



Merton Liberal Democrats

www.mertonlibdems.org.uk

Councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes
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24 January 2016

Dear Caroline and Stephen

Re – PROPOSED CUTS TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE BUDGET – an open letter

You tell us you wish to protect those who rely on Adult Social Care services (and their families) from a disproportionate share of the cuts that you are forced to make by central Government. Sadly such reassuring statements are sounding increasingly hollow. Funding cuts clearly require Merton to find savings, but your administration has choices about how to do this.

Residents, carers and charities have spoken to us about your budget proposals to again cut Adult Social Care. These services have already had to cope with less money, and many of their clients live in dread of further cuts.

Of course working procedures should be reviewed and streamlined so that our limited resources can be focused on supporting residents. But cutting services to the bare minimum will have knock-on effects elsewhere in the care system, such as increased hospitalisation and dealing with problems caused by social isolation.

We therefore urge you to consider the full implications of your proposals and explore alternative ways of plugging the funding shortfall, otherwise your reassurances will simply be meaningless gestures.

Liberal Democrats want people to live their lives to their full potential – and believe that the role of Adult Social Care is to provide the support needed to help those who need it live as independently as possible. We want to stop further social care cuts.

Therefore we ask that:

- Merton uses the Adult Social Care precept to increase Council Tax by 2% to minimise cuts. This would cost the average household between £2-3 per month (for a Band D property) – we believe this is the right thing to do; or
- If you feel unable make this choice immediately (for 2016-17), cuts to Adult Social Care services should be avoided in the current budget round by using Merton's unallocated reserves. This then gives time for public debate on the need to increase Council Tax in the future. We believe that most Merton residents will be in favour of paying a little more to support their neighbours.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on these proposals. If necessary, Cllr Jeanes will lodge an amendment to the budget asking for the 2% precept to be levied.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Mary-Jane Jeanes and the Executive Committee of Merton Liberal Democrats, Chair: Giles Bailey.

CC all councillors