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The Chief Executive
Bournemouth Borough Council
Town Hall
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

Thursday, September 6, 2007

Dear Chief Executive,

Bournemouth Centre for Community Arts

I am writing to you on behalf of Boscombe Area Forum following its meeting on Monday 13th August.

A very clear view was expressed that consultation on the closure of the BCCA was utterly inadequate, and that the loss of the facilities for both adult education and the arts was unacceptable.

In addition, the Forum was vocal about the lamentable lack of information about the Council's reasons for the closure, its plans for the displaced services, and its apparently lack of a strategy for delivering these, and other, services in the area.

Boscombe contains a number of the most significant pockets of deprivation in the South West. One might assume that adult education was an element of the Council's strategy for addressing this.

However, residents at the meeting pointed out that the primary Bournemouth site for the Council's adult education service is in a location that is not well served by public transport. Boscombe West ward has the largest proportion of households with no access to a car.

The Forum asked that the following now happen

1. That an officer be invited to a Forum meeting to explain the closure decision and its plans for the displaced services.
2. That the Forum be consulted on future uses of the site. I remind you of the commitment the Head of Adult Learning made: that 'there will be consultation with the appropriate stakeholders.'

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3. That the forum be consulted in the future over cancellation or withdrawal of services affecting residents in Boscombe East and Boscombe West wards.

The consultation expected in the second two points above was expected to be 'meaningful' in the sense that the decision has not yet been made, and that a genuine attempt is being made to explore both existing and new options.

Your officers would be welcome to either or both of the next two scheduled meetings in respect of the Forum's requests above, and I'd appreciate being notified as soon as possible for the agenda.

Ordinary Forum Meeting, Monday 10th September, 7-9pm
Selwyn Hall, St John's Church, Christchurch Road

Annual General Meeting, Monday 8th October, 7-9pm
Selwyn Hall, St John's Church, Christchurch Road

It is the Forum's intention to schedule the next six meetings shortly, which should help your officers plan for the Forum's involvement early in the decision making process.

Yours Sincerely,

Ben Prescott
Secretary, Boscombe Area Forum