

Improvements to Adult Social Care **Consultation Report**

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Children, Families and Adults Directorate, Cheshire East Council

Executive Summary

The consultation period for the Improvements to Adult Social Care Consultation ran from 20 September-13 December and involved a number of measures to engage with the public. These included three public meetings (111 attendees) and 14 meetings at day centres with customers and carers (278 attendees). It also involved collating feedback that the Council received through questionnaire, by email, telephone or on a face to face basis (e.g. via a home visit).

Feedback was ordered by the three different aspects of the consultation; the lifestyle vision, the specific changes to day services, and the proposal regarding the respite centre at Queens Drive.

Lifestyle Vision

- 59% of customers endorsed the lifestyle approach, with 22% against it
- Many customers liked the idea of the greater choice and variety that the lifestyle vision promised for day services. However, some users felt that this variety should also be offered within existing day services.
- The following options were the most popular of potential activities that could be offered; trips out, lunch, music and cooking.

General (Day Services and Respite)

- In total 53% disagreed with the principle of rationalising centres with 30% agreeing.
- Any transfer of day centre was viewed as creating a number of transport related problems for customers and carers e.g. because of the logistics of public transport and the increased time and cost of travelling.
- Changes in centres were seen as being potentially disruptive to vulnerable groups of people e.g. people with learning disabilities
- Occupancy rates at buildings were questioned by many users. Linked to this, there was also a feeling that personal budgets were negatively impacting on the sustainability of centres.

- People generally valued the service they received at social care centres particularly the quality of staff.
- Two petitions were received; one with 6290 signatures which emphasised the need to keep services local in Cheshire East and to preserve health and social care provision in Knutsford. The other specifically related to retaining the Stanley Centre (Knutsford) and comprised of 275 signatures (see Appendix 1).

Day Centres listed in proposals:

Stanley Centre (Knutsford):

- No alternative buildings were seen as suitable in the Knutsford area by respondents.
- The inconvenience of travel to alternative day centres (e.g. Redesmere - Handforth) was seen as excessive.
- It was felt that the Stanley Centre already offered activities that fulfilled the lifestyle brief. The quality of care was also praised at the Stanley Centre and this was cited as superior to alternatives.
- The meetings at the Stanley Centre and at Knutsford Civic Centre were characterised by strong feelings being expressed about the proposals. Petitions were also completed by Knutsford residents and others emphasising the need for the Stanley Centre to be retained. A detailed report was also completed by MENCAP on the consultation proposals.

Bexton Court (Knutsford):

- Few representations were directly received about Bexton Court. Although a petition was completed by Knutsford residents and others emphasising the need for dementia care services to be retained. Knutsford Town Council made the same case.
- A drop in meeting was arranged for former users of Bexton Court and their family but nobody expressed an interest in attending.

Peatfields (Macclesfield):

- Comments were more limited for this centre although some carers were unhappy about the proposed decommissioning.

- Transport was cited as a key issue for users of Peatfields e.g. many users live nearby the centre and are able to walk in
- There were questions as to why Peatfields had been selected for closure above other centres. It was felt that it offered a personalised service which it would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Dean Row (Wilmslow):

- Customers of Dean Row appreciated the familiarity of the centre, the staff and its facilities.
- Concern was expressed that attendance at Dean Row had deliberately been limited in order to allow it to be closed.
- Comments were more limited for this centre although some carers were unhappy about the proposed decommissioning.

Brocklehurst (Macclesfield):

- A further proposal was developed to transfer customers from the Brocklehurst to Hollins View.
- Generally carers were happy with the transfer although it was emphasised that staff should transfer with customers to ensure continuity of service, and that bathing facilities should be available.

Respite - Queens Drive (Nantwich):

- Strong feelings were expressed about Queens Drive at the meetings at Nantwich Civic Hall and Crewe Football Ground.
- People valued the homely environment that Queens Drive offered and felt that the Council should have worked harder to find solutions to retain it.
- Transport was seen as particularly problematical for users of Queens Drive who were mostly from the Crewe and Nantwich area.

There were additional comments made about the consultation process itself; this included the information that was provided such as around occupancy. It also included remarks that the consultation was a done deal and over the anxiety and upset that the uncertainty was causing to customers and carers.

Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Chapter 1: Introduction	6
The Consultation Process.....	7
General Questions Raised About the Consultation	12
Chapter 2: Analysis - Lifestyle	14
Lifestyle	14
Feedback from the Questionnaire	15
Responses at Meetings, By Letter etc.....	21
The Lifestyle Pilots	23
Chapter 3: Analysis – Day Centre Proposals	25
The Questionnaire.....	25
Analysis: by Area	28
Knutsford Area	28
Wilmslow Area	36
Congleton and Middlewich Area	39
Crewe and Nantwich Area	42
Macclesfield Area.....	44
Chapter 4: Analysis - Respite and Queens Drive.....	47
Chapter 5: Key Themes	51
The Consultation Process.....	51
Service Changes – Key Themes.....	54
Appendix 1: Petition.....	57
Appendix 2: Responses from Organisations	62

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Improvements to Adult Social Care Consultation concerned the Council putting a vision forward for how the Council could deliver services in the future.

The vision involved customers who currently receive day services being given more choice over what they do during the day. Customers would be able to attend lifestyle groups where they would be able to access a much greater range of activities. These activities would be appropriate to their social care needs and their interests. The lifestyle groups would be run from buildings based in the community such as leisure centres.

Customers with more complex needs would still attend traditional day services. However, the number of these would be reduced. Some of the money from these changes would be used to re-invest in the remaining buildings.

The specific buildings directly affected by the proposals were: Peatfields (Macclesfield), Dean Row (Wilmslow), Bexton Court (Knutsford) and the Stanley Centre (Knutsford). However, it was underlined for Knutsford that dialogue would take place over the most appropriate way forward. It was also stated that no one would lose a service as a result of these proposals (subject to the Council's standard Fair Access to Care eligibility criteria).

In addition to this, proposals were put forward for respite services. This involved the transfer of respite services from Queens Drive (Nantwich) to Mountview (Congleton) due to the fact that this building did not have the facilities for people with more complex needs. It also involved investment in Hollins View (Macclesfield).

Full details of the vision and the proposals are available in the Information Pack which went with this consultation.

The proposals were preliminary because there was a desire by the Council to involve the public in work at an early stage. Options were compiled for each area/centre on the basis of the consultation with the public.

The time period for this consultation ran from 20th September to 13th December.

The Consultation Process

The Consultation was open to everyone in Cheshire East but was particularly aimed at customers, their families and carers. The Council was also keen to listen to organisations that play a part in delivering Social Care related support either because they represent customers or because they deliver care.

A number of methods were available to stakeholders to give them the opportunity to make their views known during the consultation. This included by email, telephone or face to face via a consultation meeting.

The Consultation meetings were held during the October/November period.

- The formal meetings were for customers who attended centres and their family/carers. These were for centres directly affected by the proposals.
- Informal meetings were also held at centres because the lifestyle ideas might be explored in these areas if this was of interest to customers. Explanation of the other proposals was also given.
- The public meetings were open to all and were arranged in the evening to give an alternative time slot for carers working during the day.

Meetings involved a presentation on the proposals, a question and answer session and the chance to speak to staff on a one to one basis. The format tended to vary slightly depending on the size and the needs of the audience. However, the key messages remained the same.

A questionnaire was handed out following the presentation at the meetings. This was available in both standard and easy read format. The questionnaire gave the chance for everyone to comment on the proposals and allowed quantitative information to be collected.

Staff at centres provided additional support to customers and carers to ensure that they understood the proposals and had a full chance to give their views. This included supporting them to fill in the questionnaire.

Formal Meetings

<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Hollins View	Wednesday 5 th October 2011	7
Peatfields	Thursday 6 th October 2011	27
Stanley Centre (also for customers formerly based at Bexton Court)	Friday 7 th October 2011	48
Redesmere	Tuesday 18 th October 2011	18
Dean Row	Monday 24 th October 2011	16
Mountview	Monday 31 st October 2011	15
Nantwich Civic Hall (for customers based at Queens Drive)	Monday 31 st October 2011	24

Informal Meetings

<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Mayfield	Monday 3 rd October 2011	43
Carter House	Wednesday 26 th October 2011	15
Lincoln House	Wednesday, 2 November 2011	3
Cheyne Hall	Monday 7 th November 2011	11
Macon House	Wednesday 9 th November 2011	9
Hilary Centre	Friday 11 th November 2011	24
Salinae	Friday 18 th November 2011	18

Public Meetings

<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Knutsford Civic Hall (Cranford Suite)	Tuesday 15th November 2011	63
Crewe Football Ground (Carlsberg Lounge)	Thursday 24 th November 2011	33
Wilmslow Leisure Centre (Evans Suite)	Tuesday 29 th November 2011	15

Additional measures included:

- Focus groups with customers using the Macclesfield and Wilmslow pilot lifestyle groups.
- A Knutsford engagement group with customers who attended the Stanley Centre and their carers (expressions of interest were taken for this group)
- Presentations and questions and answers at Learning Disability Partnership Boards
- A follow up meeting for users of the Brocklehurst Unit
- A drop in meeting was held on 1 November for customers of the Stanley Centre and their carers/family, due to disruption at the formal meeting at the Stanley Centre. Similarly, a drop in meeting was held on 8 December for former customers of Bexton Court and their carers/family.

The public meetings were generally attended by people related to or caring for customers or people from organisations, although customers were also present. The day centres meetings had much greater representation by customers although carers did attend these meetings as well.

Petition

A petition was also presented to the Local Authority before full Council on 15 December 2011. The petition contained 6,290 signatures from people predominantly in Knutsford but also from those in Cheshire East (and outside its boundaries). The covering statement included the following:

“We the undersigned petition Cheshire East Council and East Cheshire Hospital Trust:

Save our social and health care –keep our services local

Keep our Stanley Centre for disabled adults

Return our dementia care services

Return our intermediate hospital ward”

The petition relates to the proposals to look at services within Knutsford (Bexton Court and the Stanley Centre) but also to services provided by health (the intermediate hospital ward) and more widely within Cheshire East.

Another petition was also presented directly relating to the Stanley Centre.

This was signed by 275 people. See Appendix 1 for full details.

Publicity

The consultation was publicised through a number of different methods. These included:

- Posters in libraries, supermarkets, public buildings etc
- Letters to customers using the Stanley Centre and those formerly using Bexton Court
- Radio interviews with Silk FM, Canalside and BBC Radio Stoke
- Publicity through Cheshire East LINK
- Letters to relevant local health and social care organisations
- Press releases
- Engagement with Knutsford Town Council
- Stakeholder meeting with strategic health and social care organisations
- Circulation of posters and email reminder to relevant health and social care organisations
- Internal Cheshire East staff newsletter (goes to 10,000+)
- Engagement of customers through staff working at our social care buildings
- Usage of the Council’s website including the ability to complete a questionnaire online

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is one of the best ways to receive feedback from a range of people. It is especially useful because of the way it can give quantitative information (numerical information) which can be used to give a general overall assessment of what people think of a particular policy. However, it is also important to allow open responses to questions in order to understand some of the reasoning behind the selection of a particular option.

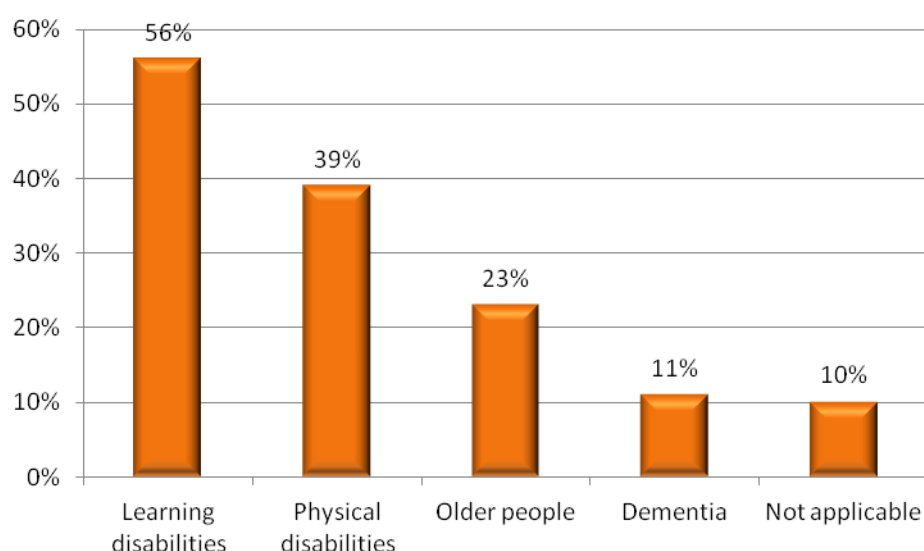
There were two versions of the questionnaire; a standard version and one aimed at customers with learning disabilities (although some people chose this because of the simpler language and pictorial approach that this offered). In all, 99 people completed the easy read questionnaire with 88 completing the standard questionnaire.

Only the standard questionnaire recorded the client type of the customers (e.g. learning disabilities, physical disabilities etc) due to concerns about keeping the questionnaire as brief and as simple as possible for those with learning disabilities. As such, it would be expected that the overall proportion of customers with learning disabilities is somewhat higher than the proportion below. It is also likely that there is a greater response rate from older people.

In total 187 questionnaires were received during the consultation. The majority of people (who indicated) were users of day or respite services (72%). 18% of all respondents used short break services with 70% using day services (note: it was possible to select both options).

If an assumption is made that those who did not indicate that they used a service in the easy read questionnaire were carers (to simplify this questionnaire 'carers' was not an option on this document) then carers can be said to have returned 32% of the questionnaires. (Note: some people indicated that they were both a customer and a carer so percentages are from total responses received. Other feedback received was from organisations or from general members of the public)

Chart 1: Questionnaire received by client group (from standard questionnaire)



The responses show a good spread of responses across the client groups. The percentages are weighted towards people with learning disabilities but this

reflects the fact that the main consultation proposals e.g. the Stanley Centre, Peatfields, Dean Row and Queens Drive relate to this client group (although there are also implications for others client categories).

General Questions Raised About the Consultation

Many general questions were raised about the consultation itself during the process. Responses from the Council have been given here to some of the main questions posed. A fuller list of general issues raised about the consultation is included in the analysis section.

Q: Will our views be listened?

A: The Council has tried to make this Consultation as transparent and as fair a process as possible. As such no final decision will genuinely be taken until Cabinet considers the revised proposals in March 2012.

Q: Is this just about saving money?

A: There are two important areas that the Council would contend to be improvements. Firstly, the lifestyle vision which if realised would see an increase in the range of activities and therefore the amount of choice available in the day to customers. This could have a genuinely positive effect on customers' wellbeing. Secondly, the investment that would be made in the buildings that the Council retained. One good example would be the potential ability for the Council to offer respite services for people with more complex needs.

Q: Why are you saying the centre is under occupied when I know many people attend there?

A: There were a number of people who disagreed with the way the Council had calculated occupancy rates in its buildings. This was particularly so for the Stanley Centre.

Occupancy can be interpreted in a number of ways. For instance, it can mean the physical capacity of the building – the number of people who can reasonably fit in the rooms the building has. It can also mean the staff capacity - the number of people the current staffing in the building can support.

There are also additional factors such as the fact that many individuals using a building may only use it as a 'check-in' point before accessing services in the community. Attendance levels are also affected by sickness and other reasons

for absence – requiring a place to be ‘reserved’ but not filled on some occasions.

Q: Why is the Council cutting services for vulnerable people?

A: Everyone who currently receives a service will continue to receive one. As such the Council is not cutting services although it is possible that they may be delivered in a different location.

Demand for social care services continues to grow as a result of factors such as the ageing population. This puts pressure on the Council’s limited resources. The Council therefore has a responsibility to regularly review services to try to ensure its services are delivered in as efficient way as possible. It is also important to ensure the needs of individuals are carefully taken into account.

Further more general issues are picked up about the consultation process later in this document.

Chapter 2: Analysis - Lifestyle

As stated in the introduction the consultation concerned three different areas; the lifestyle vision, specific proposals for day centres, a proposal for the respite centre Queens Drive. This commentary will take each of these proposals in turn, following the format of the original consultation information pack.

The lifestyle analysis which follows is split into three main sections, feedback we received via the questionnaire and feedback we received from other sources e.g. consultation meetings, correspondence etc. There is also a separate section on the lifestyle pilots.

Lifestyle

The proposals that were put forward for day services had an underlying vision behind them known as the lifestyle concept.

The idea of this was to try and give customers receiving day services more choice over what they do during the day. There would be a menu of lifestyle activities delivered by trained and experienced staff who would support individuals in what they wanted to do. Activities might include such options as swimming, using the gym, badminton, pottery, tea dances, IT buddy support sessions etc.

Services would be offered in a range of buildings including Council leisure centres and libraries. The lifestyle buildings would act as a base from which customers could access community facilities such as health services, luncheon clubs, shopping trips etc. Such services would predominantly be offered to people who were more independent, with those with complex needs continuing to attend 'traditional' day services.

Feedback from the Questionnaire

What do customers, carers and families value about current day services?

The first section of the questionnaire explored how people felt about their current day services. The standard and easy read questionnaires shared the same options apart from one ('the fact my carer/family can have a break from looking after me' – as such the percentage for this is worked out from the standard questionnaire responses only).

The most popular option selected was 'Being with friends' (82%). This perhaps reflects the importance of customers having an established group that they were part of. Another option relating to this which was also popular was 'Going to a place I am familiar' with (74%) respondents selecting this.

A representative quote is:

"The person for whom I care has chosen to travel from Macclesfield to the Stanley Centre at Knutsford. He wished to be with his friends in surroundings to which he is familiar."

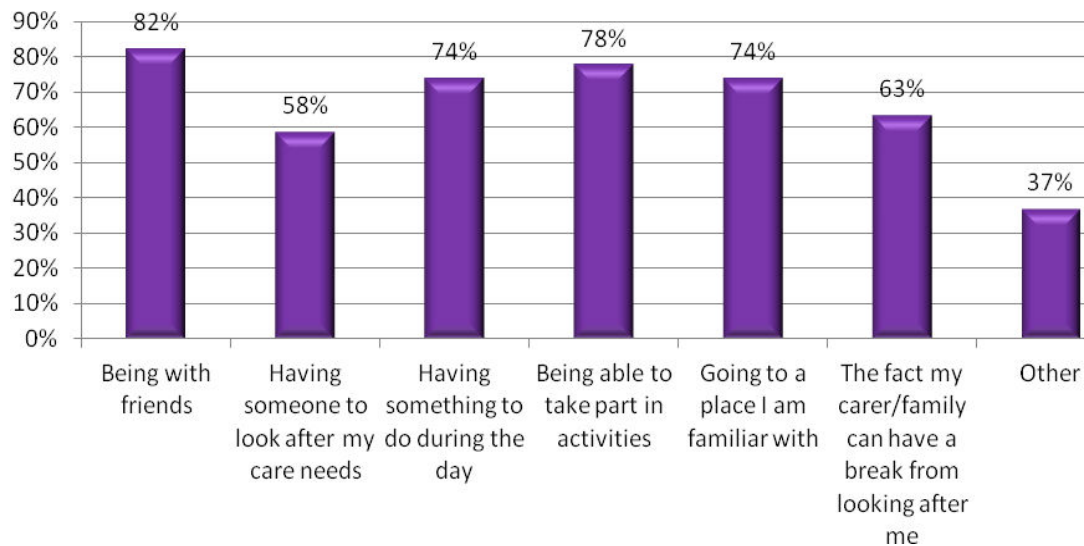
The second and joint third most popular options were 'Taking Part in Activities' (78%) and 'Having something to do during the day' (74%). It should be remembered that these options relate to current service provision and not the lifestyle vision. A statement relating to this was:

"The Centre (Stanley Centre) gives P's day a structure. He feels safe there and confident in taking part in activities, which do not duplicate activities he does in his spare time."

"My daughter goes to Carter House twice a week and enjoys having the independence of going there on the bus and meeting her friends there. She likes the fact that it is regular and familiar."

'Having someone to care for me' and 'the fact my carer/family can have a break from looking after me' were the least popular options although were still selected by a sizeable majority of people.

Chart 2: What do you value about current day services?



What do customers, carers and families dislike about current day services?

The easy read and the standard version of the questionnaires had a different range of choices here so results need to be commented on separately.

For the standard questionnaire the overwhelming majority of people (88%) stated that they did not dislike anything about day services. Comments that reflect this include:

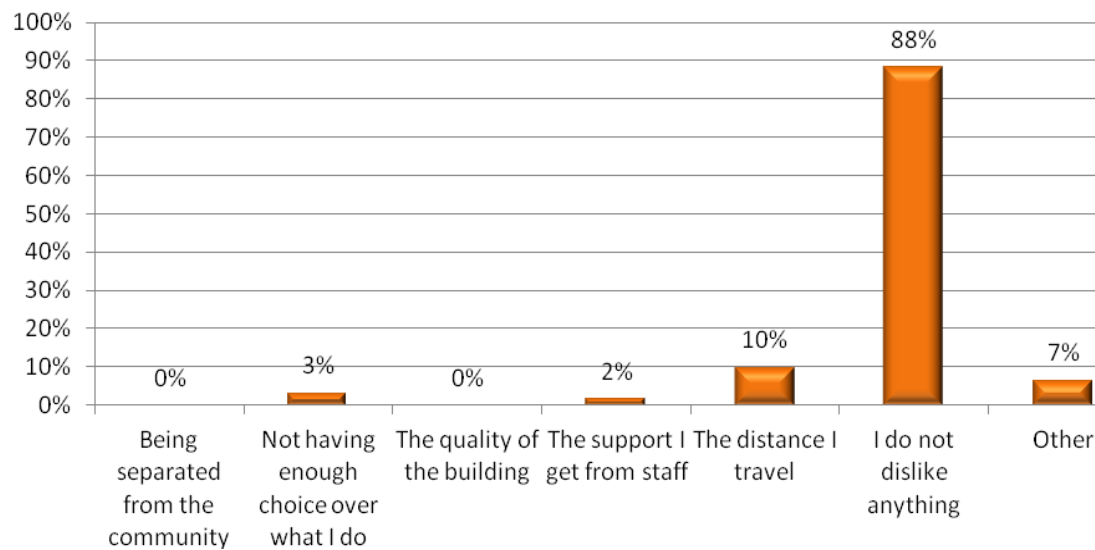
"The carers and staff are so kind and helpful."

"Peatfields is a very good day centre."

However, six people did state that they did not like the distance they had to travel. For instance:

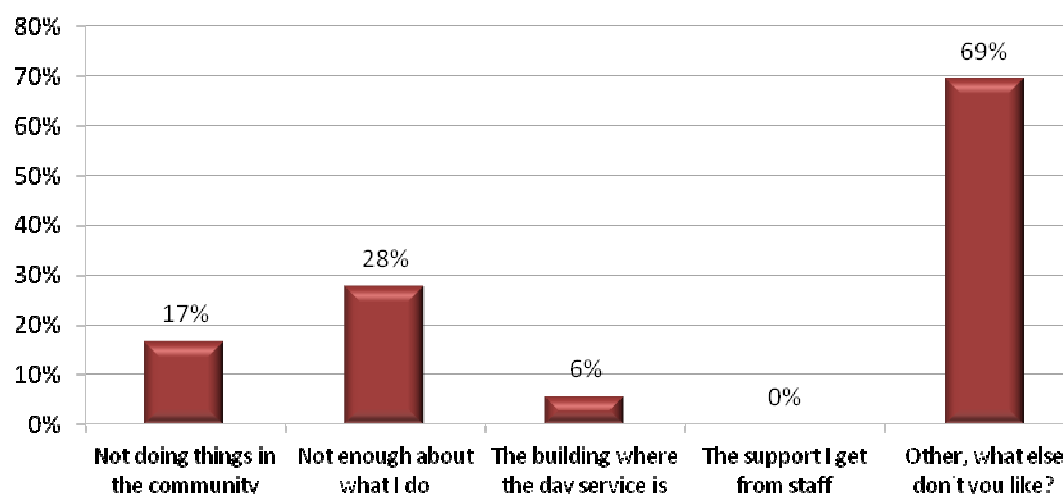
"Transport to and from the day centre is expensive at £4.00 per mile, so I have to walk to and from the centre."

Chart 3: What do you dislike about your day service? (standard questionnaire)



The response popularity was quite different for the Learning Disability version of the questionnaire. Here 28% of people stated that they did not have enough choice over what they did, 17% also stated that they disliked not being able to do things in the community. However, the majority of comments (69%) were from people ticking the 'Other' option. There was not a particular pattern in these remarks though aside from praise once again for day service staff.

Chart 4: What do you dislike about your day service? (easy read questionnaire)

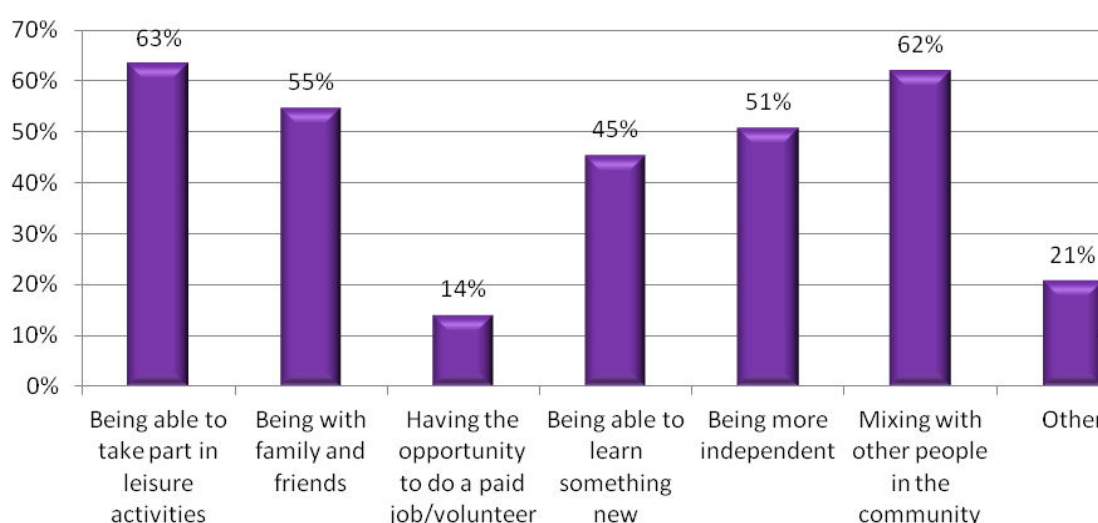


What do customers like doing during the day?

This question in the survey asked customers what they would like to do during the day in general terms. Marginally, the most people (63%) selected 'being able to take part in leisure activities' which is in some small way endorsement for the lifestyle approach. Likewise, 62% of responses were from people who stated that they liked mixing with other people in the community.

The responses 'being with family and friends' (55%) and 'choosing things you want to do/being more independent' were also (51%) popular choices.

Chart 5: What do customers like to do during the day



Few additional comments were given by respondents to this question. The ones that were received again reiterated the need for familiarity and continuity of day centre. One statement was:

"My disabilities mean most of the above are no longer practical. I enjoy the activities available at Redesmere, but not sure if these are classed as 'leisure'. I am unable to undertake physical activities. I enjoy being with my family but my children all live out of the area."

Would customers like to take part in 'lifestyle activities' during the day?

A majority of respondents to this question (59%) stated that they would like to take part in lifestyle activities, with 19% stating they were unsure and 22% stating they didn't wish to. It should be underlined here that the question emphasised that 'these would take place at other buildings different from our day centres such as leisure centres or libraries'.

This majority was noticeably higher in the easy read questionnaires with 70% of respondents here stating that they would like to take part in lifestyle activities (16% said they didn't wish to, 15% didn't know). In the standard questionnaire 44% stated that they would like to with 31% stating no (26% of people stated they were unsure).

The open comments received do suggest a little caution is applied to these results because people do raise a number of anxieties. For instance, questions are raised about the suitability of some activities.

"Some of the lifestyle activities listed may be inappropriate because of the nature of disability and personal unfamiliarity or dislike of an activity."

"Not physically or mentally able to participate in any lifestyle activities"

"It would be very difficult for C to take part in some things."

Transport was also seen as a problem in participating in a lifestyle group. For instance:

"My strong preference would be to participate in 'arts' and 'social' activities, but only if these are provided at Redesmere. I should be unwilling to travel away from Redesmere to access these."

"Needs to be local to where I live"

"...for me to attend activities provided at locations outside my home (whether held in other public buildings or at a day centre) affordable transport would be needed to enable me to participate. The nearest bus stop is beyond my walking range at present."

Many people also felt that the lifestyle approach should be available in a traditional day service setting. There were also a few comments relating once again to the difficulty of people going to an alternative location. For instance,

"Given the level of anxiety generated by unfamiliar places/situations, I doubt the benefits of any activities outside the community support centre."

What particular activities would customers like to do during the day?

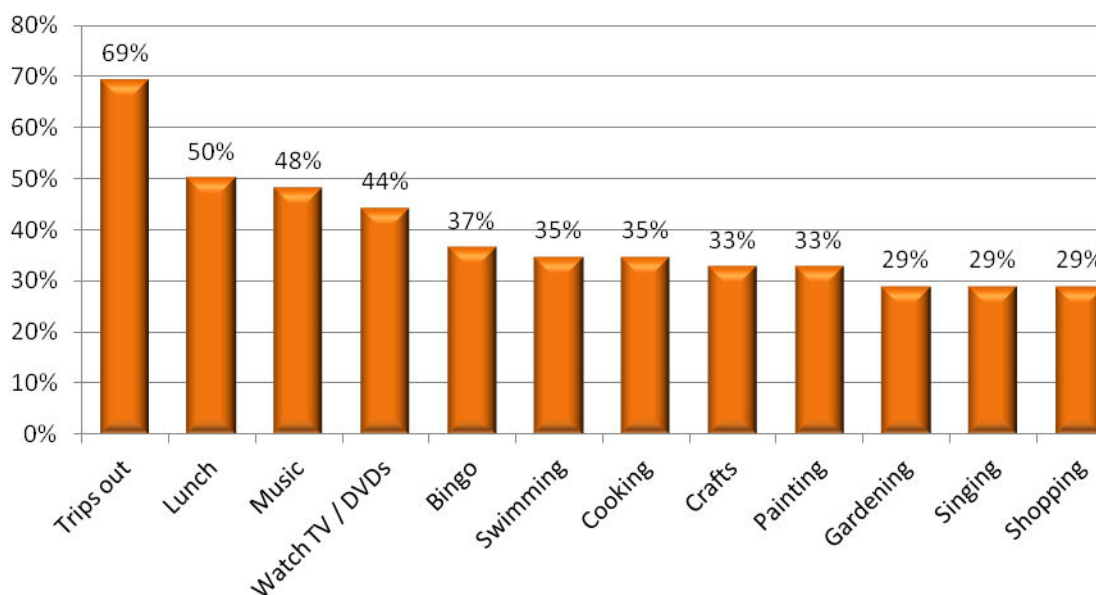
A wide range of activities were given as options in this question under the broad headings 'active', 'arts', 'social' and 'helping with everyday life'. The

range of options was slightly smaller for the easy read questionnaire to make it more usable for the individuals completing it.

In the standard version of the questionnaire the most popular option was 'trips out' with 69% of respondents selecting this. This was also the most popular (82%) for easy read respondents. 'Lunch' and 'Music' were also very commonly chosen by both sets of respondents (79% easy read, 50% standard; 65% easy read, 48% standard).

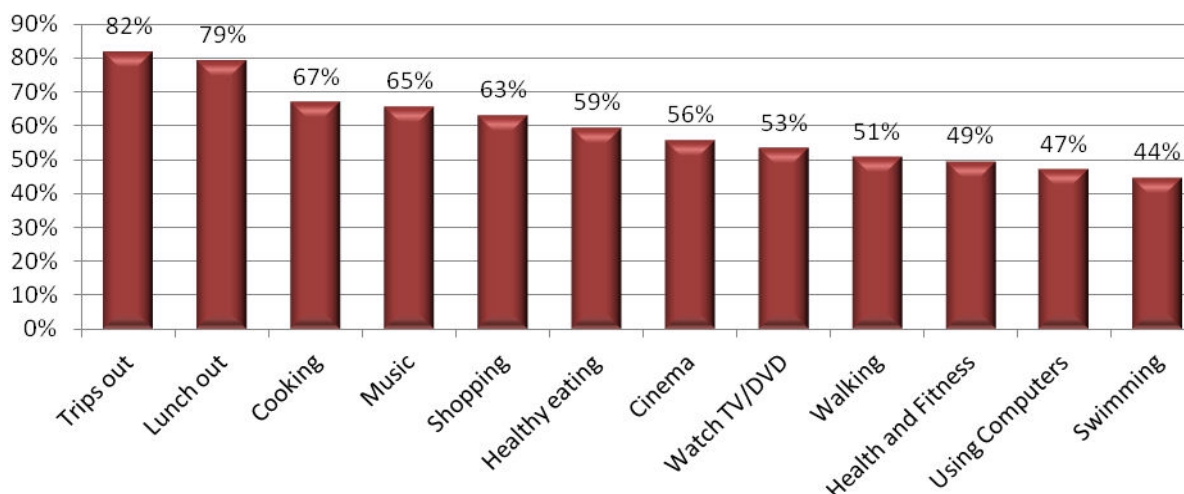
Cooking received much more prominence with easy read respondents (67%), whereas swimming was more important for respondents to the standard questionnaire (35%).

Chart 6: Top 12 activities selected (standard questionnaire)



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Chart 7: Top 12 activities selected (easy read questionnaire)



What is most striking from this data is that it is the socially related activities and ones that help people with everyday life that are most popular. If further work is conducted by the Council into developing activities during the day this is invaluable information in understanding what to provide.

There were a small amount of comments given on additional ideas for activities. These included: Horse Riding, Pottery, Wildlife and Nature, Going on Short Trips (1-3 days) to the Seaside (with support of competent, familiar carers). A few remarks were also made once again about the level of the customer's disability making many of the activities listed unsuitable.

Responses at Meetings, By Letter etc.

The Consultation Meetings tended to be dominated more by people's views on the proposals for day centres and Queens Drive rather than views on the lifestyle vision. However, where it was raised people did express some anxiety with the approach.

For instance, concerns were raised over whether it would be suitable for people with complex needs:

"B won't go to the leisure centre, some people are cruel to him, it is not an option."

"The lifestyle service sounds great for some people but it is not necessarily appropriate for older people. I applaud giving people greater choice and for some people this would be great. For my wife, who is losing skills, it is wholly inappropriate."

"I would suggest that it would not be simply a case of installing a disabled toilet to replicate the extensive facilities currently in use at Stanley House."

Note: it should be stated that the proposal was for people with complex needs to continue to receive support in a traditional day service setting.

It was also felt that because the pilots were held at leisure centres that activities might be too orientated towards physical activity and thus activities should also be offered in the day centres.

"How many people would want to go swimming five days per week. The Stanley Centre doesn't just offer sport."

“What are they going to do at a leisure centre all day except sport. You are going to send them backwards instead of forwards. They would learn nothing at a leisure centre.”

There were also questions about how some of the logistics would work. For instance, transport to and from the centre, the problems of different people wanting to access different activities/services in the community, and related staffing related problems.

“Bus services appear reasonable, but infrequent, and often several different buses are required to reach relatively nearby locations.”

Knutsford Town Council

Issues were also raised about how long the Council would stay committed to this model of service delivery.

One further point raised at the Knutsford drop-in meeting was that it was felt that the lifestyle approach was potentially problematic because it split an established group of customers up. This would lead to those with less complex needs going elsewhere and mean that those with more complex needs would only be able to interact with each other. This could potentially damage their wellbeing and development.

Organisations tended to give cautious support to the lifestyle approach. Although the opinion was given (e.g. Age UK Cheshire East) that traditional day centres should still be maintained as this approach was not suitable for all.

“We applaud the Life Style concept for those users for whom it is appropriate and who are able to benefit.” Cheshire East LINK

“The Lifestyle Activities detailed in the consultation covering physical activities, social and community activities, and activities which help a person in their day to day life, are a very similar approach to the activities provided by Age UK Cheshire East.” Age UK Cheshire East

“We agree that use of ordinary community buildings is a good thing so as to integrate people whilst offering a wider range of activities...” Crewe and Nantwich Open Minds

Note: please see the appendix for the context these comments were given in

One representative of an independent sector provider stressed that there was a general lack of awareness amongst customers and carers of alternative provision they could take up.

A few carers did want to know if the pilots were deemed a success whether they would be implemented elsewhere. For instance,

“If the pilots of the lifestyle services are successful at Wilmslow and Macclesfield will it be rolled out to leisure centres in other areas of Cheshire East Council?”

The Lifestyle Pilots

Focus groups were conducted with customers taking part in lifestyle pilots at Wilmslow and Macclesfield Leisure Centre. Each of these pilots make use of rooms in the leisure centre to serve as a base for customers. From here they could take part in different activities both in the leisure centre and in the wider community. In order to travel to different buildings, individuals might be assisted by a carer or use public transport accompanied by a member of staff as necessary.

Customers in both locations felt that the lifestyle group was a genuine improvement over what they did before. In particular, they valued the greater choice over what they did during the day including the ability to use leisure centre facilities such as the gym or swimming pool. People also stated that they had formed friendships since they had started attending and thought the staff were excellent.

“I used to go to the Methodist Church Community Day Service but I like the leisure centre better because there is more to do and I can play badminton and football.”

“I like coming here because there are more things to do, I keep busy and it keeps me fit.”

“I have made new friends coming to the leisure centre.”

“It’s a bigger building and lots of activities going on, I like keep fit and walking.”

The location of the leisure centre in Wilmslow was seen as a real plus. However, there were issues raised about Macclesfield. One customer mentioned that travelling to Macclesfield town centre by public transport was easy but actually getting to the leisure centre was not.

There were also concerns raised by users of the Macclesfield Lifestyle Group about the small size of the room they used and access to it. For instance, the standard route to get to the room is circuitous and disabled access is only possible through the sports hall at the moment. Canteen facilities are offered upstairs as part of normal leisure centre facilities, however, this is not accessible to those with wheelchairs.

These issues were also picked up by respondents during the consultation.

“Macclesfield Leisure Centre is a dump and isolated. It is not nice enough for people with LD and how will you encourage people to get out into the community without good places for them to go to....You need to build relationships in the local community - Macc College and Wilmslow Guild are two really good resources and you should be working with them.”

“We raised the matter of disabled access and were told that there were no wheelchair users at the moment.” Cheshire East LINK

It should be noted that the Council intends to make further modifications to these facilities if the pilots are approved.

Chapter 3: Analysis – Day Centre Proposals

In order to realise the lifestyle vision there was a need to look at re-shaping the Council's resources. The Council stated that this would also allow efficiencies to be realised, tackling for instance, the problem of under capacity at some centres and allowing the overall social care budget to be met.

These proposals were to:

- *Invest in Redesmere and Mayfield to provide for customers with learning disabilities and physical disabilities as well as a service for older people and those with Dementia*
- *Invest in Hollins View to provide general Respite and Day services for those with Dementia and intermediate care services.*
- *Invest in Mountview as a specialist Respite/Short Break facility for people with a learning disability. This will also provide Day and Respite support for people with Dementia.*
- *Consider what services need to be provided locally in Knutsford.*
- *Transfer customers from Peatfields, Dean Row, Bexton Court, Stanley Centre and Queens Drive (currently a Respite centre).*

One further idea was also considered at an additional meeting which was:

- To transfer customers from the Brocklehurst Unit, Mayfield to a building within the Hollins View complex.

Although these proposals had been put forward for consultation, the Council was in no way decided about whether they would be implemented. It was stressed that the Council would listen to alternative options on a way forward. This was particularly emphasised for the Knutsford area.

The Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire related to the lifestyle ideas and the current operation of day services. These have already been analysed in the lifestyle chapter. The next set of analysis relates to the remaining questions which

centre around the review of provision at day centres and the Queens Drive respite centre (although specific comments about particular centres are included in the area section).

Did customers/carers agree with the reasoning behind the proposals?

The key question in the survey relating to the proposals was:

- How strongly do you agree or disagree with the principle that the Council should reduce the number of day and respite centres that it runs and should invest in the remaining buildings?

This was phrased a little differently in the easy read version of the questionnaire to make it more understandable for individuals.

- The number of people going to the day centres and short break services is getting less. The Council do not have enough money to continue to pay for services that are not being used. Do you think it is a good idea for the Council to have less Day Centres and Short Breaks services? This is so they can spend money on making the buildings that are left better? Or do you think that would not be a good idea?

Overall, a significant majority of respondents disagreed with the proposals (33% strongly disagreed, 20% disagreed, 15% agreed, 14% strongly agreed, 17% neither agreed nor disagreed). If we put these figures together we can see that 30% of people agreed with the proposals with 53% disagreeing. This is a sizeable majority against the principle underlying the proposals.

How would the proposed changes affect customers/carers personally (if at all)? [the proposed changes were detailed below the question]

One of the reasons for including this question was to understand the impact of proposals on customers/carers whether positive or negative. In particular, it was important to know if proposals would have a disproportionate impact on particular groups of individuals e.g. people with learning disabilities.

The issue of transport was commonly referenced in responses. This concerned the increased distance customers would have to travel if they transferred centres and the cost of transport for them. Carers also raised issues such as that it might lead to them needing to provide greater transport assistance which could lead to reduced respite time for them. The Council's recent

decision to phase out fleet transport was cited as an issue compounding the problem.

“Transfer from the Stanley Centre to a place other than in Knutsford would cause problems , especially as regards transport. We have experienced this in the past when our daughter was transferred from Risley Street to the Centre. The whole day was wasted waiting for transport and being transported.”

“The transfer of respite services from Queens Drive to Mountview will involve considerable increase in transport cost for customers in the Nantwich, Audlem and Crewe area who will need to travel instead to Congleton.”

“If the service of respite moves from Queens Drive to Mountview, it would be impossible for S as I myself care for S and I would not be able to take S as I am a none driver. The transport cost would be too much. I do not think it is right that all this extra pressure should be put on families with someone learning disabilities.”

“How it would affect me as a carer is that the amount I currently contribute towards transport would go from £25 per week to £50 per day which is unfeasible.”

Another important concern for respondents was the general disruption it would cause to the wellbeing of customers. It was felt that any transfer could be challenging for them especially those with more complex needs:

“These changes would turn me upside down and make me sad because I know what to expect from my day centre, and everyone knows me and what I need and I like Dean Row”

“It will be very hard for T as he soon gets upset, he does not like change but needs short stays as we are 80 and need a break”

It was also felt by some that the lifestyle centre option might cause further related problems:

“If C is not provided with stability & the structure of a day centre. She will become more disturbed and challenging.”

A couple of respondents felt that day services should be evenly spaced across Cheshire East in line with population centres and to minimise travelling.

“It is assumed that the reorganised centres would be well-distributed over the area of Cheshire East. This is to optimise coverage and minimise travelling distances from the locations where there are clusters of potential users and avoid long and expensive taxi journeys.”

General comments that customers/carers wanted to add

Little feedback was received for this question which was intended to ensure there was an opportunity to capture any additional concerns people had. One respondent did question whether the Council was truly committed to the proposed re-investment in buildings:

“I am not sure that I believe the council when they say they will improve and invest in the remaining buildings. I feel it is just an excuse to close some of the current facilities to save money and the remaining one's will probably just carry on as they currently do with no further investment. “

Analysis: by Area

A great deal of feedback was received from customers and the Cheshire East public relating to specific areas and centres. To recap feedback sources were; comments in questionnaires received, comments and questions at day centre meetings, comments and questions from the public meetings, letters, face to face meetings, drop in meetings, telephone calls, emails etc. In order to make this section more concise and because similar issues were often raised this information has been grouped together under a single heading for each centre.

Feedback has also been ordered by area because some of the proposals have knock-on effects for other centres (i.e. a centre may be affected by customers being moved there). A summary of the main themes is also provided later on in this document.

Knutsford Area

The original proposal was to ‘consider what service needs to be provided locally in Knutsford’. One of these options might include closing Bexton Court

(already temporarily closed as a result of the closure of Tatton Ward by Health) and the Stanley Centre and transferring those users to other services.

We received perhaps the most feedback of all during the consultation, on the proposal relating to the Stanley Centre. Much of this was powerfully expressed. This included emotive meetings at the Stanley Centre and at Knutsford Civic Centre. Feedback also included two petitions (with 6290 signatures and 275 signatures respectively) which were made available in buildings in Cheshire East and other locations. See Appendix 1 for further details (including the covering statement by Knutsford Area for Knutsford Action, organisers of the larger petition). An extract from the main petition text is:

“We the undersigned petition Cheshire East Council and East Cheshire Hospital Trust:
Save our social and health care –keep our services local
Keep our Stanley Centre for disabled adults
Return our dementia care services
Return our intermediate hospital ward”

Other documents (e.g. reports from other agencies) were also submitted with the petitions (see Appendix 1).

i) Disruption to Customers

Many individuals expressed grave concerns about the ability of customers with learning disabilities to cope with the proposals being put forward. A large number felt that the upheaval and change would cause a lot of distress amongst the customers.

“P has been at the Stanley Centre for 20 years now, and it is quite likely he will refuse to go anywhere else.”

“The Stanley Centre is like a second home, customers would have a terrible time adjusting if it was taken away.”

Many of them had attended the centre for many years and viewed it like a second home where they met regularly with their friends.

Comments were made about the importance of the relationships that had been established at the centre, not just between customers but also between customers and staff. One customer expressed her feelings about the proposals, and became quite emotional whilst doing so:

“This is the first day centre I have been to, don’t take it away from us, you can’t take it away from us. This is a big part of my life. All of our staff are very nice people. We will not be moved, you cannot make us.”

A further comment was:

“We all stick together because we don’t see our parents that much.”

Some individuals questioned the ability of some customers with complex needs to make choices and to understand what the proposals meant to them.

ii) Building facilities and condition

Many parents and carers did not accept that the Stanley Centre was not fit for purpose. Instead they felt the Stanley Centre section of the building was modern and purpose-built and would not take a great deal of investment to improve the facilities. They also questioned the financial feasibility of closing an existing centre and looking for alternative accommodation. It was felt that for very little cash outlay, the Stanley Centre could be brought up to date thus eliminating the need to look for an alternative.

“The Stanley Centre is NOT a decrepit building. There is no reason that this facility cannot be brought to a reasonable standard without great expense, for less than would be needed to adapt any other premises in the Knutsford area.”

Several comments were made regarding the activities provided at the Stanley Centre. They felt it already provided for vocational and recreational needs.

“Since attending the Stanley Centre my son has benefitted from their very well structured activities”

“The Stanley Centre meets all of my needs and is local to my home in Knutsford. I have attended this centre for 18 months and am familiar with the staff and surroundings.”

The staff are described as excellent, caring and experienced and familiar with the majority of customers.

“My son is unable to verbalise what he enjoys doing. He is very rigid in what he will join in with. Staff at the Stanley Centre encourage him to

join in and have made some progress in widening his narrow range of interests.”

“Andy (the Manager) is brilliant and knows exactly how to manage M, he wouldn’t get that elsewhere.”

iii) Transport

Transport provision was seen as a particular problem if customers were required to travel to another centre. This was felt to be compounded by the removal of fleet transport as well as the limited public transport available into and out of Knutsford. Costs and the time that they would potentially spend travelling were also of particular concern. Many felt that they could not afford to pay for increased travel costs if the person they cared for had to travel to a centre located further away. Two representative comments were:

“How can these be seen as improvements for adults with learning disabilities if their local services are cut and they are to be taxied to other areas of Cheshire?”

“We can’t afford a taxi if (he) has to travel further”

A further transport related point made was that the location of the centre was seen as ideal for many of the customers who attended. It was stated that many of the Stanley Centre’s customers were able to walk there, but this would not be the case if the centre closed. One parent in particular felt that public transport was not an option.

“Only a minority of the customers at the Stanley Centre are independent enough to be able to cope with public transport.”

MENCAP stated:

“If the Stanley Centre were to close the next nearest centre would be Wilmslow. The council would have a duty to provide transportation to and from this centre which could prove very costly and would add a substantial amount of travel time for attendees.”

A carer at the day centre meeting expressed concern about the additional distances to other centres should there be an emergency.

“In the event of an emergency how would we get to them if they are too far away?”

One issue that was particularly emotive was the fact that the centre minibus had been removed by Cheshire East Council. It was felt that the range of activities had been restricted as a consequence. A representative of the Knutsford Lions questioned why the offer of a minibus from them had been declined. It was felt that this had in itself limited the number of activities the day service was now able to offer.

iv) Building usage

Several attendees at the Stanley Centre meeting and at the drop-in meeting questioned the reliability of the occupancy figures supplied in the Consultation Information Pack. Many felt that this misrepresented the actual occupancy rate as they deemed the capacity being based on Stanley House and the Stanley Centre (when it was felt Stanley House was not utilised).

A few individuals felt the drop in occupancy rates at the centre were directly related to the introduction of Personal Budgets and Direct Payments. Concerns were raised as to whether Cheshire East staff promoted Personal Budgets/Direct Payments on an equal par with day services. Questions were also asked as to why in-house services could not be purchased with a Personal Budget. One individual suggested that Care4CE should become an independent arm of Cheshire East Council thus enabling customers to purchase in-house services with their personal budget.

“The low occupancy is because of personal budgets, because people cannot pay for Cheshire East Council services with one, so this blocks people coming here.”

“Give people a choice of what options are in place, ensure staff are promoting all alternatives”

It was suggested that a reduction in Cheshire East Council staff could be responsible for the decline in referrals to the Stanley Centre.

“The low levels of social workers at Cheshire East Council must be responsible for the low occupancy at day centres and the subsequent under utilisation.”

A few comments were also made concerning the lack of transport affecting the attendance at the centre.

One attendee suggested that as Knutsford was so closely situated to the border with Cheshire West and Chester Council that Cheshire East Council should work more closely with them to ensure local services were better attended.

Portioning off Stanley House from the Stanley Centre and leasing the office space or selling the building was suggested by several individuals particularly at the drop-in meeting. Many felt this was a good option.

v) Carers

Many carers expressed their concerns in relation to the proposals at the meeting at the Stanley Centre. They felt that the proposals were adding more pressure to carers already at breaking point, were causing distress to the person they cared for and were unsuitable for many particularly in terms of the impacts of relocation.

“My brother goes to the Stanley Centre, he is 54 now and has been going for many years, since he was in his 20’s. You are talking about taking this away from him, his second home. That is his life, you can’t move him or put him in a leisure centre”

“Carers will be under greater pressure if facilities are not available in Knutsford and they have to travel”

“Listen to your very valuable carers. They are saving you money.”

A further point raised was a belief of carers that the Stanley Centre offered in some way a superior service to alternative centres operated by Cheshire East.

“The proposals are insulting, my son cannot go out. I have always wanted the best for my son and this is being at the Stanley Centre. Can’t you make things better here? I spent a long time looking for an appropriate place, and that is the Stanley Centre.”

vi) General

In relation to the proposals, a respondent acknowledged that merging centres where they were close to each other was acceptable, but felt this should not

be the case in Knutsford because there was a lack of suitable alternative provision. The lack of alternative places to take part in day activities was commented on by MENCAP in their response.

Comments were raised in the drop-in meeting around the rumours circulating concerning the Stanley Centre/Stanley House land being earmarked for a super surgery. Some parents felt the media speculation on this had been unhelpful, and that the Council should have given a clear statement of its position as it would have allayed many fears.

The Knutsford Town Council Health and Social Care Public Consultation (Nov 2011) recommended that the Stanley Centre was retained with some alterations and its usage increased out of hours. It also recommended that:

“Stanley House should ideally be retained as a facility for the community, with options considered for relocating other services into this building.”

The facilities on offer at the centre were also commended.

Knutsford Local Engagement Group

Carers and customers were asked both by letter and at the Stanley Centre day centre meeting to indicate if they would like to take part in an engagement group looking at options for the Stanley Centre. In total one customer and five carers attended this meeting which was held in late November.

