

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes.

Deputations received:

(a) Gary Palmer, Alex Knutson and Sue Beatty – UNISON & GMB – Integrated Community Equipment Store

“It was with deep regret, sadness and some anger that staff were notified of the recommendation to today’s Committee meeting that the ICES service should no longer remain with BHCC in the future. Indeed it is the view of this deputation and affected staff that the level of discussion which took place at the Health & Wellbeing Board last month on such a serious issue was sadly lacking and appeared to be agreed almost “on the nod”. Indeed some of the information offered by a H&WB Board member on equipment supplied by ICES currently, strongly suggested that she had little idea as to what ICES does provide and to whom!

Councillor Kitkat states in an e-mail that “We have to do the best we can in the circumstances with the resources and time we have available. I am confident that the decision made by the Board will achieve this whilst ensuring citizens continue to receive timely delivery and support for their equipment needs.” Given the concerns expressed by interested parties that West Sussex has a mixed record regarding claims that patients are not receiving equipment and care as quickly as BHCC offer, we are surprised that Councillor Kitkat is able to make such a statement. We also note that there is little in response from BHCC, or indeed Health, as to their duty of care for their staff who find themselves now in a position of a proposed TUPE transfer into an, as yet, unknown organisation with all the associated risks that anyone working in and with this service is fully aware of! We truly believe that what is currently a first class service will diminish following transfer to whichever provider is chosen. This can be seen time and time again following TUPE transfer. Motivation is profit over people, in this case very vulnerable people!

Councillor Kitkat told staff at ICES on his recent visit to the service that they could try and put forward a business case for keeping the service in-house. Staff/unions/service users wish to be offered this opportunity in an attempt to save a highly commended and valuable service for the future. However, we need time and information to prepare a business case. Today we are requesting that on the basis of this being a genuine offer from Councillor Kitkat, please defer any decision around the future of ICES to enable this to happen? We would need to be given all the necessary information that is available around the tendering process/costings/budget /bidder information etc and we would need to be given sufficient time to enable a plan to be carefully

considered and presented to you. At a meeting on 8th October with trade union reps, BHCC management and SCT/BHCC commissioners, we requested information to enable us to begin the process of getting a bid together. We were told that this would be made available to us but unless a decision at P&R Committee is deferred on 16th to allow us time to do this work once the information is received, it's an empty offer being made by Councillor Kitkat and our members will need to reconsider their position.

This group of highly dedicated staff, their respective unions, together with its' service users are determined to save this service and will not go away quietly. Given the above we ask that you show the same determination by agreeing our request.

Thank you."

Gary Palmer (GMB)
Alex Knutson (UNISON)
Sue Beatty (UNISON)