



Merton Centre for Independent Living  
Wandle Valley Resource Centre  
Church Road  
Mitcham, CR4 3BE

Date: 07/09/2016

Dear Stephen,

when I met you, with other voluntary sector representatives on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016, and when you visited Merton CIL at our offices, you assured me that there would be a consultation on whether to implement the 2% precept, and that Merton CIL and other representatives would be fully involved in developing that consultation to ensure that it is accessible to disabled people, and represents the issues fairly.

Despite a number of reminders via the Health and Social Care forum, the Adult Social Care Task group and from MVSC on behalf of the sector, it has come to my attention, through yesterday's press release, that a consultation is being launched this Friday<sup>1</sup>.

I am deeply disappointed that you have not kept to the commitment you made to involve us in this consultation. From the initial publicity it appears that the issues are not properly explained to the public, and I have grave concerns about the biased nature of the explanation, which risks negatively influencing the result.

It is extremely concerning to see that Merton Council, under your leadership, does not fully acknowledge the devastating nature of cuts to Adult Social Care, and the detrimental impact on the lives of disabled people, particularly when combined with the cumulative impact of the wider austerity agenda and Welfare Reform.

<sup>1</sup> <https://news.merton.gov.uk/2016/09/06/have-your-say-on-council-tax-and-council-spending/>

I remind you of the report produced by Healthwatch Merton prior to the latest round of cuts which was explicit about the negative impact on disabled and older people<sup>2</sup>.

I also urge you to read Merton CIL's submission to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee on Adult Social Care (attached); the nature of the crisis in Adult Social Care cannot be overstated. In fact, we recently had a call from a social worker alleging that the situation in Merton was dangerous and putting people at risk due to low staffing levels, high sickness absence, loss of senior expertise and use of inexperienced locums.

I urge you, Stephen, to ensure that this consultation fairly represents the issues at stake, and ensures that disabled and older people are supported to engage with the consultation.

Yours sincerely,



Roy Benjamin  
Chairman

Cc: Cllr Tobin Byers; Cllr Peter Southgate; Simon Williams;  
[www.mertoncil.org.uk](http://www.mertoncil.org.uk)

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk/sites/default/files/hwm\\_asc\\_focus\\_groups\\_write\\_up\\_report.pdf](http://www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk/sites/default/files/hwm_asc_focus_groups_write_up_report.pdf)