Each member of the group was asked to state what they felt about the Stanley Centre and the consultation itself. The group then worked through a list of alternative options that had been raised by members of the public, organisations and Cheshire East Council, with comments being sought for each one. Options included; use of Plumley Chapel, East Terrace and Knutsford Civic Hall etc.

The overwhelming opinion of the group was that it was unnecessary to consider alternative options for Stanley Centre users because none of them would deliver a better quality of service. By way of example, there would have been few toilet facilities at the Civic Hall and it was felt that it would have been

inappropriate for people residing at East Terrace to also receive day services there.

Bexton Court

Although comments were expressed about Bexton Court in emails/letters and at the public and formal meeting in Knutsford, these were relatively meagre in comparison to those raised relating to the Stanley Centre.

One argument that was raised on several occasions was that Cheshire East Council had always intended to close Bexton Court permanently despite the fact the initial closure in November 2010 was deemed temporary.

“We were told that Bexton Court and Tatton Ward would be closed temporarily – untrue, stop telling untruths.”

In addition to this it was stressed that it was important that dementia provision was still available in Knutsford.

“You said you would provide something else in Knutsford, but there isn’t anything else in Knutsford. Bexton Court has been closed.”

“People relied on Bexton Court – you said Cypress Court was under occupied when it wasn’t.”

A comment given by another respondent was that it didn’t matter who provided the services as long as they were available:

“Dementia care respite beds are needed in Knutsford, but could be provided by the private sector.”

An issue which was raised at the Stanley Centre meeting and Knutsford public meeting was whether the Local Authority had already developed plans for a new ‘super surgery’ on the Bexton Road Community Hospital site (consisting of Stanley House, Stanley Centre, Knutsford Community Hospital, Tatton Ward and Bexton Court).

“What plans does Cheshire East have to sell off the Bexton Court site?”

As a result of the disruption at the Stanley Centre Day Service Meeting (for carers/services users who used or formerly used Bexton Court or the Stanley

Centre), letters were sent out to carers of people who used the service at Bexton Court as well as former customers (with capacity). This letter invited people to book a slot at a drop-in meeting to discuss issues to do with Bexton Court or to contact the Consultation Team by telephone or email if this date was unsuitable. However, the Consultation Team did not receive any resulting contact requesting a meeting. [Note: a similar meeting was held for the Stanley Centre which was well attended]

Knutsford Town Council stated in their response document that they themselves did not receive representations on the subject of Bexton Court. However, they still felt it was an important facility in the local area particularly given its ageing population:

“..This working group would therefore urge CEC to provide this type of facility within Knutsford, and should Tatton Ward re-open suggest that Bexton Court is also opened, at least until the future of the Bexton Road site is known, and an alternative venue secured.”

Wilmslow Area

The proposal put forward for Wilmslow entailed transferring customers to the Redesmere building from Dean Row.

Dean Row

i) Disruption to Customers

In general, people's comments in the questionnaire and at the Dean Row meeting reflected that they were happy with the service they received there and were concerned that the main driver behind the proposals was to save money rather than to improve services. Strong feelings were expressed relating to this in the day centre meeting. The familiarity of the centre, the staff, facilities (such as the light and sound room) and the accessibility of the building for wheelchair users were particularly appreciated.

“What are the plans for this building? My daughter has specific needs which she at present gets at Dean Row. My Daughter has 24/7 care. There aren’t any problems, so why make changes?”

“These changes would turn me upside down and make me sad because I know what to expect from my day centre, and everyone knows me and what I need and I like Dean Row.”

There was a concern that if people from Dean Row and the Stanley Centre moved to Redesmere then it could be overcrowded.

“What was the criteria used to close Dean Row and why is Redesmere better than Dean Row?”

However, one respondent said they wouldn’t be against a change of buildings as long as the same facilities were available at the alternative centre.

“I really do not mind changing buildings if the same facilities are available but a normal leisure centre is irrelevant”

ii) Building usage

There was scepticism about the occupancy rate of Dean Row, for example one person felt that there may be an underlying reason why this was low.

“I was refused an extra day for my daughter as other people were waiting for places. I have since found out this is not true as numbers are down.”

iii) Transport

There was also concern expressed about the extra travelling that would be required to get to the alternative day centre and the logistical problems it would cause.

“No buses coming in”

“It will make a difference to get people who live further away”

However, the amount of comments was relatively limited.

Redesmere Centre

i) Disruption to Customers

Although customers of Redesmere were not being asked to switch to another day centre, there were anxieties expressed that they might have their days cut as a result of people transferring to this centre (as a result of the proposed closure of Dean Row). One person was concerned about the reference in the proposals to less demand for day care and respite. They felt strongly that there is still high demand at Redesmere and that the issue was money to provide it. There was also concern about personalisation affecting the nature and quality of services.

“A lady had to cut her days and was then transferred to Hawthorns”

“People’s care keeps changing now that they no longer get council staff and have to use agency staff”

But in general respondents said that they wouldn’t be impacted by the proposals in relation to Redesmere. An example comment was:

“I assume that as long as I am allowed to continue to attend Redesmere and as long as the services at Redesmere are not reduced, removed or changed, then I should not be affected.”

ii) Building usage

Many people commented at the Redesmere Meeting that the low occupancy figures were not due to lack of demand for the day centres, but rather due to people not being able to afford services. The promotion of personalisation (and the opting out of Council run services) by Cheshire East was also seen as a factor.

“The reason why people are not coming to day centres is because they can’t afford to and not because people are using other services.”

"I noted that the occupancy of the Redesmere Day Service is given in the Pack as 45%. I visit the Redesmere Centre every week and my observation was that the occupancy is much higher than this."

iii) Building facilities and condition

One person questioned why the proposals were to upgrade Redesmere but close the Stanley Centre when Redesmere is the older building.

iv) Transport

It was also felt that the overall proposals gave little thought to the impact on carers as respite could be shortened as a result of the carer having to transport the cared for a longer distance.

"Quality of care will be affected if carers have to travel much further"

Congleton and Middlewich Area

Note: The proposed changes would not directly affect Carter House and Salinae but would have an impact on Mountview with an extra service being provided from there for adults with learning disabilities.

Mountview

i) Disruption to Customers and Carers

In general, users of Mountview stated that they were very happy with the services they receive there. It was felt it gave them social interaction which many required due to being housebound. In addition to this it gave them something to look forward to and a focus for the day.

The respite support for families was cited as helping to avoid the need for nursing home care. Staff were highly valued and the feeling was that they should also be considered when planning change. It was felt their expertise would be invaluable in ensuring a smooth transition of customers who may have to move.

"The staff are our gold dust on whom we all critically rely. Please proceed slowly and steadily to preserve the excellence we have and treasure."

"We get a break knowing that we can relax without worry and our relative comes home after respite rejuvenated. It's a joy to see. I am very pleased with the care received at Mountview."

"I'm asthmatic and I get very tired but I have a lovely relaxing break when my husband is in Mountview."

One additional point was that there were felt to be potential issues around how the two customer groups (older people and adults with learning disabilities) would mix. For instance, would there be sufficient beds and availability to cover the respite people required?

"My son keeps getting moved for respite which unsettles him for quite a while after. The present service is wonderful and everyone is happy with it but suddenly it all changes."

"Don't mind if the new service is better but find Queens Drive to be very good."

"Smaller places are better."

ii) Building facilities and condition

Respondents were concerned that the physical constraints of the building would not be able to support additional customers. There were also concerns that the quality and availability of services there would suffer.

"Very impressed with the service and the staff are excellent. Concerned that when adults with learning disabilities start to attend it will change. Would hope the changes will be slow so that it does not unsettle people who already use the service."

It was felt that staffing levels should be increased because of this. The question was also posed as to whether the building would be extended in the future to accommodate higher numbers. One carer wanted reassurance that customer needs would continue to be met despite pressure on services.

iii) Building Usage

An individual raised the explanation that the reason numbers might have been decreasing at centres such as Mountview was because transport was expensive and meal charges had increased.

iv) General

One respondent expressed views strongly that there was a lack of attention to mental health related issues in the consultation. It was also felt that there was a general lack of attention paid to this group of customers by the Council. It was felt that the comment in the information that 'people with mental health disabilities are not affected by this consultation' was inaccurate and misleading.

There were a couple of miscellaneous comments. One respondent wished the Council to train staff to administer insulin injections to customers. Another respondent wished to know what the Council was doing for people with more complex needs who were 75+ and required nursing care.

Carter House and Salinae

i) Disruption to Customers and Carers

As both these centres were not mentioned in terms of specific proposals, people felt that the changes would have little or no affect on them.

However, customers that attended these services did state that they enjoyed their time there and valued the contact with other people. The centres were felt to provide a change for a lot of people from the home environment which was important to the wellbeing of users and carers. :

"My daughter likes being with her friends, if she didn't go to Carter House she would just stay upstairs in her pyjamas, she loves taking part in activities."

ii) Lifestyle Services

Respondents (with reference to Salinae) said that they enjoyed socialising and the activities that they do at this day centre but would not cope with the independence of going to lifestyle groups. However, more variety would be welcomed (e.g. computer or internet classes). Some individuals at Carter House commented that going to the Leisure Centre in Congleton enabled them to exercise which helped with their general wellbeing.

iii) Transport

One carer whose daughter uses Carter House expressed the view that any changes in transport would lead to less respite time for carers. It was also felt that people were now being asked to continue to come to the centre but without the Council assisting with travel as a result of the transport review.

iv) General

Some felt that the consultation itself generated a lot of unnecessary worry for customers not attending centres where modifications were proposed.

“When the word ‘change’ comes up immediately you have a hostile audience. Dementia sufferers need routine, structure and familiarity, these are really important. Changes bring too much anxiety.”

People at Salinae were also very concerned that if more people took personal budgets for their care needs and were unable to spend this on Council services the present service at Salinae would not continue.

One other point that was raised was the impact of previous staff cuts. It was felt that this had led to a worse service because many of the most experienced staff had left.

Crewe and Nantwich Area

There were very few comments received by questionnaire on day services in Crewe and Nantwich. This was, perhaps, unsurprisingly as they were unaffected directly by the proposals although there was the opportunity to comment on the lifestyle vision.

One organisation based in this area ‘Audlem and District Community Action’ stressed the need to retain specialist centres in the area for those with specialist needs. They also stressed the importance of day centres for providing social interaction.

Cheyne Hall

Respondents generally valued the service they received at Cheyne, seeing it as providing somewhere to visit that was both familiar and inclusive. They also liked the advantages of mixing with people who had similar disabilities as well as the social activities that took place. A few respondents were interested in the lifestyle activities but remained unsure about attending a leisure centre .

