

# ANDREA LEADSOM MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
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OX15 4AA

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BY E-MAIL

Dear Ian,

Please would you accept my apologies for not being able to attend the Community Partnership Meeting this Friday. I am grateful for the efforts taken to accommodate the commitments of the local MPs; regretfully, I am required to be elsewhere in the country. Normally my Parliamentary Assistant, Tommy Gilchrist, would attend in my stead but he too has other commitments that day that require him to be in London. I would like to note my thanks, on behalf of my constituents, to my colleague Victoria Prentis MP for doing a sterling job in promoting and advancing the concerns of local residents, including those in South Northamptonshire who are equally impacted by the proposed changes at the Horton.

There are a number of matters that I should be grateful for you noting in the minutes. If there are appropriate persons present at the meeting who could write to me further on these, that would be useful.

My constituents are particularly concerned, overwhelmingly so, about the journey times to the JR from South Northamptonshire. This is separate from, but related to, the "blue-light" journeys from the MLU at the Horton. Many have written to me to share their heart-warming stories of the excellent care and attention they have received from staff at the Horton hospital, and I should like to add my own thanks to those staff as well. However, these correspondents have queried what would have happened to mother and child had they had to travel the long distances to the JR in an emergency, and whether their own children would have survived the journey. Examples included umbilical cords around necks, births within 15 minutes of arriving at the Horton, emergency caesareans, low oxygen supplies, and so on. It is simply unacceptable that the OCCG may be putting the lives of mother and baby at risk through these travel times. We all know that traffic on the roads in and around Brackley, Banbury, Oxford and the surrounding area can be extremely slow.

This leads onto my second point. There seems to be a lack of consideration for what you might term "low risk mothers with complications". I understand that low risk mothers are being advised they can use the MLU at the Horton in future, and high risk mothers will be cared for

*Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire*



through the obstetrics unit at the John Radcliffe, but the low risk mothers who subsequently develop complications are almost an afterthought in this process. What are these mothers expected to do if they need to get from somewhere like Greatworth or Edgcote to an obstetrics unit in Oxford, but the A43 is slow or closed for whatever reason and traffic has diverted, as it will, onto the local road network?

Further, I have constituents who have been advised that they should arrive with an hour to spare to find a parking space. This is the last thing that any mother, regardless of her condition, is wanting to hear. What about the fathers, or those accompanying, who may very well miss the moment of birth because they were driving round the car park?

Banbury and its surrounding environs are in a state of expansion, with significant new housing going up in the next few years. The growing population is going to lead to a large increase in pressure on the JR, and my constituents ask what forward planning is being undertaken to futureproof this?

My constituents feel that the closure of obstetrics at the Horton amounts to a loss of choice in their area, and that as South Northants residents they have been treated as an inconvenience to the consultation process. I am sure that Victoria will speak further on the consultation as a whole at the meeting, but it has been badly undertaken. It is exceptionally difficult for my constituents to understand the whole STP given that it is being split into two halves across a vast and unwieldy timescale. Further, the consultation times, dates and locations themselves are not accessible to all – there is only one in South Northamptonshire (held mid-morning on a Monday), and none on a weekend. This makes it very difficult for working people (including myself) to attend one of the sessions.

Finally, I have had no response from the Chairman of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to letters that I have sent him. I do note with thanks the responses from Dr Bruno Holthof and Stuart Bell, both of whom have asked David Smith to respond to me. It is very frustrating that I cannot get a quick answer on behalf of my constituents, many of whom are fearful of these proposed changes and seek clarification.

I am grateful for the time of the CPN and I look forward to receiving any responses or comments.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Andrea Leadsom'.

The Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP  
Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire