



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Bruce McDonald
Leader
Elmbridge Borough Council
Civic Centre
High Street
Esher
KT10 9SD

18 April 2024

Dear Cllr McDonald,

I am writing regarding Thames Ditton Centre for the Community and the future of user groups at the Centre.

Following Elmbridge Borough Council's decision to hand over the management of Thames Ditton Centre for the Community to a private company, Vital Village, despite a petition signed by over 1,000 local residents calling for Elmbridge Borough Council to continue managing the centre, many of the user groups are understandably concerned about their future at the Centre. Having been let down by Elmbridge Borough Council, user groups are now particularly concerned to secure assurances to ensure their long-term future at Thames Ditton Centre for the Community.

First, user groups are keen to see copies of the actual terms for existing community groups and hirers based at the centre, and the lease agreement for Vital Village. This will enable user groups who have been based at the centre for a number of years to understand their future position in light of Elmbridge Borough Council's decision to hand over responsibility for the Centre and core community groups.

Second, user groups would like details of the proposed key performance indicators for Vital Village and how these will be monitored, in addition to details of the management of Thames Ditton Centre for the Community. This will help provide user groups with reassurances on the expectations of Vital Village and how they are able to hold the company to account.

Finally, it is essential that Vital Village's management board works in the best interest of community groups and existing hirers moving forward. This will help provide long-term reassurances to current user groups that when terms are renegotiated after the first year, groups like Thames Ditton Boomerang Bags and Men in Sheds won't be priced out of the Centre due to the new commercial fee structure.

Only by providing the above can community groups based at Thames Ditton Centre for the Community not feel that Elmbridge Borough Council has handed over responsibility for a much-loved and well-used community centre to a private company with disregard for its current users. I have to say, given the parlous handling of residents on this matter, I believe this is the very least you could do to provide some much-needed reassurance.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Raab'.