

Pilmeny Development Project say cuts will isolate more older people in Leith

Around 50 people gathered recently to discuss what action Pilmeny Development Project (PDP) can take against the threatened cuts by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB).

The mood in the building on Buchanan Street was quietly determined. The group set up a physical petition on the day which almost everyone signed. [There is also an online petition which anyone can sign in support here.](#)

Those attending the meeting heard from local councillor, Jack Caldwell, who having explained the challenge of making the EIJB sustainable given its financial set up from the start.

He said that two years ago the council put an extra £12 million into the EIJB, and £3.4 million in the following year to cover wage increases. He said that it is not acceptable for organisations such as Pilmeny to be told mid-year that their funding would be cut and that is something which a stand must be made against.

Representatives from the offices of Tracy Gilbert MP and Ben Macpherson MSP also attended to hear about possible cuts to PDP funding and offer their help.

Everyone was encouraged to write to their political

representatives either on email or as a letter. Style letters were offered to copy or adapt.

The Edinburgh Integration Joint Board meets next at the City Chambers on 25 February.

The EIJB is a collaboration between NHS Lothian and The City of Edinburgh Council, and it was set up with a deficit of just over £32 million. It is little surprise then that the last time the board met they reported a deficit of upwards of £51 million.

But in a surprising move by the board late last year, just ahead of Chief Officer, Pat Togher quitting his £180,000 a year post to return to Glasgow, was to suggest making cuts to 60+ third sector organisations of £4.5 million in an effort to bring their budget under control. All of these organisations depend on this core funding which they use as a springboard to getting more money from other sources. With a £900 million budget most third party organisations have commented that this is a drop in the ocean to the EIJB, but essential funding for all of them.

Phil Attridge (PDP Chairperson) said: "Our main goal is to protect vulnerable local older people and stop the loss of their much needed services in this area. We informed local folk about the impact of the 100% loss of funding at the meeting and asked for their support to fight the cuts -which included signing our petition, participating in our social media campaign and contacting their local councillors."

Anne Munro (Manager said: "This was a unique opportunity to hear from local older people who are most directly affected by these extremely short-sighted decisions to cut all funding. We hope the Council and EIJB will listen to us and try to help us find solutions in these challenging times for all."

