



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Communications & Engagement
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
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Jubilee House
5510 John Smith Drive
Oxford Business Park South
Oxford
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4th April 2017

Ref: AL/TG/1704

Re: Oxfordshire's Health and Care Services - The Big Consultation - Phase 1

Please treat this letter, and its enclosures, as my submission in response to Phase 1 of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's consultation on Oxfordshire's Health and Care Services. Given that I am responding as the Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire, and I am representing the views of my constituents in this matter, it was impractical for me to complete your questionnaire in the usual way due to its limited scope to consider what I am presenting to you.

Hundreds of my constituents have written to me in recent months to raise their concerns about the downgrading of maternity and other services at the Horton General Hospital. I have included a sample of forty of these messages which I hope convey the strength of feeling on this matter; I expect that most of these individuals will also have completed the consultation questionnaire and/or written to the OCCG directly

To summarise, many of those who have written to me did so 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, my constituents are particularly concerned, overwhelmingly so, about the journey times to the John Radcliffe from South Northamptonshire. This is separate from, but related to, the "blue-light" journeys from the MLU at the Horton. 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 or at the roadside, 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.

Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire

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 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; 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 – this makes it very difficult for working people (including myself) to attend one of the sessions.

It has also been frustrating that information and appendices have only been provided at the end of the consultation period, limiting my constituents' ability to provide proper scrutiny.

Thank you for considering the points I have raised on behalf of my constituents, and I shall be publishing this submission on my website for them to see.

With best wishes,



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

[Enc.]

Cc: David Smith, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Constituent 1

I was extremely shocked to hear about the imminent downgrading and possible closure of the Banbury Horton Maternity Unit. Please could you convey my concerns to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group on my behalf?

I've had two children born at the Horton Hospital maternity Unit, the youngest is only 5 months old. The staff and facilities there were wonderful, I could not have asked for more. Even though it was the middle of the night, my second birth was even more calm and controlled than my induction with my first child.

As I live in a village and not within the town centre, I cannot comprehend the additional worry, stress and pain I would have gone through if I had had to travel all the way to Oxford to get pain relief and give birth. I was writhing with the pain during our 12 minute journey, despite the use of a tens machine. The idea of waiting longer, and that time in a car where you cannot walk about, it would have been torture!

Quite apart from my personal inconvenience, I have no doubt that a longer journey before receiving care must add risk to the health of Mums and their unborn children.

Please support our community, help to save the Horton Hospital at its full capacity for us and for future generations.

Constituent 2

I wish to make you aware of my extreme concern regarding the proposed downgrading, or indeed closure, of the Horton Consultant Led Maternity Unit and the other cuts to vital services outlined in the Oxford University Hospital Trust's emerging options. I would ask that you convey these concerns in the strongest possible terms to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) on my behalf.

It is vitally important that with an ever-expanding town and catchment area of Banbury – currently at unprecedented proportions, that we retain the full services of a General Hospital in Banbury.

The Horton not only serves Banbury town itself but a very large surrounding rural area. Many of those patients find themselves without the benefit of transport links. Due to cutbacks in local buses and the duration and duress of the journey to Oxford is prohibitively expensive and stressful. This creates unnecessary pressure, which, is not conducive to the health and well-being of the patient.

You need to be physically fit to undertake the journey. Transporting small children on public transport is difficult enough at the best of times. Within the Horton's catchment, there are three areas of significant deprivation. These people cannot afford a car or taxi to transport themselves and their families to/from Oxford.

Hospitalisation in the JR also makes it very difficult for family and friends to visit the patient both in terms of transport difficulties and travel time. It is an acknowledged fact that lack of direct contact with loved ones is detrimental to the patient's recovery and well-being.

With the imminent threat to the maternity unit, I share the huge concerns for the safety of both mothers and babies. Such an action will undoubtedly put unnecessary stress on the mother and increase the potential for harm to mother and baby and will inevitably result in loss of life.

I am aware that Oxford's John Radcliffe hospital already struggles to accommodate all those mothers that currently use their maternity facilities. The closure of our Consultant Led Unit will add to that pressure and impact on other communities in the district. This is wholly unnecessary.

I would urge you to support that the full services of the Horton General Hospital are retained and that the OCCG are asked to reconsider the proposals. Services at The Horton General Hospital need to be expanded, not reduced.

Constituent 3

I am very concerned about the proposed cuts and possible closure of the Horton Consultant Led Maternity Unit as well as other cuts to vital services outlined in the Oxford University Hospital Trust's emerging options.

Banbury and the surrounding catchment area have expanded greatly in the past few years, and many more houses are planned to be built – surely a time to expand the town's Hospital facilities, not cut them back.

The journey to Oxford is long and stressful even for those who are fit and with private transport. Public transport has undergone many cutbacks over recent years so it is an extremely difficult and stressful journey to be undertaken if you are unwell, elderly, have small children or suffering the stress of undergoing tests for a serious condition. The use of taxis would be prohibitively expensive for many.

The same problems occur for those visiting relatives who are patients in Oxford at a time when the support and contact with family and loved ones are vital.

With our ever increasing local population it does not seem to make sense to close the Horton Consultant Led Maternity Unit, especially when the John Radcliffe in Oxford already has difficulty in accommodating the mothers already using its Maternity services.

I hope that you will support the retention of full services at the Horton General Hospital and request that the OCCG are strongly asked to reconsider their planned cutbacks.

