



## Northamptonshire County Council

CLlr Yvonne Constance OBE  
Chairman Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview &  
Scrutiny Committee  
Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford OX1 1ND

Please ask for: Jenny Rendall  
Tel: 01604 367560  
Our ref:  
Your ref:  
Date: 20 February 2017

Dear Councillor Constance

### **Re: Scrutiny of the Oxfordshire Health and Care Transformation Phase 1 proposals**

In response to your recent letter regarding the above, I have discussed this with a member of the Northamptonshire County Council's Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee who lives close to the borders with Oxfordshire and therefore both he and his constituents are affected by these proposals. Our comments are as follows:

- The Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) is split into 2. Consultation times, dates and locations were quite inaccessible with only one held in South Northamptonshire mid-morning on a Monday and none on at a weekend so working people would have found it difficult to attend.
- The consultation appears to be overly focused on Oxfordshire with Northamptonshire and other areas being of secondary concern despite many users of Oxfordshire Health Services living in the surrounding areas. Also communication on the consultation was not considered to have been adequately wide. For instance, Milton Keynes had not been consulted despite their hospital being suggested as having capacity for residents alongside other hospitals such as Northampton General and the Royal Berkshire.
- Regarding the plan to downgrade the Horton Hospital in Banbury: This is considered to be ill-advised at a time when Banbury and the surrounding villages are growing rapidly. There are plans to build 30,000 more houses in the Cherwell District of North Oxfordshire which is taking place without any improvement in the infrastructure there will inevitably be further journey delays resulting in missed appointments and a waste of doctors' time. Added to this are the new houses

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being built in the part of South Northamptonshire where people use the Horton as the nearest hospital. Plans need to be future proof to take account of the growing population throughout the area.

- Apart from the distance from the Banbury area, parking at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford can be difficult sometimes taking as long as an hour to park. Any further increase in the number of cars would make it impossible. 'Park and Ride' is an option but not really for expectant mothers, the elderly or disabled.
- In the event of a reduction in the facilities at the Horton Hospital Northampton would be an alternative to the John Radcliffe but this is 30 miles from the villages in the extreme South of this county. Factors like this could considerably increase the pressure on the ambulance service.
- Although I appreciate that some specialized treatments can be provided only by main hospitals such as the John Radcliffe I consider that it is essential that everyday healthcare, such as maternity, A&E, and general surgery, to continue to be provided at the Horton. Horton Hospital had been previously discussed by an independent reconfiguration panel in 2008 which felt changes to obstetrics would damage accessibility of services. Emergency situations cannot be properly addressed by having to travel to Oxford particularly at peak traffic times and it is inevitable that delays will have tragic consequences.
- There had been inadequate consideration to 'low risk mothers' who developed complications. Examples given include umbilical cords around a baby's neck, emergency caesareans and low oxygen supplies.
- One reason why it is proving difficult to recruit consultants and doctors to serve at the Horton is self-induced by the fact that the Oxford University Hospital Trust continually suggest that there may be no long term future for them at Banbury.

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Phil Larratt  
Chairman – Health Adult Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee