

Our ref: GC/ccth/lb/ac



8 September 2015

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr P Pester
Mayor of Bideford
The Mayor's Parlour
Town Hall
BIDEFORD
Devon
EX39 2HS

15 SEP 2015

Dear Philip

Reduction of Community Beds

Thank you very much for your letter, dated 20 August 2015, which I am replying to on behalf of Peter Heaton-Jones, the Member of Parliament for North Devon, and myself, the Member of Parliament for Torridge and West Devon.

Firstly, I must reassure you that we both share your concerns, and that we have been working hard to ensure an effective outcome to the proposals that have been put forward by the Northern Devon Hospital Trust (NDHT) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which fully meets the needs and requirements of our local communities.

We remain clear that any decisions made should be on the basis of superior clinical outcomes for patients. Therefore, to remove any community beds without being completely certain that the alternative service, Care Closer to Home, is comparable or greater, is ill advised.

We also fully share your concerns regarding the impact of these proposals on our rural communities. Peter and I were assured at a recent meeting with the CCG in July that at least two of the community hospitals would remain open. We are therefore seeking urgent clarification on the latest proposal from the Trust which is to close all of the beds and relocate them to North Devon District Hospital.

I am extremely aware of the strength of local opinion on this matter and continue, as I have for the last two years or so with Torrington Hospital, to represent my constituents as fully as is within my remit as a Member of Parliament to do so. This has included the above meeting with the CCG, further communications with the NHS Trust to express my serious reservations about the proposals and consultation process, a further planned meeting with the Trust alongside Peter, regular communications with both organisations, appearances on the regional news to highlight the issue, a scheduled day with the Care Closer to Home team to see first-hand how and if this system is working, meetings within my constituency with various stakeholders, and the use of traditional media and social media to raise awareness and encourage as many of my constituents as possible to respond to the consultation.

Continued

Please reply to the Constituency Office
2 Bridge Chambers, Lower Bridge Street, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2BU.
Tel: 01237 459001 Fax: 01237 459003



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With this in mind, please be assured of the considerable amount of work being undertaken by both Peter and I on this issue, and also that our communications with both the Trust and the CCG remain ongoing.

I have long expressed my concerns about the consultation process which took place in Torrington, and I will therefore do what I can to ensure a fair consultation process that results in our communities maintaining services which are effective and that meet the needs of those they are serving.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Cox Q.C., M.P.

cc Cllr J Allen, Mayor of Holsworthy
Cllr B Edwards, Mayor of Northam
Cllr D Goodman, Mayor of South Molton
Cllr Mrs C Simmons, Mayor of Great Torrington ✓
Cllr G Squires, Mayor of Ilfracombe

I will treat as confidential all personal information you give to me or to my staff. I may need to pass on this information to others so that they can help you. I undertake to handle the information you give me in line with requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

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