

Sent on Behalf of Fringford Parish Council

Horton Maternity unit

Fringford Parish Council is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Overview Committee's Scrutiny of proposals to downgrade the maternity unit at the Horton Hospital.

The proposal is of considerable concern to Councillors and residents. Bicester and Banbury have seen substantial housing growth over the last 5 years, and growth will continue in these locations, at least until 2031 – the end of the Local plan period. The demographic of home owners moving into the newly built residential areas will be people looking to expand their families. Therefore the demand for a consultant led obstetrics unit in the Banbury area is likely to increase rather than decrease.

Should the unit be down graded this will mean that maternity patients will need to present at the John Radcliffe hospital for consultant care –and women in labour may need to be transferred by ambulance from Banbury to Oxford. Non medical facilities for patients on the JR site are already under pressure and, frankly, poor. Car parking is severely limited and waits by patients in Headley Way and around the JR site can be in the region of hours. Emergency access for patients being brought to the site in private vehicles is not available, and women in labour cannot be expected to walk to the maternity wards from the car stationary outside the hospital grounds. Parking for partners and visitors is not available and the current lack of parking availability will add to an already stressful situation when a woman goes into labour.

Furthermore the Horton Maternity Unit is badly maintained and a disgrace both o the community and to the Hospital trust. The Parish Council urges the trust to look again at the whole role of the Horton Hospital, and make it into a fully functioning District General Hospital serving the needs of the whole north Oxfordshire community.