

Councillor's plea to save Bathgate cafe fails

A plea by a Bathgate councillor for West Lothian Council to intervene in plans to shut a pensioners' cafe has failed.

A meeting of the full council voted down a motion from the SNP's Willie Boyle to intervene in plans to close the cafe in Rosemount Gardens in Bathgate.

Councillor Boyle said the proposed savings "don't add up" given that four council staff would be moved to other posts.

"Where's the savings?", he said

Councillor Boyle first tabled his motion to the last meeting of the full council where it was ruled as inadmissible. He took it back to Tuesday's meeting unchanged.

In it he referred to the opening of the Rosemount Gardens complex in 2017 saying: "The delivery of this accommodation offered so much to people who gave up homes to take up residence."

The cafe is "at the heart" of this development, he maintained, asking that the council write to the Integration Joint Board raising concerns about closure plans.

He added that the complex provided: "A new home that would provide them with facilities to meet their perceived needs and hope for their future. A building that is a focal point for the community and has become a valued hub serving a wider

need.”

Councillor Boyle said that a campaign group had pointed out that the cafe had only ever operated as a break-even operation and that staff were keen to work with the IJB to look at ways in which the cafe could stay open.

An amendment from Councillor Tom Conn, who also chairs the IJB said: “A report will be provided to the IJB on 26 June 2025 to specify whether or not a viable option has been identified for delivery of cafe facilities within Rosemount Gardens complex.”

He pointed to the £8.6m budget gap in social care to 2027/28 and suggested that the council should instead write to the Scottish Government asking for social care to be better funded.

Councillor Boyle told the meeting “Look at the human element behind this decision. The cost that’s crippling this cafe is because four full time equivalent employees work for West Lothian Council. Given that this council has a no redundancy policy where is the actual cost saving.

“It doesn’t add up, and that’s how the public are looking at it.

“Where is the savings? It’s a paper exercise and people could lose vital services because of it. Let’s put the politics aside.”

Councillor Boyle’s motion was voted down by 17 to 14, with one abstention.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter