



BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
Councillor Rob Pocock
Scrutiny Chair
Health & Social Care
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council House
Victoria Square
Birmingham B1 1BB
Telephone: 0121 464 4419

Our Ref: RP/rk

5th March 2020

Councillor Paulette Hamilton,
Cabinet Member Health & Social Care,
Room M83, Ground Floor,
Council House

Dear Cllr Hamilton,

Request for Call in: Adult Social Care – Draft Day Opportunities Strategy

I am writing to you as agreed, following the meeting on Tuesday 18th February which you attended and where the Health and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the Request for Call In relating to the Adult Social Care Draft Day Opportunities Strategy, which was lodged by Cllrs Matt Bennett and Alex Yip.

You will remember that wide-ranging concerns were raised in the course of the discussion. We noted, however, your assurance that no decision has yet been made on the future of day services in Birmingham and that there is no 'pre-determination' of the final decisions in the report of 11th February. We welcome your assurance that the next stage of the process anticipates a considerable amount of co-production work being done with all stakeholders on the future of day services which will be happening over the next nine months before the strategy comes back to Cabinet in January 2021, when you have advised that a decision will be taken by Cabinet on the future of day opportunities. If at that point any closures are being considered, then we note your assurance that a further consultation will need to take place.

In the circumstances, the members of the committee decided not to call-in the decision. However, in the light of the important issues raised in the course of the debate, the members decided that their serious concerns needed to be put on record and raised with you in the form of a letter, in order that these can be fully considered by the Executive during the next stage of the co-production process on the Implementation Plan.

Eight main areas of concern were raised by the Committee during the meeting.

1. This Scrutiny Committee needs to be included in part of the co-design process happening between now and when the strategy goes back to Cabinet in January 2021.
2. The Committee sought reassurance that individuals who choose to use the services provided by Day Centres can continue to exercise their entitlement to make that choice.
3. That there should be no coercion or no appearance of coercion to pressure people to opt out of Day Centre care where this is their preferred day care option.
4. Day Centres need to be integrated into the wider community and with wider day opportunities as closely and as quickly as possible.
5. Direct Payments may not always be the most appropriate solution for people. They need to be carefully explained to people/reassurance provided so that people understand how to use them.
6. An initial working draft of the co-produced strategy/implementation plan should be brought to the HOSC at the earliest opportunity for our consideration and comment
7. There needs to be greater clarity of communication about current policy between the leadership level and how that is communicated to people on the ground at the front line - both workers and service users. We are concerned to hear that the approach being taken at senior level which does not presume closure of centres, may not be accurately reflected by staff on the front line.
8. We have some concerns over the capacity and ability of voluntary and third sector organisations to play an effective role in the provision of day opportunities. As day opportunities develop, there needs to be investment in voluntary and third sector organisations and in making community asset transfers work and in supporting people in local communities.

We look forward to your assurance that due consideration will be give to our concerns during the next phase of this work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Pocock', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Rob Pocock
Scrutiny Chair
Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee