

Statement – Lesley Mansell  
In a personal capacity

Cabinet meeting 13.11.2013

## **Proposed 40% cut to Children's Services**

When collecting signatures for the petition I found that people were very concerned and more than happy to sign it.

You've heard a number of people speak from personal experience tonight. You are in danger of ignoring the human aspect of this.

Just over a year ago I attended the opening of the Radstock Children's Centre which had been refurbished. I wrote at the beginning of this year with my concerns about the potential cuts to children's services and was given an assurance that centres would not be closed.

In Radstock we have high levels of deprivation and higher than the national average of levels of children with special educational needs. Cuts of these services will not help this situation.

In Radstock we've already seen a reduction in the Youth Service, it is now being managed by volunteers which is a struggle.

Meanwhile, we have heard much talk about the regeneration in Radstock with seemingly little idea of what this is. If B&NES are not going to invest in children and young people what future is there for the town?

The core strategy proposes massive house building in Radstock, but there are no plans to improve the infrastructure or provide services to support this. It makes no sense to be cutting children's services at this stage.

I agree with Cllr Hardman that the report is flawed. For example, it mentions that a risk assessment and an equality impact assessment have been carried out, but there is no mention of the outcomes of these. How can the council make an informed decision without all the relevant information?

I urge the council to support councillor Hardman's minority report and change the proposal in the main report. Otherwise B&NES is stacking up problems for the future not just for Radstock but across the whole of B&NES.