worried about upsetting their carer/ parent.

- The Building was on 2 floors, with no lift and was therefore the first floor was not used, and was wasted. The majority of users had personal care however the service did appear dated.

### **Western Road**

- This was a Victorian Building which had been used by one group for a history project. This included a recreated Victorian School Room, which had been offered to the Museum, but they had turned it down.
- Users would be disappointed to leave the building given the history.
- The activities carried out were more intimate with the users and there was a good vibe and enthusiasm from the staff. The staff were happy with the change

### **Nason Waters**

- Members were impressed with the size of the building and its potential particularly the flat being used to promote independent living
- The activities seemed to be limited and the building itself seemed depressing and grimy
- Members were informed that as staff had left they had not been replaced
- Staff felt that the clients and carers of Nason Waters had been over consulted; therefore they had been given lots of opportunity to comment.
- The move of staff from Western Road to Nason Waters may help to lift the ambience of the centre. Member felt it would be advantageous if the staff started working together before the clients transferred.

### **CONCLUSION**

Overall Members felt that although there had been a low response rate, efforts had been made to encourage all stakeholders to register their views, and opportunities had been made available for all to participate.

It was agreed that the consultation process had been carried out effectively.

The Group requested that a progress report on the proposals be presented to the full OSC in the future.