

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 22 NOVEMBER 2023

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OR THE CHAIR OF A COMMITTEE SUBMITTED UNDER PART 4 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES, PARAGRAPH 10.4 OF THE CONSTITUTION

Question for the Leader from Councillor Bell and Councillor Roome, Leader's responses:

"DCC have once again surreptitiously opened a consultation on the future of the Link Centres in North Devon with a view to cutting, what DCC regard as an expensive extravagance, but for the users of the Link Centres (in Ilfracombe, Barnstaple and Bideford) are a vital lifeline and a way to facilitate access to mental health services and more importantly, a vital social hub where some of the most vulnerable and forgotten adults in our society can meet and find companionship, common ground and mutual support. DCC have now launched a third consultation on this matter and appear hell-bound to continue "consulting" until they finally get the answer they want. Fortunately, the people of North Devon and the excellent work of Save our Hospital Services have kept the wolf from the door so far. But it is only a matter of time before North Devon loses yet another County service. Would the Leader please agree;

- (a) That North Devon Council should strongly appeal to Devon County Council that these services are vital and should continue

Councillor Roome, Leader's response: "I concur that the Link Centres play a crucial role in supporting individuals facing mental health challenges. As Leader of North Devon and a Devon County Councillor, I am committed to advocating for their retention and continued operation."

- (b) To urgently ask our comms team to promote this consultation to maximise the voice of North Devon on this vital matter

Councillor Roome, Leader's response: "I've requested our Communications Team to disseminate the consultation links across our various media channels."

- (c) Thank Save Our Hospital Services for their tireless work in protecting and promoting the healthcare services of our distant, isolated community."

Councillor Roome, Leader's response: "I align with Cllr Bell's viewpoint that Save Our Hospital Services rightfully deserve acknowledgment for their ongoing efforts and advocacy to safeguard these crucial mental health services. Their persistent lobbying ensures the protection of services relied upon by numerous users at the Link Centres."

I trust that the Conservative administration at Devon County Council will attentively consider all users' perspectives and refrain from moving forward with any closures of the existing service provision in its present operational format.”