

**Statement by Kay Hammond
Lintons Lane / Phab**

Cabinet – 24th July 2012

Thank you for the petition that you have presented here today.

I completely understand and recognise the anxiety that you all have about the future of Phab's ability to hold your weekly youth club at Lintons Lane. I also understand the great attachment you have to the building as it has served you so well for many years. Phab plays a vital role for young people every Friday evening and we need to do everything we can to protect the service you provide. We have been working hard with both the freeholder of Lintons and the potential purchaser to have as long a period as possible before all the user groups, including Phab, need to vacate. It is therefore particularly pleasing for me to announce this afternoon that, subject to contract, vacant possession for Lintons will be 31st December 2013. This will give us all much more time to secure alternative venues to ensure the continuation of the important work we all do.

Following the Cabinet Decision made here on 20th December 2011, a working group was set up and I would like to thank Phab for the hardwork you have put into this. I know you have trawled through every building that is available in the Epsom area – some 57 - and have visited many of them to assess whether or not they are suitable. I also know that Surrey County Council space planners and architects have also visited to see how some venues can be made suitable where at first sight they have been turned down. I understand that Phab have not been able to agree that any of these venues are suitable with moderate alterations which is why I am particularly pleased that Nescot, just outside the town centre of Epsom, is willing to continue to discuss how Phab can make use of the planned new facilities for students with learning disabilities.

I can report to Cabinet and to you all that Surrey County Council has recently worked with FE Colleges in Surrey to successfully secure £1.3 million of capital for NESLOT and £200k capital for East Surrey College - specifically to develop education and training opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

These new facilities at NESOCOT will provide education and training opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities at the heart of the college, with plans for a flexible learning environment, tailored to their needs, including a cafe and college shop, enabling young people to sell products they have themselves grown in the garden or made in the kitchen. This prepares them with skills and experiences that support their progression to employment. Many of these young people are those who will also attend Phab's club on a Friday evening. Whilst NESOCOT will use these facilities extensively, it is possible for PHAB to have use of the facilities at your current club times. In my view these facilities offer the best alternative to Lintons and indeed will be far better in many ways, having been specifically developed for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. I urge PHAB now to work closely with NESOCOT so that the future facilities meet their needs. We will do all we can to facilitate the discussions.

Further, I am confirming today that Surrey County Council will finance the provision of an outdoor Multi-Use Games Area, or "MUGA", with floodlighting, subject of course to agreement of location with NESOCOT and PHAB and planning permission, through a budget provision of upto £125k. This addresses the remaining specific area that PHAB had identified as not provided in the facilities at NESOCOT. These facilities can also be enjoyed for the rest of the week by other users.

I am satisfied that the works at Nescot can be completed in good time for them to be ready by 31st December 2013.

After six months of engagement and another 18 months before vacant possession, I believe it is now reasonable for a member decision to be taken which we will look to do in the next couple of weeks to allow the sale of Lintons to go through and Phab, together with the other user groups, to be successfully relocated to good alternative venues by 31st December 2013.