

02 April 2012 Cheshire East Cabinet– comment for Cabinet. 2pm Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach

In a search for certainty, I ask that this complete series of comments is included within the minutes of this Cabinet Meeting, particularly for this date 02Apr2012.

Produced in a 'professional' setting, looking suspiciously like a deliberate oversight, what is missing from all four Draft Town Strategy Consultation documents which are due to close their doors today in respect of Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach, is the local opportunity to plan for old age and disability, by producing the necessary local infrastructure to encourage self-help, community help and freedom of movement in the old, rather than the expensive burdensomeness, which is the way in which their needs are openly spoken of in this Cheshire East Council area.

Town Strategy Consultations should not be about airy-fairy 'Visions for Leisure Time' and 'Enhancing the Public Realm' but about the practicality of town centre buildings for use in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the actual needs of a very large section of the population.

It is about positive, practical factual infrastructure, care and help – where it is needed – valuing family and other carers – valuing life experience and education – valuing the elderly volunteers who appear in all corners of Cheshire East – and making caring use of their valuable, freely-given contribution to this Council area.

The work achieved by the fit elderly is beyond price. This work must in future be valued and encouraged by a provision of suitably built and effectively combined infrastructure in every town in the Borough.

The old are gathering. They will not be going away. It seems there are three options for the resolution of this problem

- 1 Kill them - or otherwise get rid of them
- 2 Carry on mistreating their needs and regarding them as 'a Burden'
- 3 Make full use of their very valuable knowledge and invaluable voluntary help – and provide useful, dignified Day and Respite care, Rehabilitation and simple Nursing care in all the local towns where it is needed, for those people whose health is failing, and who live in those local towns..

We also need Public Wellbeing Centres for healthy local populations, where they can meet, socialise, take out a library book, drink tea, eat healthy food, read the papers, learn and volunteer their services; where they can access, via intelligent caring individuals (that much underrated, undervalued, underpaid, very experienced group) such oncoming care as memory clinic, toenail cutting, hearing help, day care, respite care, rehabilitative care, simple nursing care – and stay in touch – at their welcoming social centre - with all their friends, for mutual support. Friends can withstand 'the miseries', bereavement, failing memory, odd behaviour, and can provide a familiar and supportive background to the failing lives of each other.

We don't need flawed 'visions' but factual, practical help. We don't need slews of wasted buildings and lies about their drains but practically based knowledge and enthusiasm to keep up the fabric and make good use of every building which this council owns. Where any building cannot be used for the public good, it should be sold or leased, and the money used to fund the rapidly growing and urgently needed help for the elderly, the disabled and the family carers of this Council area. This will save Council taxpayers' money.

This is to place on record, that these comments are directly relevant to all four of the Town Strategy Consultation documents, whose consultation time is up today. I formally ask that a copy of this statement should also be placed against each of those documents for Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach, and against all future Town Strategy documents, to ensure that adequate public infrastructure for the wellbeing of the old, the disabled and carers, is included in all Town Strategies across Cheshire East Council area... stating that 'disability access' is a very good – if belated - idea, but it should only be the start, of 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking which will open public buildings, for the first time to the full benefit of the health and wellbeing of the public.

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