Constituent 4

I have just been informed that the Oak Ward and the Emergency Treatment Room at the Horton Hospital are due to close in two weeks.

Given that our Brackley Cottage Hospital lost its maternity, then accident department and finally closed completely, I am extremely concerned that Brackley residents will face a 20 mile journey to a city not on any of our bus routes when suffering health problems affected by these closures.

I have also been informed that staff at the Horton Hospital have long waits for ambulances needed to transfer patients to the Oxford hospitals as the ambulance service wrongly thinks these patients can be treated at the Horton.

I am further concerned by consistent rumours that the Accident and Emergency Unit in Banbury is facing closure.

I would appreciate an up-date on the situation and would ask if there is anything you are able to do to prevent this alarming situation.

Constituent 5

I am writing to you to add my small voice to the many in the Banbury area who are astonished and bewildered at the proposal to downgrade or even close the Horton Hospital Maternity unit. This seems to me to be politically driven and/or algorithmic insanity.

The Banbury area is expanding at a bewildering rate. More and more houses and new estates are being built. It is turning into a metropolis. At this time, to make cuts in the essential infrastructure – in particular a hospital maternity unit – is reckless, careless and destructive to the social good.

May I ask you to be so kind as to pass these thoughts onto the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG)?

Constituent 6

We live in Kings Sutton in South Northamptonshire and you are our MP. I am sending this email to you to ask if you can look into the issues regarding the Consultation regarding the STP that is supposed to be taking place in Banbury in January and March. I have tried several times to contact them so I can book an appointment, either by email or phone and I have not received any response from them at all. I also know that there are lots of other people who also have been unable to make appointments, we don't even know where the venue is either, so how can this be a consultation?

In my opinion it just proves that the so called Consultation is just pulling the wool over our eyes and the decision to downgrade the Horton Hospital has already been made. I plead with you to use your power to help influence the Health Secretary and stop this devastating process which I and other people believe will result in more deaths. Banbury and the surrounding area is growing fast and we need the Horton Hospital more now than any time in the past.

Constituent 7

I am compelled to send you this to convey my deep sadness and feelings of helplessness at what I see happening to our nearby Horton hospital in Banbury.

My 1st child was born there, low risk but ended in an emergency as his cord was wrapped around his neck causing his heart rate to drop dangerously. Within about a minute the room was full of consultants and doctors and my baby was quickly and safely delivered. Time was critical. I cannot express enough my gratitude to have had this care. A transfer to the JR would, I believe have been too late.

I write to urge you to keep fighting to save our hospital and NHS. I often think of the London Olympics Opening ceremony and how proudly we showed our beloved NHS to the world in that amazing dance of nurses. Incredible. However, it seems that what should be seen as progressive, humane and ethical is being dismantled for some kind of awful alternative US style system. I plead to you to do all you can to help. Please please, our voices still aren't being heard.

Constituent 8

As I know you are aware the Horton Hospital in Banbury and the services it provides are under threat. I cannot believe that anyone thinks that travelling to the John Radcliffe at Oxford from the Banbury area is acceptable.

I read with disbelief a letter sent to a friend regarding an outpatient's appointment at the Radcliffe, one paragraph says "Our car park spaces are limited. If possible please use the Park and Ride service available to avoid queuing at the John Radcliffe hospital. If you plan to come by car please aim to use Car Park 1 and allow an hour to find a parking space." An hour to find a parking space for someone with limited mobility is this something the Government approves of?

I was fortunate to be able to use the maternity unit at the Horton when I had my two babies and more sadly when I had a termination of my first pregnancy at 22 weeks due to foetal abnormality. The stress and sadness of that first pregnancy was awful but the care of the staff and my GP surgery was amazing, how more difficult this would have been if I have been forced to go to Oxford.

The NHS seems to be in chaos in Oxfordshire at the moment, I cannot even book an appointment with my GP as it is now telephone triage and the village surgery has now closed for good.

Please do not let the Horton Hospital be downgraded further.

Constituent 9

I don't normally write to MPs complaining but on this occasion I felt I had to.

The people in charge at Oxford are showing a total disregard to the duty of care to the residents of South Northants with the plans to downgrade the Horton at Banbury. We in Brackley feel much closer to the community of Banbury than we do to Northampton.

We have all had the need to visit the Horton for x-rays, scans and operations. My daughter almost died when she was eight years old and we have the Horton to thank that she is still alive today and the mother of three children. It would have been awful for us if we had had to travel to Oxford and back each day. Apart from the cost, there is the emotional drain on you with a member of your family miles away in hospital.

Would you please raise this matter in Parliament? Twenty years ago Oxford was only used for the people of Banburyshire for serious cases but a relative of mine was taken from the Horton to the Radcliffe with just a nose bleed.

I cannot understand how Oxford is expected to cope when Brackley and Banbury keep expanding, as well as the surrounding villages. Almost weekly there is an accident on the roads and the distance will make a difference between life and death.

Please do your best to put a stop to these cuts. Instead of losing our hospital we actually need a bigger one built!

Constituent 10

I attended the presentation given by Oxford CCG in St Mary's Church, Banbury about the proposed changes to the Horton Hospital on Thursday evening. Victoria Prentis and a range of cross-party councillors spoke and asked questions with passion and eloquence about the devastating effects of the current loss of full maternity services, and the proposed loss of other services in the future.

As I'm sure you are aware, many Northamptonshire residents also rely on HGH as their nearest hospital, and we have the additional disadvantage with the new proposals that we are an additional 10-15 minutes further away from Oxford, than Banbury residents. I do not think you were present last Thursday (if you were, my apologies), however I hoped that if you were planning to attend any future meetings (for example I believe there is one scheduled in Brackley) my own experience might be of interest and encourage you to fight these proposals.

In the CCG presentation, an obstetric consultant was shown saying that there are two groups of pregnant women - one group who are fit and healthy and another group that are higher risk deliveries. The notion being that the first group are well served by midwife led units whilst the second group need the close availability of medical intervention. What the consultant failed to say, is that there is a third group of pregnant women. Those who are fit and healthy and low risk, but who develop entirely unforeseen complications during labour requiring emergency intervention. It is these women who need speedy access to doctors and anaesthetists, and the new proposals make this impossible.

I would like to illustrate this comparing my own experiences with what I would experience under the new proposals.

In 1998 as a fit and healthy 29 year old, I went into labour with my first child. After a few hours of labour we drove to the Horton but were sent home as my labour was not sufficiently advanced. We returned later in the day and I was admitted to the labour ward where labour progressed slowly. Several hours later my contractions slowed and the monitor showed that my baby was in distress as her heart rate was dropping. Within minutes a junior doctor/registrar was called and my daughter was delivered safe and well.

Three years later I had a very different experience when my son was born. We drove to the Horton on what was a very stormy night with gale force winds. Within twenty minutes of our arrival on the labour ward my son was in my arms.

My third child was born another three years later at the Horton with no drama!

Let us now consider how I would have fared with the new down-graded maternity service. When my contractions slowed and my baby's heart rate dropped, I would be transferred to an ambulance (taking an estimated five minutes of so to get out of the building and into the ambulance). I would be taken to Oxford, hopefully arriving 40 minutes later - although this may be longer in the case of heavy traffic, a motorway accident, snow, fog etc.). My baby would have had reduced oxygen to her brain for at least 45 minutes, potentially causing brain damage.

Constituent 10 (continued)

Following this difficult birth, presumably I would be advised to have my second child in Oxford at the JR. This would be a journey of around an hour (in good conditions) for us. My second child would therefore be born on the hard shoulder of the M40, somewhere between Banbury and Oxford.

I'm not convinced I'd have a third child.

Midwife led maternity units can be an excellent option for very many women, but they only work when there is quick and easy access to medical intervention as soon as it is required. This is impossible given the distance between Banbury and Oxford and I do not understand why the OCCG are willing to put the lives of North Oxfordshire and South Northamptonshire mothers and babies at such risk.

As I am now in my late 40s, and am not planning any more children, the changes won't affect me directly, but they will affect thousands and thousands of other families and so I felt compelled to write. Please do whatever you can to restore these services.

Constituent 11

I live in Brackley and am writing to beg and implore you to do all you can to stop the decimating of the services at our local Horton Hospital. This seems totally wrong getting rid of these services when THOUSANDS of new houses are being built in Banbury, Brackley, Bicester and surrounding areas which will have THOUSANDS of people and THOUSANDS of children and babies living in them. I feel that hospital services should be INCREASED due to so many more people living in the area. The JR at Oxford is not the easiest of places to get to, with frequent traffic holdups and accidents, and is so busy and so very difficult to park. I feel that lives will be needlessly lost but maybe that is what the Powers That Be want so that there will be less people to look after.

In June 2015 my daughter in law had to have an emergency C-section at the Horton as the baby was becoming distressed and was looked after brilliantly. I hate to think what might have happened if she had to go to Oxford. Would she and the baby have survived? Would the baby be brain damaged? All totally needless outcomes. It doesn't bear thinking about. And how can the JR cope with all these extra patients? I think the people who make these decisions live in cloud cuckoo land.

Constituent 12

I am contacting you to inform you that I have today signed the petition against the threatened cuts at the Horton General Hospital Banbury. As a constituent of yours I am deeply concerned about the prospect of the loss of many clinical services at the hospital which I fear may ultimately lead to its total closure.

Whilst I appreciate that the NHS has to make many difficult decisions in relation to the best use of available resources, degrading the level of service at the Horton will impact negatively upon the population living within its catchment area.

I hope that you will convey the strength of feeling that is evident locally to both the Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust and the Secretary of State for Health and lobby in support of the Horton.

Constituent 13

As one of your constituents I am writing to ask you to intervene in the shambles that is the Horton Hospital Consultation.

Your constituents are being ignore, lied to, dismissed and insulted with a pathetic whitewash of a consultation.

I copy below an open letter from one more eloquent letter than me, please use your position as a representative of the people of South Northants to help.

Both of my children were born in the Maternity unit at the Horton and I have personally been a recipient of excellent A&E care at the Horton, the Journey to the JLR would be over 35 mins without any traffic from my home (Middleton Cheney) and in most traffic conditions over an hour.

Constituent 14

I didn't try to book an appointment for the consultation in Brackley because the time advertised was during the working day and totally unsuitable for me. I had though at the time of writing to you tried to arrange an appointment at the Banbury consultation in March. I am pleased to say that I have now received confirmation of a place for the March Consultation in Banbury.

My Wife however went to the first Banbury Consultation at St Mary's church and found the whole experience frustrating as a lot of questions went unanswered. My Wife's comment to me is that the only persons who seemed to have questions answered were people wearing suits. The overall feeling was that this was "cut and dried" and the people running this so called consultation are not interested in the needs of the people in Banbury and South Northants.

Constituent 15

I am writing to voice my concerns about the cutback of services at the Horton hospital in Banbury.

Although a consultation is still in progress it is becoming obvious that this has already been decided, as reported in the Banbury Cake today:

www.banburycake.co.uk/news/15093484.Future_of_Horton_39_for_local_determination_39_says_Department_of_Health/

Brackley and surrounding villages seem to be of no consequence in this report, and it appears that Northamptonshire county council and South Northants council think that Northamptonshire stops at Silverstone. You can't even get a bus to Northampton without travelling to Silverstone first.

It is almost impossible for people in Brackley and the villages surrounding Banbury to get to Oxford and back in time for a hospital appointment without a car.

There is no public transport from Brackley to Oxford and Oxford city council is actively restricting parking spaces at Oxford hospitals, making driving there pointless as you cannot park when you get there: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-38922510

I think that the obvious solution is to keep the Horton fully open

Constituent 16

I'm writing to ask you to help with the campaign to save the Horton General Hospital. People need key services such as A&E and maternity close to home - it's unacceptable to require people in the Banbury area to travel to Oxford for these services. "Care at home" is not an adequate replacement.

As Banbury and the surrounding area are growing, there is only going to be more need for health care, and indeed more tax money available to pay for it.

The NHS is being deliberately underfunded to provoke an artificial crisis under which more and more services can be close. People are already dying because of this policy: please show that you care about the lives of your constituents by working to keep the Horton as a fully functioning hospital.

Constituent 17

I am particularly concerned about the down grading of the Horton. I do accept the value of concentrating specialist care in hospitals with the expertise and expensive equipment that it would be wasteful to spread thinly. However, the loss of full maternity care, by reducing to mid-wife only, and the threat to A & E are of great concern.

The rapid growth of housing in the Banbury area will inevitably lead to an increase in population. Access to the Oxford hospitals is difficult enough already, It is not only the car parking, but the queues for A & E are already frequently greater than can be met within the target. Imagine all having to go into Oxford.

Recently my wife had an appointment booked at the Churchill. She had a letter suggesting she arrive an hour early to enable car parking. The appointment itself was 40 mins late, and lasted 10 mins. It then took us an hour to reach the city limits and another half hour to get home. An equivalent appointment at the Horton would have taken an hour to an hour and a half. This one took 4.5 hours. This is just an illustration, fortunately not an emergency.

This is why I am so opposed to the downgrading of Maternity and A & E and these views are shared by the Banbury MP. I hope we can count on your support on this issue, even if the wonderful new recruits and financial bonanza you mention is forthcoming.

Constituent 18

Please listen to the massive strength of feeling at the unproven, unjustified and unsafe proposals to downgrade and close the Horton Hospital's acute services, an initiative being repeated all over the country in the name of STPs.

At the Banbury consultation, when asked the question by Banbury MP Victoria Prentis, whether the downgrading of the Horton Acute Services and their transference to Oxford were due to inadequate funding (and the £400 million that NHS England requires the OCCG to cut from its budget), David Smith, Chair of the OCCG stated categorically, 'No'. This was a blatant lie.

I feel it is also appropriate to inform you of the cynical and frankly fraudulent methods being used by the OCCG with their so-called consultation.

The questionnaire they have produced is weighted and angled to produce the result they desire. No surprise there I hear you say.

They have employed canvassers (at public expense) to target vulnerable, particularly elderly people in Banbury, on occasions offering to fill in the form on their behalf. Each completed questionnaire resulted in a 'Free' Health Lottery ticket (at public expense) for the targeted individual. This is a ridiculous waste of public money and is frankly tawdry, unethical and potentially constitutes fraud.

The timings of the consultation meetings have been poorly organised, or one could say 'tactically organised'. Whilst the OCCG maintain that they have been at varying times to allow a wide cross-section to attend, a significant proportion were held mid-afternoon, precluding the attendance of those working (like most people) during the day, whilst also preventing parents attending due to the school-run. I have no doubt that the OCCG will conveniently add weight to the questionnaires received, whilst disregarding or negating the thousands of letters received from those with passionate views regarding the down-grading, who have refused to complete the slanted questionnaire.

As there is no independent oversight, I fear this will go untracked unless dealt with. I would welcome any suggestion regarding how oversight may be maintained on the efficacy of this consultation process?

Constituent 19

My husband was rushed to hospital, somewhat delirious, with extremely noisy breathing and running a high temperature. Son and daughter in law ...were a wonderful help. I had rung for an ambulance but my son rang 999 again and said that an ambulance was needed URGENTLY.

The three of us felt that my husband was dying. In fact it turned out that he had an infection which had spread throughout his body.....He was moved sometime during the night from the A&E to the Emergency Assessment Unit [at the Horton General Hospital, Banbury].

[With my daughter,] I was able to fetch him home the next evening. Thank goodness the JR has not moved A&E to Oxford. My husband remembers little of what happened. He doesn't remember that he was shaking with cold although he was running a high temperature. He doesn't remember that the ambulance came and that he was sick before he left home. He doesn't remember the journey to the Horton.

.In the A&E was a young nurse who looked almost the double of one of our twin granddaughters. The first thing my husband remembers is that he said to the nurse, 'Hello [mentioning his granddaughter's name] you're here'. The somewhat baffled nurse said, 'Yes, I'm usually here'.....

“We believe in keeping the NHS going, especially in Banbury.”

“My husband was going to hospital at the afternoon rush hour. However long would it have taken to get to the JR?”

“We live in Northamptonshire but are registered with a surgery in Banburyshire.....Thank goodness for the Horton and for the ambulance people who do such a good job.”

“What I have long been saying is that there has been so much local funding for the Horton it is quite wrong for the JR to take over our departments.”

Constituent 20

I am writing you as a concerned mother, resident and patient of the local NHS hospital in Banbury, in 2012 I gave birth to my son at the Horton, brilliant care and a consultant was needed but my son was born with no complications. My second son is due in June 2017 and I need to birth at the JR due to complications which the Horton if correctly staffed would be able to help.

In time if the down grade goes a head Brackley residents (where I live) will be refused from the JR as we are Northamptonshire.

The issue being there is no transportation to Northampton of any form, if you do not drive you have to access to the hospital at all.

The only method to get 25 miles to Northampton if you do not drive is as follows;

- 1) 500 bus to Banbury
- 2) train from Banbury to Coventry
- 3) train from Coventry to Northampton
- 4) bus or taxi to the hospital

How is someone who is disabled, ill, cancer sufferer or a relative of someone in hospital meant to be able to afford the journey there on multiple times a week? How is someone with a child who has routine appointments meant to afford this?

Please do not allow this to happen.

Constituent 21

I am writing to you as my MP to express my deep concerns about the discussion and “consultation” to downgrade acute services at the Horton General Hospital, as part of the transformation and sustainability of the NHS.

These consultations are being done piecemeal, and I believe without due consideration of the following facts:

Downgrading the Maternity services and closing the Special Care Baby unit results in urgent deliveries being taken to the JR in Oxford, resulting in massive delays due to traffic, distance and space in the JR.

Removal of Intensive Care has the same time implications, and as you are aware in the event of serious accidents on the M40 would result in the same time problems.

The removal of the Acute Stroke Service is another vital service here in Banbury. I have lived here 43 years and it used to be the case that this service was provided in Oxford. Now another downgrading of our facilities

In 2008 it was proven by the IRP that changes were considered too dangerous due to the distance patients had to travel.

I recently had to attend the JR and was told don't come by car, take the Park and Ride, or leave at least an hour to park. How are sick people supposed to sit on a bus in the Oxford travel chaos to get to an appointment? I was unable to park my car at the JR car parks, and I had to park on a double yellow line while my husband attended his appointment. If he had needed my assistance it would have been impossible, resulting in a missed appointment. The parking situation was chaotic.

As you are aware, thousands of new houses are being built in north Oxfordshire and South Northants. How are these people going to be catered for in the Oxford Hospitals when the waiting list is already very long?

I believe the proposed changes are going to be pushed through as a knee jerk reaction without proper consideration of the needs of the community now and in the future.

Constituent 22

I have lived in Banburyshire all my life so have meet hundreds of people over the years who have received positive, life changing care in Horton Hospital, in particular the maternity unit.

I was born in the Hortons's maternity unit and now 30 years later, have had two children of my own there and I cannot fault the care I received. My second child in particular providing a surprising challenge to the unit's staff (she was an undiagnosed breech.)

I live in one of Banbury's surrounding villages and it was very reassuring that the fully equipped maternity unit was waiting for me whatever time of day my babies decided to arrive. I have friends who are currently pregnant and receiving care from the unit and supporting midwife team. These woman extremely anxious about the effects these proposed changes are going to have on their birth experience.

Surely the downgrading of the Horton is regressive and almost barbaric when the population of our town and surrounding villages is growing. These days it seems to be acceptable to drive further to everything; work, school and recreational activities; but surely when it comes down to the health and safety of a woman and her unborn child we shouldn't be packing them in an ambulance mid-labour.

Is there going to be a new era of Banburyshire's babies with their place of birth declared as the back of the ambulance on the M40 or A4260? Please help us prevent this happening and support our community in their efforts to save the Horton Hospital at its full capacity for us and for future generations.

Constituent 23

I am no longer living in your constituency but write to ask for your support in keeping the Horton hospital as a "General" hospital.

For many years my late parents from Middleton Cheney were treated on many occasions at the Horton, often in the A and E department, and I know from personal experience how excellent was the care and treatment they received there.

The thought of having to travel to Oxford for any treatment let alone emergency care is terrifying.

Please do all you can to ensure that the Horton Hospital remains a General Hospital to cater for the growing population in the Banbury area?

Constituent 24

I am writing as a supporter of the save the Horton General Hospital campaign and ask if you would kindly help us to be heard. I cannot believe that OUTH can even consider closure when Banbury area is expanding with new housing estates being built in Banbury and the surrounding area. These new estate will attract young couples who will eventually have families of their own and the journey to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford is too far to go in an emergency.

I myself have been travelling with my husband to and from Eydon to the Oxford Churchill hospital over the last few months and know that the journey can take at least two hours especially with the numerous roadworks surrounding Oxford - I dread to think what might happened to an expectant mother who requires emergency treatment.

Constituent 25

My apologies for contacting both of you in respect of this matter, but I live just within the S. Northants constituency but use many of the local services within Oxfordshire - key to which is the Horton General Hospital.

On Sunday there was a significant show of support for the continuation of consultant led services in the hospital and maintenance of key services such as the Maternity centre.

