

## DEPUTATION – SAVE PRIMROSE HILL CARE HOME CAMPAIGN

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

MR D MORTON: Good afternoon. I am David Morton representing the Save Primrose Hill Campaign and our Deputation includes Angela Morton, Simon Ambrose and Karlis Obrams

The 2011 Census confirmed that the percentage of population over 65 in the Wetherby area is 23% and in Leeds it is 15% - indeed the UK is only 16%. By 2031 the number of over 75- year olds in Wetherby area will have increased by 26,400 or 49%, and this is without taking into account of all the additional new build housing being approved by the Council over future years.

Because of this, for some four months we have run a very robust campaign. Primrose was purpose built some 30 years ago following lobbying by local Councillor William Hill, who recognised a requirement for a residential care home in Boston Spa, there being no other in the immediate area. Fundamentally, that situation has not changed and closing Primrose is merely removing a level of care which has been, is and will continue to be vital to local elderly people who require 24 hours support and can no longer live in their own home even with carer visits. It can be home for 33 residents and the 27 who live there now are mainly in their 90s and some even 101.

Our Campaign has received good publicity through newspaper, TV, radio and social media. We have gathered support totalling 6,185 people. Letters have been received from the residents, their families including grandchildren, friends, Bishops, many clergy, hospital doctors, Round Table, WiSE, and Town and Parish Councils and Alec Shelbrooke, MP.

By touching all quarters of all local communities to ensure we gathered a representative view of local opinion, we have received 100% support to keep open Primrose and not a single voice in favour of closing.

To date the residents and families have not been given any indication of what and where will be the alternative accommodation. Many families and friends live on the doorstep of Primrose and visit daily. Many of the immediate family, sons and daughters, are ageing themselves, so this is extremely convenient and cost effective. Forcing them to travel greater distances will mean less regular visits, more costly travel and certainly more difficult travelling in the winter months. All this will contribute to increase the carbon footprint by up to 50 tonnes per annum CO<sub>2</sub> therefore breaching Leeds' Climate Change Strategy.

Indeed, some families have moved their mum or dad from further afield to have them locally so they can visit daily and this has in all cases been health and mentally beneficial to the resident.

Some sons and daughters have not yet told their mothers or fathers about the planned closure and being moved to another home because they are so concerned about mum and dad's reaction, the impact on their health and wellbeing.

Indeed, there is evidence supported by the medical profession to show that moving older people of great ages is not just health threatening but life threatening.

Financially the case for closing Primrose seems not to add up. Based on figures provided by Council the analysis does show that closing Primrose will cost Leeds some quarter of a million pounds per annum and if there are no self-funding residents, this could rise to £600,000 and that is before any resident is reassessed as requiring higher cost dementia or nursing care.

On the question of numbers, in Mr Holme's report dated 15 February to the Executive Board, the table on the last page has an error of over £1.2m and so all other numbers must be questionable. Is Council aware of these errors?

It seems that Leeds is determined to relinquish its responsibilities by passing the care of older, frail and defenceless people over to the private sector. The financial case for this is very questionable. Mr Holmes has confirmed Leeds does outsource to the private sector at £429 per person per week. He claims Primrose costs over £700. However, Council numbers show the actual running cost of Primrose to be £647.

Private care homes east of Leeds charge from £650 through to £800 so, when Age UK state that private care homes are closing at the rate of 12% per year (and increasing because 28 closed in 2008 and 67 in 2012), it seems Leeds is closing its own care homes and putting elderly folks' futures at risk by relinquishing responsibility to an under-funded private sector.

We hope that you will agree to keep open Primrose Hill and thank you for your attention. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*