



## Trafford Tories insist on their pound of Flesh

The Conservative majority on Trafford Council has again refused to accept in full the Local Government Ombudsman's decision that Trafford Council was guilty of maladministration in dealing with a lady with serious mental health problems. The Conservative Executive on 23 July said the Council would place a charge on this lady's home to recover the grant paid to her. At the Meeting of Trafford Council on 25 July 2007, the Labour Group moved that the Council should, in accordance with the Ombudsman's findings, waive completely the repayment of this lady's grant.

Cllr Barry Brotherton pointed out that it was very exceptional for the Ombudsman to issue a second critical report and to condemn the Council's actions in such strong terms. He said: "It is just not good enough for the Executive to delay their demand for repayment of the grant by placing a charge on this lady's house. That just means that the Council would get the money back when the house is sold. We have the unedifying image of the council hovering like a vulture to get its reward. In fact this lady's health is such that it is quite likely that she may have to sell her home and go into residential nursing care in the near future. Repaying this grant would seriously prejudice her ability to finance her choice of personal care".

Supporting him, Cllr Judith Lloyd said: "The Council has treated this vulnerable lady appallingly. The Ombudsman found that the Council had failed to advise this lady about the change to the grant rules with the result that she has been put at a significant financial disadvantage. The important person in all this is this lady and the Council should accept the Ombudsman's decision in full to protect to protect her legitimate interests."

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