

Shaping your Local Health Services
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Freepost Nat 17963
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 3BR

Date: 29 November
My Ref: DP/NH/KC
Your Ref:
DX: 4819 Maidstone

Dear Sir

RECONFIGURATION OF HOSPITAL SERVICES IN THE SOUTH OF WEST KENT (PRIORITY 3)

I set out below the Council's response in respect of the discussion document regarding Trauma and Orthopaedics and the consultation document on proposals for Women's and Children's Services.

The Cabinet, on behalf of the Council, have adopted the views expressed by the External Scrutiny Committee, as its response to the above documents (a letter from their Chairman expressing their views have been included with this letter) with the exception that their view on the proposals for women's and children's services is that the maternity service is not a specialist service and should be provided at Maidstone Hospital as a core Doctor led service. If the proposals that had been submitted in the consultation document were agreed, this would result in Maidstone becoming a Priority 1 service whilst Pembury Hospital would be Priority 2 and Medway Priority 3. The impact to the Maidstone Hospital would mean that of the 2700 babies being born this year at the hospital, only 490 of these babies would have been born at the proposed Midwife led unit at Maidstone Hospital. This means that 80% of those births currently undertaken in Maidstone would now be transferred to other hospitals.

The Cabinet also wished to stress the importance of paragraph 1.4 in the comments of the External Scrutiny Committee that the proposals being put forward by the NHS Trust could only be accepted subject to a commitment

from them to ensure that responsive public and private transport mechanisms and high standard community care facilities were in place before the services were removed.

The Council felt it was not reasonable that decisions made regarding these matters had been based on population levels in 2003 rather than when the hospital would come into operation in 2010 when Maidstone's population would have changed significantly. It also felt that the current shortage of staff might also change at the time of the opening of the new hospital in 2010.

Additionally, from the discussion and consultation document it was not clear what would happen prior to 2010 and therefore the Borough Council would be grateful if you could supply it with the information on how the Trust will deal with the advance transfer of services during the building of the new hospital prior to 2010 including the issues of decanting of patients from Pembury during building operations.

The Borough Council would like to thank you for the opportunity of being able to comment on these proposals and I look forward to receiving your response to the issues raised by the Council in response to your proposals for change to the Trauma and Orthopaedic services and Women's and Children's services.

Yours sincerely

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Enc.