I understand recently that one of the other wards has now been phased for closure - Oak ward which cares for acute general medical patients, nominally the elderly.

Banbury and its environs has thousands more houses being built which will encourage several thousand more people to locate here, also villages such as Kings Sutton and Middleton Cheney on Banbury's doorstep are growing at a significant rate.

Are these developments really supposed to house only those who don't want to have children and will never age or need surgery?

Part of the issue is the divorcing of care from our wards in favour of management - walk around any hospital now and see how many nursing staff actually have time to consider the human needs of a patient rather than just completing their tasks to a strict time limit.

Next is the cavalier role played by highly paid NHS executives who want to deliver at the lowest cost rather than at the highest level of service - local care and centres of excellence are destroyed in favour of mega-hospitals in metropolitan areas which are inaccessible in times of need due to poor traffic planning and no parking.

Lastly is the problem caused by a real lack of funding - not the faux corporate PR, but real direct support. Mr Hunt displays his contempt for those doing the jobs and his delight in seeing the privatisation of service in favour of training and real world remuneration.

I truly am frustrated that Oxford NHS Trust has not been castigated for the decisions they are taking and allowed to deliver disastrous change by saying that the reason they can't support services is that they can't recruit to support them.

Any person of intelligence can see they are contriving a self-fulfilling prophecy - if they refuse to position lead consultants in the hospital and resource training there then no one can afford to commit to a post if it affects their career prospects.

For both of you the Horton Hospital will become a political hot potato - I hope you will do more than offer placatory words.

Constituent 26

I am writing to you regarding the proposed downgrading or possibly closure of the Horton consultant led maternity unit. I have attached a generalised letter but just wanted to add some personal feelings.

When I went into labour (3 weeks early), I was scared and anxious but I was in safe hands and knew if anything went wrong all the medical staff, either me or my baby may need where there.

Luckily I had a natural delivery and was discharged that day. In the future I would like to have another baby but the thought of the Horton being downgraded or even worse shut and having to go to Oxford really worries me. What if I went in to Banbury hospital and something went wrong, would there be time to get me to Oxford?

At the end of the day I truly believe **mothers and babies could die**. So I ask, please do whatever you can in your powers to help stop the downgrading or even closure of the Horton consultant led maternity unit.

Constituent 27

You will recall at the recent CPN we were told that it would not be possible to restore the service before March. Had I had the opportunity I wanted to ask why the situation could not be reviewed on a monthly basis as adverts and interviews are monthly.

The Trust reps also insisted that there needed to be 9 middle grade doctors to replace the former 6 Clinical Research Fellows and I think we all assumed that this was because the former had been offered experience in Oxford so would not be full time at the Horton. I would also have queried why it had needed a rota of 6 Clinical Research Fellows to cover a unit with only 1500 deliveries a year.

BUT new evidence has come to light in the form of the attached email from the University indicating that the CRFs were NOT full time and one of them who left at the beginning of this year to take up a consultant post has confirmed that the post was only 50% clinical at HGH, the other half being research.

This does cast further doubt on the Trust's strategy as in addition to earlier failure to see the need for advertising it now appears that they are imposing unnecessarily stringent staffing requirements.

Constituent 28

I have written to you previously to voice my concern at the removal of consultants from the maternity unit at the Horton but I am hearing more and more about how our local services are just not coping any more.

For example, a friend of mine had a baby 8 days ago. She wanted to go to Chipping Norton to have her baby. When she was in labour she rang Chipping Norton and was told not to go there as their midwife was out doing house visits. So she called the Horton and was told not to go there till the next day as they were full. So she called the JR and was told they were full so not to go there.

She managed to get into the Horton the following day to deliver her baby so all was well in the end.

As I am expecting a baby in March this really worries me as I feel I could have nowhere to go. What will happen if I have no medical professional to deliver my baby? Who would be responsible if there were complications and anything should happen to me or my baby? As I already have an 18 month old I feel vulnerable.

I'm going to discuss this with my GP and midwife too as this really isn't good enough. But as my MP I feel it is also your duty to protect the health services for all families in this situation. Especially as the JR are trying to reduce the area for which they will accept patients.

Constituent 29

As local GPs we would like to express our dismay and concern regarding the downgrading of the Horton Hospital.

We feel this will have a huge impact on our patients and make it far harder for them to access healthcare services. We recognise that very specialist healthcare is best delivered in larger centres, but what is threatened is the dismantling of basic services at the Horton such as Maternity and Child Health with the subsequent knock on effect on other specialities and ultimately their closure.

Inequities in service provision across the county and neighbouring counties will be widened and this will disproportionately affect the most deprived.

The downgrading will put further strain on an already stretched and vulnerable primary care service; both threatening its future and putting patients at increased risk of poor health.

We would urge all involved to act now and prevent this ill-conceived and short sighted action.

Constituent 30

Please keep up the pressure with your fellow Local MP's to keep the Horton Hospital.

If everything centres on Oxford people will die.

Constituent 31

There is a mass of misinformation surrounding the various consultations over the future of a number of elements of the Horton General Hospital. Can the Trust develop a clear plan of their intentions, maybe, where they see the Horton over the next five years and then explain the reasoning and the routes to get there?

When local elected Members of Parliament and the Leader of the County Council express concerns, it really would be sensible of the OUHT Board, both executive and non-executive, to take some notice rather than be seen to continue with an attitude that can appear almost cavalier at times.

It does feel as though the OUHT see the misinformation and strength of public feeling as smokescreens they can hide behind. A clear coherent communication strategy is required.

There is still little trust in the Trust.

Constituent 32

I hope you will have seen this morning the forecast for snow over the course of the next few days.

I am a high risk pregnant woman (with a potentially life threatening condition during labour) and I am asking this question on behalf of the many women across the county that are concerned about our safety during labour in the event of snow.

Please can you immediately send through the trusts contingency plans for women who may be at significant risk if they are unable to travel to the JR due to snow in the next few weeks? I'm sure you remember only a couple of years ago the roads around Banbury were totally impassable due to snow. Indeed members of staff at my company were forced to sleep in their office it was so difficult. . I am due very shortly and am lying awake at night in fear of what will happen to me. I am now regularly attending antenatal care at the JR and on average this is taking 1 hour and 45 minutes in normal travel conditions and then having to take on the impossible task of parking at the hospital. If I were not able to travel due to snow or my journey were considerably longer this would place me in very very significant risk.

It would be decent to provide immediate guidance for the women of the county whose current risks are being ignored and disregarded, particularly in the light of his new risk. The impact of the current situation is having a very significant physical and emotional impact on them at a time when they are at their most vulnerable. This is totally unacceptable. I would also like to remind you of your legal obligations to pregnant women under the equality act 2010, which requires you to provide regular updated risk assessments and reasonable adjustment to your plans in the light of new risk information.

Constituent 33

Please help us to protect vital services at the Horton. There's no time to lose. The midwives who delivered my daughter there were wonderful and kept us both safe. We've always taken our children there for medical emergencies. The staff have always been amazing. The NHS is the most wonderful creation our country has.

I would be terrified if I was a pregnant woman living in this area now, or someone who cared about her. Imagine being rushed from Banbury to Oxford while in Labour and the baby and / or the mother is in danger... during rush hour.

Constituent 34

There has been a lot of media focus on the ‘downgrading’ of the Horton Hospital, mainly focussing on maternity services. Whilst I too am concerned about this I wanted to raise your awareness to the threats to other services too - in particular stroke rehabilitation

I was contacted by the wife of a gentleman who had been treated at the Horton and who was admitted a few weeks ago to Northampton General with a stroke. The wife who is in her late eighties and recovering from surgery herself within the last year had requested he be transferred to the Horton as she was having to travel a fifty mile round trip daily to keep him stimulated.

Her request had been turned down as she and her husband reside in Northamptonshire. The fact that the Horton is regarded by most Brackley area residents as their local hospital (which it is) seems to have eluded the managers at Oxford. They seem to think that despite it being 25-35 miles to Northampton General Hospital, it is our ‘local’ hospital.

I am aware of a planned re-organisation of the in-patient wards at the Horton meaning that the stroke unit beds are being absorbed into the main medical ward which has less stroke awareness and where they are pushing patients to planned early discharge if not home then either to nursing homes, or to community hospitals in Oxfordshire such as Chipping Norton or Bicester..

They have an expertise in stroke rehab and are understandably upset as they will not be able to use this skill set as much.

I am also very concerned for South Northants patients. There is NO in-patient rehab facility in South Northants and I understand there is less rehab than there was in Daventry although that is also very difficult for Brackley area residents to access especially if reliant on public transport. I believe the Brackley Medical centre plans to be relocating to the building site on the North of Brackley, possibly including a floor of rehab beds to replace Brackley Cottage Hospital, but that seems to have come to a halt and even if it does re-start I understand that would not be until 2018. In the interim South Northants patients, who were promised inpatient treatment from the foundation of the Horton Hospital with a legacy from Mary Horton of Middleton Cheney, are being denied treatment in their local hospital.

I appreciate that for Towcester residents and nearer to Northampton NGH may well be the hospital of choice – but a large portion of South Northants relate far more to Banbury.

Please can you make representations to the Oxford University Hospital Foundation Trust Managers to protect the access of your constituents to in-patient treatment in their local general hospital in Banbury? And can you make representations to the Northamptonshire CCG to ensure intermediate care and rehabilitation beds are made available to South Northamptonshire patients without having to travel over 30 miles from the county boundary.

Constituent 35

The Horton Maternity unit in Banbury is currently faced with closure. I would ask that you lend your support to keeping all the services at the hospital.

Local residents will be faced with a long and potentially life threatening drive to Oxford.

Constituent 36

I am extremely concerned at the proposals to downgrade services at the Horton Hospital. I fear for the lives of the residents and visitors that use the hospital. Please think again and invest in the Horton, don't cut these vital services.

I gave birth to both my children at the Maternity Unit at the Horton Hospital. I choose to have my babies there as I was reassured that should anything go wrong during delivery that there was access to appropriate emergency treatment. The idea of being transferred in an ambulance the 45+ minutes to the JR in the middle of labour putting both my baby and my life at risk frightens the life out of me and surely risks women and babies dying on route. I would also be worried about transport arrangements if I was accompanied by my husband in the ambulance.

Access to a local hospital meant my labours were fairly stress free and I attended hospital a number of times and was able to be assessed and return home during my antenatal, labour and postnatal care. My second baby was much quicker than the first and I would be worried if I have subsequent children that they would arrive before I could get to the JR. There is also the additional costs (transport, parking, time off work etc.) and time of attending the JR over the Horton hospital, it is unfair to pass these costs to patients, particularly those on lower incomes.