Macon House

At the day centre meeting there were some more general questions and comments relating to the lifestyle service and personal budgets. For instance,

“If the pilots of the lifestyle services are successful at Wilmslow and Macclesfield, will it be rolled out to leisure centres in other areas of Cheshire East Council?”

But there was little on Macon House itself. Only one questionnaire respondent commented directly about the centre. This person stated that their relative was happy at Macon House, that the service gives them some independence and provides them with activities that meet their needs.

Hilary Centre

Little comment was received directly relating to the Hilary Centre. One respondent stated that they had formerly attended Jubilee House and preferred going there. Another stated that they liked the computing facilities available at this centre.

Lincoln House

Lincoln House was not affected directly by the proposals so most of the comments at the Lincoln House meeting related to Queens Drive. However one respondent did state that the activities at Lincoln were not always relevant to the person they care for. No questionnaire comments were received directly relating to this centre.

Macclesfield Area

Proposals for Macclesfield included the transfer of customers from Peatfields to Mayfield. Dementia users at Mayfield would in turn transfer to a specialist service at Hollins View.

Peatfields

i) Disruption to Customers

A range of concerns were raised about the proposed transfer of day services from Peatfields to the Mayfield Centre. Customers explained that the social interaction Peatfields provided was very important to them, and they were concerned this would be lost if they were moved. The personalised nature of the service at this centre was also stressed.

Many felt strongly that some of the customers would not cope with any change to their day service provision.

“What will happen to people who have 24/7 care and have been attending Peatfields for years and don’t like change?”

Some felt that if Peatfields had to close, there should be a period of transition between customers leaving the centre and moving to the Mayfield Centre. The importance of staff moving with users was also stressed.

“The right services should be provided before everyone is moved”

In addition to this, the Gardening Club at Peatfields was clearly very important to some customers. Carers were keen to know whether there was a similar group at the Mayfield Centre.

ii) Building condition and facilities

One question raised concerning this why the Mayfield Centre had been earmarked for investment and Peatfields had not.

iii) Building usage

It was generally felt that Personal Budgets were responsible for the decline in attendance at day centres. Questions were also raised concerning where people could go if they decided to take a Personal Budget.

One question was asked concerning what would happen to the Peatfields building if it did close.

iv) Transport

One of the main concerns for people at Peatfields was the additional distance and cost which would be incurred if customers had to move to an alternative day centre. This included the fact that some were currently able to walk to the centre. Alternative transport options were discussed at the meeting.

v) General

Some of the carers in attendance were cynical about the exercise because the previous consultation around transport had concluded in fleet transport being stopped.

Mayfield

i) Transport

Transport was seen as a major issue for users of Mayfields. This was felt to be very much exacerbated by the move away from fleet transport by the Council. Example quotes were:

“Not being able to afford the extra cost of a longer journey when they move to a different centre or leisure centre could lead to isolation of disabled people in their own homes. There is no objection to paying from mobility allowance but transport is a big issue with the proposed changes.”

“Transport, now that fleet transport has stopped dial-a-ride transport is in greater demand and if someone wants to go out during the day i.e. shopping there is no transport available. Also dial-a-ride drivers not trained to support people.”

Other issues touched on related to the safety and reliability of alternative transport options.

ii) Lifestyle

Feelings were expressed that the ability to do more during the day was appealing. However, it was felt that this was impossible in the day centre itself due to the low numbers of staff. One person stated:

“There should be more staff because we want to go out and do things, bowling, shopping, eating out, and other activities. We can't do these things at present.”

It was also commented in the questionnaire with regards to the lifestyle approach:

“But it is only what Mayfield Centre offered 5 years ago. We used to go swimming, sewing, gardening, learning computers. Drive through the country. It's only what we used to do at Mayfield centre.”

Mayfield – Brocklehurst

Note: An additional meeting was held for Brocklehurst (part of Mayfield) customers on 3 February as a result of an amended consultation option. Information was also available on the Cheshire East website.

Overall individuals were content with the proposal providing that staff transferred with service users. This was perhaps the key issue stressed in feedback.

“I think the whole idea of a purpose built facility for dementia care can only be welcomed. I do feel the continuity of care staff will be essential, they all do such a fantastic job they are part of the family.”

“I don't mind about the change to my day care as long as we have M and J coming with us. They make my day they are such wonderful ladies without them it won't be the same.”

Another point raised related to the importance of bathing facilities being available at the new unit at Hollins View. One person reported how they did not have facilities to bathe the cared for at home and that being able to use the Brocklehurst helped reduce the overall stress of this procedure.

Hollins View

There was little feedback received around Hollins View. One issue that was raised concerned respite provision here and how it would change as a result of the proposals. Other issues concerned the administration of medication and the availability of art classes.

Chapter 4: Analysis - Respite and Queens Drive

There was one proposal that specifically related to respite services. This suggested that customers using Queens Drive (Nantwich) would use Mountview (Congleton) instead due in part to the lack of facilities at Queens Drive for people with more complex needs.

A consultation meeting was held at Nantwich Civic Hall for carers and customers. There was also a public meeting at Crewe which was attended by many people with an interest in Queens Drive. Both meetings contained people who strongly felt that Queens Drive should continue to be available. The strength of feeling was also apparent in the written feedback that was received.

i) Building Condition

One person questioned why Queens Drive can't be improved for people so that there was a respite facility in the south of Cheshire East. There was a feeling that Queens Drive did not require investment but more thought about how it could be used. One concept that was put forward was to use it as a training centre to prepare customers for independent living.

"Queens Drive doesn't need investment – it needs thought and planning to get it filled. Leave it alone". (Strong reaction in favour from rest of attendees at meeting)

Some individuals questioned the figures on usage of Queens Drive, feeling they were not an accurate reflection of its use by the community.

"I feel the figures quoted on page 17 of the information pack are not accurate as they are based on occupancy of nine months not 12 months"

ii) Disruption to Customers

Respondents felt that if Queens Drive were to close it would have a significantly negative effect on the clients using it as they would find it hard to cope with the change. They were also concerned about increased social isolation as customers might access services less in the future on account of them being further away. Some respondents felt that Mountview wouldn't meet client need as well because it is larger and it would consist of a mixed client group. It was felt that this could potentially lead to increased stigma and a poorer quality service.

"It will be very hard for T as he soon gets upset, he does not like change but need short stays as we are 80 and need a break"

"Would you put a child of yours with a learning disability in service with older people?"

"Why should they have to travel over to Congleton, to Mountview. Those youngsters will get labelled there."

The impact of the proposals and the disruption it would cause to customers was clearly and emotively expressed at the meetings and in questionnaire responses. It was clear that the service at Queens Drive is highly valued by those that attend it and their families. In particular people like the friendly, comfortable and homely atmosphere as well as the convenient location.

"I'm concerned about the increase of social isolation by moving respite from Nantwich to Congleton. It is important for people when using respite that they can still get visits from their family/friends but if they are far away from their local area this will be less likely"

iii) Carers

Respondents felt a closure of Queens Drive would have negative affects for carers as they would have to support the cared for in adjusting to provision at an alternative centre. They also felt respite might have to be reduced as a result of a need to travel further, with services no longer being local to Crewe and Nantwich. It was even stated that the potential extra cost of transport

might make it unaffordable for some people to continue to receive respite. This would all put extra pressure on carers potentially leading to crisis.

“We as carers are not asking for much, just suitable respite in the area. We are already saving the council money!”

“If you don’t provide respite that is convenient, carers are going to breakdown and that will cost the council more money”

iv) Transport

Respondents felt strongly that transport would be a major issue if respite was moved from Queens Drive to Mountview. Issues raised concerned whether transport would be provided by the Council and the cost/affordability of respite if transport was not provided.

“The move from Queen's Drive in Nantwich to Congleton is a move too far. The cost of transport and time spent on transport for the service users is too much. Congleton is an unfamiliar area and that is a worry.”

One respondent also stated that as they didn’t drive it would be impossible for them to get respite if services were relocated to Congleton.

“Our daughter attends Queens Drive. We don’t drive so won’t be able to afford for her to attend Mountview.”

v) General

Note: usage of Lincoln House for respite was not in the original proposals but was suggested to Queen Drive carers/users as a possible alternative to Mountview.

Some individuals raised concerns about customers from Queens Drive attending a centre which was seen as for older people. An additional concern raised by a carer was that some clients at Lincoln House might have a mental health disability. One respondent did endorse the Lincoln House idea providing respite provision for those with learning disabilities was made available at Lincoln House before Queens Drive was closed.

There were also quite a few comments about looking at alternative buildings that are no longer used as a way of saving money. Many felt the south of Cheshire East was disadvantaged by the proposals as they felt that as well as respite being moved there to the north, improvements to buildings were also anticipated in this same area.

A further comment relating to the Council's overall approach to respite was:

"Cheshire East is not very creative when it comes to respite / short breaks – there are other options".

Chapter 5: Key Themes

This consultation was a large scale exercise and one which provoked undeniably strong feelings at times. Perhaps, inevitably the majority of feedback was about specific proposals to decommission centres rather than the lifestyle vision or the potential improvements to buildings.

The next section summarises some of the key themes from the preceding analysis, particularly points common to a number of day centres. There is also a précis of points raised about the consultation process itself.

The Consultation Process

i) The decision had already been taken

A number of members of the public expressed the view that a decision had already been taken on the consultation. They felt the Council was just going through the motions and that whatever they said would make little difference. A typical comment was:

“I believe that the Consultation Process is purely a case of ‘smoke and mirrors’ in an attempt to convince higher authorities that Cheshire East Council actively involves participation of the public in its decision-making process. The truth is that the Council proceeds with its proposed actions irrespective of public opinions expressed at the consultation stage.”

An extension of this was the feeling that the public had had little influence over previous consultations and this would be a case of more of the same.

“This seems like the transport consultation – is it a done deal?”

“What confidence will we have about the consultation, the council doesn’t have a good track record, carers don’t get listened to! Focus should be on service users and carers.”

Finance was often referred to as a key reason why this was the case.

“Is it just about costs rather than about the quality of care for people? “

“You say no decisions have been taken but it seems unlikely that these major changes are not going to be adopted. You give a strong financial argument etc. these proposals will go ahead surely?”

There was also a specific statement made by Knutsford Area for Knutsford Action (organisers of the main Knutsford petition) about the consultation process and the lack of general engagement in the Knutsford area on health and social care issues:

“We petition Cheshire East Council on this day, Thursday, 15 December 2011, to carefully consider the needs and rights of service users and carers and further to consider – in view of point 9 - whether any adequate ‘consultation’ has ever – yet - taken place between Cheshire East Council and residents of the Knutsford Area, in respect of social care and health services.”

