

Council Meeting – 14 April 2014

Notice of Motion – Walsall Society for the Blind

1 The Notice of Motion

The following notice of motion has been submitted from Councillor Worrall

- i. This Council, whilst conscious that the decisions of Walsall Society for the Blind are entirely within that organisation's gift, nevertheless wishes to register its concern at the Society's recent decision, effective from 30th June, 2014, to withdraw its in-house transport, whereby blind and partially-sighted service users are collected from their homes around the Borough to attend Hawley House for activities and lunch, and are taken home later in the afternoon.
- ii. The Council asks the Society to revisit its decision, and postpone its implementation for a period of up to twelve months to enable discussions to take place with the Council and others, so as to ensure a continuity of transport provision beyond 30th June until a long-term outcome is assured, whereby all the Society's users, present and future, will enjoy ongoing access to transport arrangements at least equivalent to what is currently provided."

2 Walsall Society for the Blind

The Walsall Society for the Blind is an independent charitable organisation with its own Board of Trustees and Management Committee. The Board of Trustees decided that the Minibus Transport would cease from the 30th June 2014 and has been conducting a consultation that began in March 2013 and has been extended at the request of the people that use the service to the end of June. The 2 minibuses cost £34k a year to run and this is totally funded by the Charity. The day centre numbers have been falling, and there are now only 55 people who use the day service. The transport is provided to 26 people – the remainder make independent arrangements to travel to the day service. Walsall Society for the Blind has offered 1:1 support to all those affected by the transport changes to assist people to make alternative arrangements by choice. The Society has extended its consultation on the proposed changes to June 2014, and therefore has not made a decision.

3. The Council does commission some specific services from Walsall Society for the Blind, including a Registration Information and Advice Service, an Eye Clinic Liaison Post and an historic management agreement which is a contribution to the running costs of the building. The Council does not commission or contribute directly to the day service. Any person eligible for social services and thereby receiving a personal budget from the Council who attends these services could use the Direct Payment method if they chose to.

Keith Skerman
Interim Executive Director (Social Care & Inclusion)

7 April 2014