

COUNCILLOR STEPHEN ALAMBRITIS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
(Labour, Ravensbury Ward)

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Date: 6 April 2020

By email only: hello@improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk

Dear Sirs

Re: Improving Healthcare Together 2020-2030: Consultation

I refer to your consultation on the above programme. Whilst I am grateful for the short extension that Sarah Blow gave the Council in an email dated 26th March 2020 for filing its response to the consultation, given the unprecedented circumstances healthcare staff in the NHS and the Council are currently facing, I am astonished that you chose not to suspend the consultation.

By way of response I enclose the following documentation:

1. Completed Questionnaire.
2. Report commissioned by the London Borough of Merton of Roger Steer, Independent Consultant of Healthcare Audit Consultancy.
3. Report of the Council's own consultation process together with comments.

As you are aware the Council has regularly and consistently raised concerns about process, gaps in the analysis being undertaken and impact on other providers since the Trust first engaged on these proposals in 2017, and over the past two years through the Improving Healthcare Together Programme. Whilst the programme team has attempted to address some of these concerns, through the commissioning of the Deprivation Impact Assessment and recent work with the Council's Public Health team on additional analysis in the Integrated Impact Assessment, many of our concerns remain.

As such, the Council formally expresses its opposition to the Pre Consultation Business Case and to the preferred option put forward in the consultation.

The reasons are set out in the questionnaire and our Consultant's report. The result of the local consultation undertaken by the Council also overwhelmingly indicate that respondents strongly agree that Emergency Services, Maternity Services and Queen Mary's Hospitals should remain at St Helier Hospital.

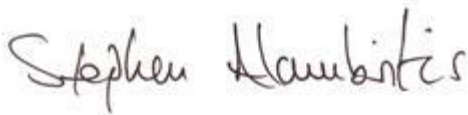
Further the Council recommends:

1. That you undertake additional work on lower capital cost options for services on two sites not three;
2. That the NHS seeks additional trainees, rota changes and incentives to staff to improve recruitment and retention; and
3. That you work with Merton's Health and Wellbeing Board to reappraise the longer term priorities and the need for (and possibility of achieving) additional savings in the light of the government's declared intentions to respond to disquiet on the funding of the NHS and the current crisis which has exposed the lack of capacity within the NHS.

I also confirm that the Council will be tabling its response at the South West London & Surrey Joint Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee at its forthcoming meeting currently scheduled for 4 June 2020 in order that it can be taken into account as part of their considerations further to the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks to everyone working in the healthcare sector in this extremely challenging time. As the circumstances we are facing are unprecedented in recent times, I strongly urge you to reassess and re-evaluate the assumptions made in your proposals in light of COVID-19, to properly address the questions of capacity and resourcing that the pandemic has exposed within the healthcare system.

Yours faithfully,



Councillor Stephen Alambritis
Leader of the Council

Councillor Tobin Byers
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

cc.

Sarah Blow, Accountable Officer SWL CCG
Dr Andrew Murray, Clinical Chair, SWL CCG
Dr Vasa Gnanapragasam, Chair, Merton Borough Committee
James Blythe, Managing Director, Merton Borough Committee
Councillor Colin Stears, Chair, SWL & Surrey JHSC Sub Committee