

Gill George

From: Gill George <gill@gillgeorge.net>
Sent: 15 May 2015 15:00
To: philipdunne@ludlowconservatives.com
Cc: philip.dunne.mp@parliament.uk
Subject: Open Letter: Please can we meet to discuss this
Attachments: High-Level Critical Path---13.5.15.pdf

Dear Mr Dunne

I am writing to request a meeting to give you and discuss with you the open letter requesting your support for the continuation of a full A&E in Shrewsbury. This has been signed by over a thousand of your constituents. The number of signatories reflects the importance of this issue to very many local people. I would welcome the opportunity for a small group of the signatories of the letter to raise with you our strong concerns over the risks to Ludlow constituents if A&E and acute hospital facilities are lost from Shrewsbury.

In your letter of 6th May, you comment, *'At present the alternative proposals led by NHS clinicians are being developed, with business cases prepared for each, prior to a full public consultation later this year. This is the time when politicians and the people of Shropshire will be able to give their views to secure the optimal design of emergency provision across Shropshire for coming decades.'*

Possibly you have misunderstood the processes underpinning Future Fit. I attach the 'High Level Critical Path' timetable taken by Bill Gowans to the Shropshire CCG Board meeting two days ago. You will note from this that option appraisal begins this month, with the selection of the 'Preferred Option' in June or July. Business cases will not be prepared for options other than the preferred option. (The Pre-Consultation Business Case, now being developed, will be for the Preferred Option only, to be approved by the Treasury prior to public consultation; the development of the Acute Outline Business Case will be completed long after the end of public consultation; the Decision Making Business Case will likewise be completed several months after the end of public consultation). Do please check the timetable for yourself, and speak to the CCG if you are unclear. Business cases are not being prepared for each option.

Public consultation will therefore take place only on the basis of 'Yes' or 'No' to a single Preferred Option. This will not be about looking carefully at all possible options; it will be about commenting on a decision that has in principle already been made. If the Preferred Option is to be influenced, there are only a few weeks remaining to do this. Telford and Wrekin politicians (MPs and councillors) have fought hard for the retention of A&E facilities at the Princess Royal Hospital. Shropshire MPs and Shropshire Council have by and large remained silent. It is entirely predictable that the Preferred Option is set to be for the loss of A&E and acute beds and services at the Royal Shrewsbury.

Have the clinicians directing Future Fit got it right? I sat in this week's Shropshire CCG Board meeting and listened to Non-Executive Directors express their growing concerns. I have heard similar concerns raised by Non-Executive Directors in the Community NHS Trust. The clinicians who conducted the detailed West Midlands Senate review of Future Fit were scathing about the lack of an evidence base for the proposals, and highlighted the clinical and financial risks involved. There is by no means universal support for Future Fit proposals amongst local clinicians, and we are in touch with GPs, nurses and other clinical staff who are strongly opposed to moves to consolidate emergency and acute care on a single site. What is striking, looking at the detail of Future Fit, is the rising tide of chaos that threatens to engulf the project. Sitting back and allowing damaging decisions to be taken and implemented is not necessarily the right course of action here.

Our view is that this vast area – 540,000 people, across 2000 square miles, in Shropshire, Powys and Telford and Wrekin – need timely access both to Emergency Care and to acute hospital care. That means the retention of two full A&Es and two acute hospitals: the Royal Shrewsbury and the Princess Royal. For your constituents – in our rural area, with its poor public transport, and its inadequate ambulance provision – the consequences of having to travel to Telford in an emergency are deeply concerning.

We believe that politicians can contribute enormously to safeguarding local health facilities. Your support for urgent care provision locally is therefore welcome - but urgent care facilities cannot of course substitute for consultant-led

care in a medical emergency. We would very much like to meet you and discuss in more detail the issues we have raised here. With decisions on the Preferred Option to be taken in June or July, time is clearly very tight indeed.

Many thanks

Gill George

Chair, Shropshire Defend Our NHS

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