

Dorset County Council



Petitions Panel

21 March 2017

1. Background to the Petition Scheme

- 1.1 The County Council's Petitions Scheme was adopted on 29 April 2010 and came into effect on 15 June 2010. The Scheme was subsequently updated by the County Council on 21 July 2016.
- 1.2 If a petition is supported by 50 or more signatories then it will be dealt with by a small customer focussed panel. If a petition is supported by 1,000 or more signatories it will be scheduled for a debate at the next meeting of the full County Council.

2. Petition – Loss of Day Care in Wimborne – the Hanham Centre

- 2.1 The County Council received a petition organised by Mrs Cottingham on 23 January 2017. This reads as follows:

We the undersigned wish to support the views expressed in the letter headed "Loss of day care in town" printed in the Stour and Avon magazine of 2 December 2016. Additionally, we make the following points:-

1. *When there is such a high and increasing need for Day Care, how do you justify converting a purpose-built Day Centre into office accommodation?*
2. *Why have the service-users and their carers not been consulted about the change of use of the Day Centre? We have been patient for years waiting for things to improve so that we could have the use of a much-needed facility. Even if DCC decides that it cannot fund a Day Centre there are other options through private and voluntary sectors that could be approached for financial help.*
3. *We feel that there is a total lack of respect by DCC for elderly citizens, but we would remind them that we still have a vote, we pay our taxes and we expect to be consulted over the issues that affect our lives. "Old age" is not an infectious disease that requires us to be "isolated". We need to be able to remain in social contact with friends and other residents and at the same time allow where we have Carers, for them to have breaks.*

We request that the current conversion being carried out is suspended and a public meeting for the residents of Wimborne and Colehill be arranged to discuss the situation.

- 2.2 As this petition contains more than 50 signatures, the Panel are invited to note and discuss this.
- 2.3 This discussion should conclude with a decision as to how to respond to the petition. This may include one or more of the following:
 - taking the action requested in the petition
 - considering the petition at a council meeting
 - holding an inquiry into the matter
 - undertaking research into the matter

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- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- referring the petition for consideration by the council's Audit and Governance Committee
- calling a referendum
- writing to the petition organiser setting out the Panel's views about the request in the petition.

2.4 Alternatively, the Panel may determine a combination of the options above, or decide on another course of action as appropriate.

3. Context

3.1 Dorset County Council received a petition on 23 January 2017 and dated 19 January 2017, containing 107 signatures. The subject was originally raised by Mrs J Cottingham by way of a Complaint Form dated 5 January following a telephone call to Dorset County Council on 3 January 2017.

3.2 The Hanham Centre as a building over the last few years has primarily been used as an Independent Living Centre where visitors can receive advice on what equipment and aids can assist with daily living. This included having an assessment from an occupational therapist. The extra capacity in the building was made available too for other purposes including meetings and use on a sessional hire basis. Such use has never covered the cost of running the building. The agencies using the building on a sessional basis were aware that this would only be a short term arrangement whilst a longer term view was taken on the use of the property.

3.3 On the broader point about loss of day services for older people in Wimborne we were not providing or commissioning day services from the Hanham Centre from the point when Street Meadows was built.

3.4 The way services are delivered and policy in adult social care has changed significantly over the last five years and more. The emphasis on supporting older people with significant level of needs has been to plan this individually with the person and their family. This is particularly reflected in the relatively new Care Act 2014, where personal budgets are used to put support in place by the person themselves or with our help. This has changed the demand and use of a day care model of supporting people. So, for example, if there is a demand for people to use their personal budget or direct payment for a day care type service the agencies that can deliver those services can respond. As an example Tricuro, who operate the Ferndown Centre, are not looking to create or establish an additional day centre in the Hanham property.

3.5 We have a responsibility to make the best use of our assets and the Hanham Centre has formed part of a wider review of our use of buildings. A decision was made to retain the previously established equipment centre and access to an occupational therapist assessment in recognition that there is an ongoing requirement for this facility and no suitable alternative accommodation could be identified. The decision to use the other part of the building for office accommodation was made as part of this wider review of buildings in the area. The work to convert the building to an office is now complete and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team (East) will be moving into the space prior to the end of February 2017.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The Panel is invited to note the receipt of this petition and decide how to respond to it.

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