

Good morning and thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today. I have worked for Cheshire for 30 years, the last 10 of which have been at Sutton Beeches and I'd like to give members an insight into this.

As you know Sutton Beeches is not a care home but a short term respite facility supporting adults within the borough prior to returning home or into more supported living.

We are a 30 bed unit although currently operating with 15 beds available.

Over the past few years (not just 12 months) and despite the closure of Leftwich Green, we have seen a steady decline in demand for our service which has impacted on the number of service users we support. We have had long periods where staff outnumber residents and I do not recall the last time we were full to capacity.

The building itself is around 65 years old, in winter the heating is on permanently, cannot be set to individual needs, so it is one heat for all.

In summer it's unbearably hot with service users unable to open the single glazed windows due to their age and poor design.

For periods of illness and throughout the pandemic new admissions have to self isolate in their bedroom due to no en-suite facilities. This results in them being unable to use a proper toilet or even shower for two weeks - with the increased needs of our residents this is wrong on every level.

The maintenance costs just to keep Sutton Beeches to a safe standard are through the leaking bitumen roof we sit below.

As the data shows and as I have already mentioned to you about the decline in demand for our service, this is also supported in some ways by the petition and protests we have seen. This in itself has not been instigated by the public or service users but set up recently and driven by the union whose sole aim appears to be to keep the building open at all costs to protect jobs, gaining a lot of support union members, staff, their families and service users through social media.

To pump money into the building based service with a dwindling demand will ultimately impact on those we are actually trying to support.

I am not only an employee but also a union member, carer, and service user. This proposal is not about my or your job, it's not about saving the building, and it's not about votes. What it is about is supporting vulnerable adults within the borough.

There is no doubt from the work carried out and data collected that the proposals to close the three units will ultimately benefit the people of Cheshire giving them the control and flexibility of how and where they wish to receive support and without question, a move in the right direction to better support those we have been elected or employed to serve.