

Your Ref:
Our Ref:

Councillor Barker
7d International House
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TQ12 6RY

Date 25 November 2014

Dear Stuart,

Thank you for your response to the questions raised by the Mid Devon District Council Scrutiny Committee. Thank you for your comprehensive answers, I would however like to seek clarification on some of the issues and raise some further questions.

One of the main concerns is the lack of clear information in all our correspondence in relation to options available under the Localism Act. It appears that expressions of interest have to be made in March, as the decision to close was taken after March 2014, does this mean that expressions of interest could be made in March 2015?

Did any staff members show an intention to set up a social enterprise? Were staff informed at any time of this option and the Government's commitment to encouraging staff to take over and run services?

Mid Devon District Council supported a bid for a 50 bed care home in the grounds of Alexandra Lodge. At the point this decision was made Councillors were unaware that Charlton Lodge would be closing. In the report to Council regarding the provision of this extra care facility Devon County Council committed £1 million and MDDC committed £300k to the scheme. Given the change in circumstances, could that finance be used to refurbish Charlton Lodge to provide the extra care housing which is predicted will be the way to meet future needs?

The question relating to risk assessments has still not been answered, the risk assessment as printed in DCC reports assesses risk, following mitigation, as a 'possible minor' – all available information indicates that the risk of an enforced move is higher than has been assessed.

In your response to Question 9 you state 'Well UK is not overseeing the process. Transitions are managed by very experienced DCC staff. Well UK is evaluating how the process was received by sampling residents, day service users who have moved to new homes or services and their families.' Please would you explain how Well UK are going to sample the people involved in the moves, what is the sample percentage/number? When will Well UK be reporting back and who will be receiving their report. Will this report go directly to DCC Scrutiny?

In your response, you state 'it is expected that an interim report will be presented to Scrutiny when there are sufficient numbers sampled' surely, as this is an ongoing process, the Scrutiny committee will want to be aware of the effect of these moves on those who have



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already moved? It might be that information on the progress of the planned closures may require a re-evaluation of the process?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (What Rotherham and Mid Staffordshire tell us about Scrutiny, and where it's lacking. September 2014) make several relevant points, in particular; 'In both Stafford and Rotherham, scrutiny appears to have placed too much store on the assurances of people in authority that everything was fine. Even if they had wanted to ask challenging questions, it appears they did not have access to the information to do so.' In view of these comments it would be helpful if the question in relation to Well UK and the evaluation to date could be made available before the next round of closures takes place.

Do all residents and service users involved in the planned moves have access to independent advocates?

You did agree to attend one of our Scrutiny meetings; however, you avoided answering that question in my last email! If members of the MDDC Scrutiny committee would still like you to attend a meeting, would you be available?

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Jenny

Cc Scrutiny Agenda.
Scrutiny Chairman DCC