

Thornaby Town Hall

a) Proportionality.

The sale of the Town Hall is disproportionate in the sense that it only caters for developer profit at the tax payers expense and provides an expedient get out for SBC whose dereliction of duty is wholly responsible for the present state of the building and spiralling remedial costs. The sale is also disproportionate in that it does not encompass the spirit of an Act that stipulates community support and empowerment. Proportionality is largely about perception. This sale would appear proportionate to a council wishing to attain 'efficiencies', but massively disproportionate to a community striving for recognition and ownership retention of a building that exemplifies heritage and the physical heart of a community.

As for viable options, there has been many suggested over the years - i.e. business centre, business incubator units, development of the extension by the private sector with receipts pledged to renovate the main body of the building. Other ideas have abounded - and continue to come forward - but the unholy haste to offload the structure by SBC has never allowed any to establish full potential.

One proposed scheme in particular offered shared ownership with the community. Why was this option not presented to Cabinet? The private developer involved in this offer stated that his aim was to take up the commercial challenge of the Town Hall extension and the surrounding area of the Mandale Triangle and to allow the community to develop the heritage aspect.

[REDACTED]

b) Consultation

There has been no consultation. There have been informal talks with the Thornaby Town Hall Heritage Group and Thornaby Town Council, but public/community consultation simply has not been entered into by either developer or SBC. The suggestion that this sale has been out to consultation or has community support is patently untrue.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

d) Presumption in Favour of Openness

It is our contention, based upon bone fide witness evidence, that decisions are taken prior to Cabinet meetings - i.e. at unrecorded pre Cabinet agenda meetings - and therefore un-accessible to other elected members as well as the public. Also, Cabinet was presented with a report based upon discussions that only officers and developers were party to and which culminated in a deal

reached without elected member or public participation. How can such a deal done behind closed doors be regarded as open or fair?

e) The aims and desired outcome was solely that which appealed to SBC. Cabinet decision was based upon contrived aims and an outcome which was totally unacceptable to both community and tax-payer. Aims and outcomes with regard to community benefit? Vague and unspecified. Merely tokenism. *In terms of policy aims can the Council explain why the built environment (Thornaby Town Hall) wasn't protected for current and future generations?*

f) As stated in a) above, one developer proposed shared ownership, but apparently this was never made public and was presumable dismissed. Many other options could and should have been openly pursued. It is also something of a mystery why the building should have been offered at a knockdown price of £101,000, but never offered to anyone representing the community – i.e. Heritage Group or Thornaby Town Council. Nor was it put on the market at that knockdown price or freehold sale advertised which would undoubtedly have attracted wider interest. Why? Surely this indicates a fait accompli.

Parkview Residential Home

a) Proportionality

The decision to close Parkview Home was based upon the premise of the Homes for Life policy which the Cabinet Member admitted would take 20 years to be fully developed. It is our contention therefore that closure of the home is premature. At this present moment in time, Homes for Life is merely an unfulfilled ambition – consequently, closure of a home where care is guaranteed is grossly disproportionate insofar as those affected cannot expect the full package expressed in the Homes for Life vision.

Could the outcomes be achieved in any other way? Only if a monumental funding injection was acquired to propel the policy to full fruition. In the present climate of economic 'efficiencies' - AKA cuts - (the only possible reason for closure), this would be highly unlikely making Homes for Life unattainable in the short term and therefore not guaranteed for those being displaced from Parkview as well as others in dire need of aids and adaptations.

b) Due Consultation

To consult is to have regard to a person's (or persons) feelings, interests, etc when making decisions or plans. It is the consideration of others by those who are proposing a course of action. In respect of Parkview Home, consultation was flawed on the principle of economic pressures

overriding everything else. Consultation consisted of a one dimensional approach whereby only one outcome was forcibly presented and only that outcome (closure) considered acceptable.

[REDACTED] who hasn't been consulted and how was consultation flawed? Certainly ward and town councillors were not consulted in the truest sense of the word, but were merely informed that closure was inevitable. Residents, carers and staff were also bludgeoned into a sole option scenario – i.e. closure. Nothing else was proposed or considered – making the whole exercise pointless from opponents perspective and entirely pre-determined.

c) Respect for Human Rights

As stated in earlier correspondence, residents of care homes in the UK have no rights at all should an authority or independent provider seek closure of a home for whatever reason – though usually on economic grounds. Our elderly and frail, residing in such accommodation, do not have the same rights as those renting houses from local authorities or from RSLs etc. Consequently, these vulnerable people can be cast to the four winds at a whim; their human rights callously cast aside. This is the case with residents of Parkview.

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights does indeed say that everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence. However, this does not appear to have been adopted in this country or is blatantly ignored whenever it suits an economic purpose – primarily when the rights of those involved are routinely dismissed.

It is our contention that it is a breach of Human Rights to intrude upon privacy, break up a home and a surrogate family life. It is our contention that it is a fundamental breach of Human Rights to take away choice thereby creating a monopoly where care is proven to range from mediocre to inadequate. The stipulation in the convention with regard to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence goes on to say that a public authority may not interfere with this unless it is in line with the law or necessary in a democratic society in the interest of, for instance, protection of people's health.

It is our contention that SBC is guilty of interference in the lives of elderly people for all of the wrong reasons and subsequently in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights. Furthermore, we would contend that SBC is guilty of jeopardising the health of residents of Parkview rather than protecting them –

d) How can a decision making process be deemed open and transparent when the pre-Cabinet agenda meetings where Cabinet decisions are ultimately arrived at are not recorded for member information nor open to non executive members or the public?

With reference to the point made about local members being made aware of proposed closure through local gossip [REDACTED] If democratically elected members are to be kept informed by public gossip rather than conventional means, how

does that square with the principle of openness?

Why is it that elected members have only just been informed about the very real prospect of an extra care facility being provided on the site and why wasn't this prospect enlarged upon during the review process? Is this also down to lack of openness by SBC?

f)

Why was it deemed impossible to carry out Care Standards work in 2007-2008 when it was entirely feasible in 2001-2002? Why was it suggested that the heating system and lift in Parkview were in a state of acute disrepair? Was it simply to make closure easier?