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Your ref: DC/rr/H

18 August 2016

Mrs Victoria Prentis MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Victoria

Thank you for your letter of 4 August to Bruno concerning the maintenance and development of acute services at the Horton General Hospital and, in particular, the immediate challenge of retaining an Obstetric service at the hospital.

I can assure you that there is no risk to maintaining acute services at the Horton as the Trust is well able to support the Emergency Department, Acute Medical Services and the Trauma Unit. In terms of the long term strategy for the future role of the Horton, the Trust has developed a number of emerging options and acted in an open and transparent way with all stakeholders in sharing all details of the emerging options and the clinical and activity analysis. The Trust has also highlighted the financial and workforce challenges we face and how these impact on the appraisal of the emerging options. Staff working in all the Trust's hospitals have been involved in this programme and we have regularly presented 'live' updates to the Community Partnership Network, Cherwell District Council, North Oxfordshire Locality GP Forum, you and our staff. The Trust has also participated in the Clinical Commission Group-led engagement programme with the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the locality engagement events, including the event held in Banbury which was very well attended.

In addition, we are meeting with you and local MP colleagues on Monday and have a further event specifically focused on Maternity on Wednesday. As requested, we are also participating in the event you have arranged next Thursday evening at St Mary's Church, Banbury. As a Trust we are committed to developing services at the Horton General Hospital, investing substantial capital in creating new facilities and seeking to provide new services at the Horton General Hospital resulting in potentially up to an additional 100,000 episodes of care for Banbury residents being delivered from the hospital and thereby negating the need to travel to Oxford. This reflects the ambition of the Trust to secure the role of the Horton General Hospital as being the hospital of choice for local people. We believe the Trust is an integral and leading partner in the Save the Horton Campaign.

In the short term, the Trust is investing in services to support the Horton General Hospital in providing care to patients close to home with developments in our Supported Hospital Discharge Service, Acute Hospital at Home and Early Supported Discharge for Stroke patients. The Trust is also working with colleagues across the health and social care system, as part of the Transformation

Programme, to develop community and primary healthcare services in Banbury although I acknowledge that elements of the programme may be subject to a broader formal public consultation.

In relation to Obstetric services we do face an immediate challenge of maintaining this service beyond 30 September 2016 due to severe recruitment issues with the resident middle grade doctor rota. As I have previously explained, the current position relates to a number of resignations of doctors who have moved to other Trusts to gain increased exposure to Obstetric management as we have to face the fact that the number of births at the Horton General Hospital average four per day and this does not provide sufficient exposure for doctors who wish to obtain entry on to the Specialist Register as Obstetric consultants. Whilst we are continuing our recruitment campaign we have to recognise that only two of the eight middle grade Obstetric posts may be filled by early October and unless we can recruit additional doctors within the next week the Trust Board will need to determine whether it is possible to main a safe Obstetric service at the Horton General Hospital. The most recent advertisement resulted in three applications all of whom were shortlisted. Unfortunately, one doctor did not attend the interview and whilst two doctors were offered the posts, one has subsequently declined and the second, despite accepting the post, has not responded to our offer to support the individual to obtain GMC registration.

Bruno and I will update you on the status of recruitment to these essential posts at our meeting on Monday and he wishes me to assure you that we are exploring every opportunity to recruit to these posts.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Paul Brennan
Director of Clinical Services

Copies:

David Smith, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Councillor Yvonne Constance, Chairman, Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Barry Wood, Leader, Cherwell District Council
All Oxfordshire MPs
Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP
Nadhim Zahawi MP
Dr Bruno Holthof, Chief Executive, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust