

22nd June 2007

Dear David

West Sussex hospital reconfiguration consultation

We are dismayed that the consultation document which your Board will be considering on Monday contains only three options for reconfiguration, none of which include the prospect of retaining the status quo for West Sussex, with each hospital retaining major trauma A&E and maternity, as we have been urging on the PCT for many months. We are wholly unconvinced that the case has been made to reduce a county the size of West Sussex to retaining just one major general hospital and believe this is inconsistent with proposals that are being made elsewhere in the country.

We are not against change and have always acknowledged the need genuinely to modernise hospital services in West Sussex. However the overwhelming view of the constituents we represent throughout the whole of the county is that their hospital should be retained and it is only right that such an option should be part of this consultation document.

We are also greatly concerned by the claims in the PCT's update briefing that the single major general hospital option has full clinical support. We have already been approached by a significant number of consultants expressing their opposition to the single MGH model and given the opposition shown in previous meetings with professionals it is highly misleading to claim that these proposals are being clinically driven let alone that they provide a more desirable service for patients and clinicians.

We are therefore exceedingly worried that this consultation document is fatally flawed at the outset and will be met with a negative response from our constituents who are served by the local health service. Despite the fact that the consultation document is already nine months overdue from when it was originally promised we think that it would be in everyone's interests for you to postpone your decision until the option above is included as one of the proposals. As elected representatives of the vast majority of the population of West Sussex we are therefore calling on you and your Board to require that this option be added to the consultation proposals.

We are still awaiting any evidence that the SHA and the PCT have made representations to the Department of Health about the inadequate level of healthcare funding made available to West Sussex when compared with other regions of England and Wales. We remain deeply concerned that this issue, so vital to those we represent, has not been addressed.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Loughton MP
Hon. Nicholas Soames MP
Nick Gibb MP
Peter Bottomley MP
Nick Herbert MP
Francis Maude MP
Andrew Tyrie MP
Norman Baker MP

Cllr Margaret Johnson – Chairman, West Sussex County Council
Cllr Henry Smith – Leader, West Sussex County Council

Cllr Brenda Collard – Chairman, Adur District Council
Cllr Neil Parkin – Leader, Adur District Council

Cllr Liza McKinney – Opposition Leader, Adur District Council

Cllr Graham Tyler – Chairman Arun District Council

Cllr Gill Brown – Leader, Arun District Council

Cllr John Ridd – Chairman, Chichester District Council

Cllr Myles Cullen – Leader, Chichester District Council

Cllr Sally Blake – Mayor, Crawley Borough Council

Cllr Bob Lanzer – Leader, Crawley Borough Council

Cllr Roger Paterson – Chairman, Horsham District Council

Cllr Liz Kitchen – Leader, Horsham District Council

Cllr David Holmes – Opposition Leader, Horsham District Council

Cllr Gordon Marples – Leader, Mid-Sussex District Council

Cllr Christopher Snowling – Cabinet Member for Health and Community,
Mid-Sussex District Council

Cllr Edward Matthews – Liberal Group Leader, Mid-Sussex District
Council

Cllr Paddy Henry – Labour Group Leader, Mid-Sussex District Council

Cllr Heather Mercer – Mayor of Worthing

Cllr Keith Mercer – Leader, Worthing Borough Council

Cllr Bob Smytherman – Opposition Leader, Worthing Borough Council