Given these arguments, it was stated by some that the consultation should never have been termed ‘improvements to social care services’.

“Where does improvement come into it? All we’ve heard about is budget and cutting services. It casts doubt on the credibility of the council.”

One further issue was that it was felt that Councillors should have been more involved in the consultation as they were the ones making the final decisions.

ii) Upset caused to customers and carers by the Consultation exercise

Some carers felt that even consulting on proposals with customers was potentially very damaging. This was because it caused anxiety in often very vulnerable people. There was a feeling that the Council should try to ensure the status quo was retained as much as possible. A typical comment was:

“These proposals are causing unnecessary stress to service users and carers.”

“The uncertainty is a big worry at the moment.”

There was also a remark relating to this from Cheshire East LINK

"We were most concerned to note that the current consultation is causing anxiety and distress to some users. We were approached, as strangers wearing badges, almost as soon as we arrived by a user asking on several occasions, 'Get us back our bus'. 'Don't close us down'"

iii) Information Given

Some points were raised which can be put under the theme of disagreement with the information provided by the Council. For instance, it was felt that occupancy information was inaccurate. This was particularly felt to be so for the Stanley Centre:

"I dispute the numbers that are using for the Stanley Centre. Why does it say 38 people? There are 50 on the register which equates to 85% occupancy."

"I feel the figures quoted on page 17 of the information pack are not accurate as they are based on occupancy of 9 months not 12 months. The proposals being put forward are therefore based on inaccurate information." (from Macon House meeting)

Similarly, it was felt that the Council had misrepresented the condition of some of the buildings proposed for closure. Again, this was an issue particularly raised by people in connection to the Stanley Centre.

A comment was made about the deteriorated state of the Stanley Centre building fabric:

"In practice there was refurbishment undertaken not many years ago and currently in my opinion I would not suggest that further refurbishment work is needed."

One individual raised an issue of the lack of attention given to mental health services in the consultation information. An extract from their correspondence was:

"Do you not consider People with mental health disabilities as forming part of your customer base? Do you believe that People with mental health disabilities do not use Day Care and/or Respite services? Have you decided that People with mental health disabilities will not in future have

access to Day Care/Respite services?”

Service Changes – Key Themes

i) Lifestyle

Many customers liked the idea of the greater choice and variety that the lifestyle vision promised for day services. However, some users felt that this variety should be offered within existing day services. It was also expressed that activities should be tailored around the individual and should have a particular emphasis on life skills and social type activities rather than merely making use of leisure facilities.

A further issue was that it was felt that the lifestyle approach would only work for certain types of customers. Older people for instance, it was argued would be less interested in taking this option up.

Customers taking part in the lifestyle groups at Macclesfield and Wilmslow were mostly very enthusiastic about the pilots. However, concerns were expressed regarding the room (including access to it) at Macclesfield Leisure Centre.

ii) Transport

Transport was seen to be problematic in any attempt to relocate customers. This was because it was felt that transport options were limited particularly following the withdrawal of fleet transport. The time and cost that would be incurred were seen as key factors. It was felt this could lead to social isolation in some cases with a service no longer taken up due to these obstacles.

Issues with transport were raised particularly in relation to the Stanley Centre and Queens Drive. However, it was discussed at other meetings as well e.g. for Dean Row and Peatfields.

As such, the importance of having local services was seen as key. A comment was received from the Stroke Association relating to this:

“....I really hope that this will mean that services are ‘local’ to service users. I visit stroke survivors throughout East Cheshire and one of the biggest issues preventing people from maximising their recovery is that activities to help in their rehabilitation or care are not local.”

iii) Personalisation

Personalisation was looked on with suspicion by many people. Whilst they acknowledged it allowed greater choice, it was felt that it also decreased the viability of Council services for those who continued to wish to receive them.

There was also concern that the Council was deliberately pushing customers and carers into personal budget or direct payment options (see consultation pack for further information on what these are) in order to be in a position to argue for centre closure. One comment from a meeting regarding Queens Drive was:

“Numbers are dropping because referrals are being refused.”

“Is the promotion of personal budgets a form of privatisation?”

Frustration was expressed that people who opted to receive a direct payment could not buy in-house services.

“With Direct Payments/Personal budgets people should have choice of purchasing private or traditional services.”

iv) Disruption to Customers

There were many comments raised about the problems that moving centres would cause for customers. Aside from transport problems, these concerns centred around the problems that users would have in adapting to new surroundings, in meeting new people and in coping with a change of routine.

“As anyone who is closely involved with people with learning disabilities will know, they suffer huge stress and anxiety when taken away from their routine and comfort zone and find it hard to form new relationships.”

It was also the case that many carers and customers disagreed that the alternative centre for service provision would be an improvement. This is reflected in the case of all proposed buildings for closure but was particularly so for the Stanley Centre.

v) Carers

There were many concerns raised about the impact of the proposals on carers. These often stemmed from the previous two issues. It was felt that carers were being asked to provide more transport support than they had to before fleet transport had been phased out. It was stated this would lead to greater stress. Safety of customers was also expressed as a key concern because of the travelling they might be asked to do. For instance, a point was made about the difficulty of coping in an emergency if a customer was based further away.

Appendix 1: Petition

Two petitions were presented in advance of full Council in December. The main one was organised by a group called KAFKA (Knutsford Area for Knutsford Action). The majority of signatures were collected in Knutsford or Cheshire East, with a small number placed outside of the Cheshire East boundaries.

The message on the petition states:

“We the undersigned petition Cheshire East Council and East Cheshire Hospital Trust:

Save our social and health care –keep our services local

Keep our Stanley Centre for disabled adults

Return our dementia care services

Return our intermediate hospital ward”

The following table is a breakdown of the locations the petition was placed in and the number of signatures collected there.

Place	Number of signatures
Allstock	59
Congleton	182
Cranage	128
Crewe	67
Goostrey	124
Homes Chapel	422
Knutsford	3081
Lower Peover	8
Macclesfield	50
Middlewich	108
Mobberley	82
Northwich	23

Over Peover	20
Parkgate	433
Plumley	4
Sandbach	995
Toft	258
Wilmslow	38
Winsford	149
Online	59
Total	6290

In addition to this there was a petition solely concerning the Stanley Centre. 275 signatures were collected for this at various locations. Its text stated:

“SAVE THE STANLEY CENTRE

By an accident of birth, my brother Paul was born with severe learning disabilities.

Through no fault of his own, he will never be able to hold down a job. He will never experience simple joys such as reading the newspaper, driving a car, taking himself out for a meal or a pint with mates – or having a relationship.

Paul (and those like him) need the opportunity to be part of the local community where he can have a sense of belonging, make friends and develop skills in a caring, safe environment surrounded by people he knows and trusts.

Today such an environment exists in Knutsford- a day-care centre called ‘the Stanley Centre’. It has helped make my brother feel happy and feel that Knutsford is his home. Without it, he would be isolated and lonely, with little access to his friends.

East Cheshire Council are proposing to close the Stanley Centre as a cost cutting measure.

We live in tough times, HOWEVER, to deprive people like Paul of the assistance they need is to attack the VERY WEAKEST AND LEAST ABLE in society.

Please help speak for them, by taking the trouble to add your name to this, as we work to protect those with NO VOICE to speak for themselves.

Thank you for taking the time to help. Simon”

The petitions were presented with the covering sheet shown on the next page.



KAFKA Save Our Services

In presenting this Petition, signatures of which have been gained over the short time of only two months (14 October 2011 – 14 December 2011) **Knutsford Area For Knutsford Action**, states that it represents the view of more than 6000 people, who object to the current policy of removing local services for local people from local areas.

What began as a serious attempt to gain support for a number of learning disabled adults who attend The Stanley Centre, caught fire across Cheshire East and over its borders. Carers and other volunteers have committed a large part of their valuable social time to this Petition, and invite Cheshire East Council Representatives to take very seriously the results obtained.

We now present a three-part Petition.

The first part consists of more than 3000 signatures gathered in Knutsford;

The second part is a similar number of signatures gathered in towns and villages across Cheshire East and on its borders;

The third part is a 275 signature petition on the single topic of **The Stanley Centre**, which was begun by family members of an adult who attends the Stanley Centre.

To this petition we add,:

1. a copy of **Cheshire East LINK Report** on The Stanley Centre - 11 November 2011
2. a copy of **Knutsford Town Council Health and Social Care Work Group's Report** - November 2011
3. a **Care Quality Commission Report on Bexton Court** – showing that it was well run and appreciated by its service users and their carers - prior to its unnecessary closure – 14 April 2010
4. A Knutsford Guardian news item on the recently issued **MENCAP Report on The Stanley Centre** showing the centre's usefulness to the learning disabled and their carers – 14 December 2011.
5. **A Report to Cabinet, on Dementia Strategy – Building Based Services Review – showing an 80% occupancy of Bexton Court just before it was closed** - produced by Director of Adult Services, Mr Phil Lloyd – 20 April 2010
6. A copy of the **Report of East Cheshire NHS Trust's Director of Performance and Quality, Kath Senior** on '**Temporary Closure of Tatton Ward**' – 09 September 2010
7. A copy of **Cheshire East Council's 05 October 2011 Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Minutes**, during which a formal request was made - and undertaking given - to look into the effect of the current difficulties and worries experienced by service users and carers, about the future of their Day and Respite Services – 05 October 2011

8. Extract from **Cheshire East Council's Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme** – showing (Page 30) that the Health and Wellbeing aspects of the current crisis in social care was '**To be prioritised**' - presented with Agenda for 10 November 2011 Meeting effectively closed down all consideration of this matter for several months at that meeting.
9. Knutsford Guardian 01 December 2011 and email to Charlotte Peters Rock from **Cheshire Police Area Commander, Michael Garrihy** – 02 December 2011.

We formally request a full response from Cheshire East Council, on all aspects of this broad-ranging Petition, and ask that it should take careful account of the legal requirements on public bodies, under the European Convention on Human Rights, and under the many aspects of disability legislation in operation within the UK, in respect of non-discrimination towards disabled people and the right of all people to have their family life uninterrupted unnecessarily by any official or public body.

We petition Cheshire East Council on this day, Thursday, 15 December 2011, to carefully consider the needs and rights of service users and carers and further to consider – in view of point 9 - whether any adequate 'consultation' has ever – yet - taken place between Cheshire East Council and residents of the Knutsford Area, in respect of social care and health services.

15 December 2011

Appendix 2: Responses from Organisations

See supplementary document