I have attended A&E for my children (head injury, strange lumps and poisoning) and myself (broken toes, concussion and after a car accident). I have also had surgery for an ACL reconstruction at the Horton. I have always been impressed with the standard of services and care provided by the medical staff. I would like to see greater investment in the Horton Hospital, some of the buildings are looking quite tired and services could be broadened to improve access. The access to hospital services close to where I live has reduced the stress of extremely stressful situations. I am worried that downgrading of services will increase the cost to patients of attending appointments, that there is insufficient parking available at the JR which means you need to be an hour early for an appointment just to get a space or the costs and time considerations of travelling by public transport. It is well understood that traffic around Oxford can be terrible so a trip to Oxford could take a lot longer than 45 minutes.

The increasing population of Banbury, surrounding villages and proximity to the M40 means that the Horton serves a large and expanding population, which relies on access to good health care services close to where people live. The Horton is a vital service to our community, please save our local hospital.

Constituent 37

I am writing to express my deep concern about the planned downgrading of the Horton Maternity Unit and closure of the SCBU. This is a dangerous plan and lives will be lost. Emergencies happen during labour and there needs to be Doctors within reach available to deal with them. Banbury and the surrounding area need a consultant led unit to ensure the safety of mothers and babies. I would like to note the below:

- Banbury is NOT 40 minutes from Oxford. Everyone who has made this journey knows this. Heavy traffic, roadworks, accidents and inclement weather cause delays and women and babies may die in the back of ambulances. Not only this, but many women will experience traumatic transfers. Oxford is too far in terms of the journey time.
- One proposed ambulance stationed outside of the midwife led unit is not a practical solution. What happens if the ambulance is taking one woman and making potentially a three hour trip to Oxford and back when a further emergency occurs? Surely the money this ambulance costs would be better used to pay Doctor salaries?
- The recruitment of doctors has not been successful. It is clear that the posts have not been advertised in the correct places. The package offered to applicants need to be more attractive by offering enhanced training experience, better pay and longer term contracts. Failure to fill these posts lie with the Trust's recruitment procedures. The people of Banbury and the surrounding area should not suffer as a result of this ineptitude.
- People from a wide area use the Horton. It is not just Banbury, but Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire villages too, as well as towns such as Brackley and Bicester. It is a growing area with new housing developments. If the plans to downgrade services was considered unsafe during 2006 they certainly will be now with a growing population.
- According to the NHS Aims and Birthrights all state that it is a woman's right to choose where and how she gives birth. Not only is safety being compromised in the proposals to downgrade the Maternity unit but our rights are too. There are already 3 Midwife Led Units in the area (Spires, Wallingford and Chipping Norton). If the Horton is replaced by a Midwife led unit, you are removing the choice women are entitled to. Many women, especially in a first pregnancy, will wish to be in a consultant led unit to give birth in case of emergencies. They are entitled to appropriate pain relief and care, which a midwife led unit cannot always offer.
- I am aware that Oxford's John Radcliffe already struggles to accommodate those mothers that currently use their maternity facilities. The closure of the Horton Consultant Led Unit will add to that pressure. With extra patients to care for the pressure will increase and cause further unnecessary risks to mothers and babies.
- The midwives of Banbury disagree with the proposals. They are on the front line every day and they truly see what implications for care and safety downgrading the Horton Maternity would have. They have protested to the proposals and since they are the ones who will have to work within them, they are the experts. They, and the people of Banbury who are protesting against the changes must be listened to.

If the Trust's primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of mothers and babies these proposals cannot go ahead. It is not a suitable solution - it is dangerous and gambling with people's lives. The Horton needs doctors and they must be found in order to maintain a vital service.

Constituent 38

I read with dismay that there are plans being made to reduce some of the services at the Horton General Hospital starting with the Maternity Ward.

This makes absolutely no sense and the plans appear to be a purely cost saving device with no thought to the people of Banbury and surrounding area. Banbury is a fast growing town with several new estates being built and also have been completed not only in Banbury but in the surrounding villages. The Horton General is a vital service to all these people and must not be downgraded.

I have read that no real effort has been made to replace the three consultants who apparently are leaving The Horton and already plans are in place to convert rooms at the JR to accommodate extra maternity patients. I would like someone to explain to me how that can be cost saving? Converting space when The Horton already has space and Consultants need to be paid whether they are in Oxford or Banbury.

Has anyone taken into account that a journey to the JR can take up to an hour at a fairly quiet time and in the rush hour? It is considerably more. Has anyone actually driven that distance at different times of the day to see how long it takes and if it is practical in what might be an emergency? In addition people who want to visit relatives who are in the JR and not The Horton will have stressful journeys at what can be a very stressful time. What studies have been done apart from the one that needs to save money?

Who need to be considered here? The patients of course, their needs must come first and their needs are met with satisfaction at their local hospital: The Horton General.

All my family have used the hospital over the last 50 years and in some cases if the services needed had not been available locally, the end results could have been tragic.

Constituent 39

Being classed as high risk and 30 weeks pregnant, I am extremely concerned about the future of the Maternity services at the Horton.

I had my first child there and despite a 29 minute journey from where I live, managed to get to the Horton just in time to give birth. I have been advised it is quite likely that this birth will be even quicker - if I have to go to Oxford it will mean a journey of 55 minutes (without traffic!)

I am very anxious that this time I may not make it to the hospital...this baby needs immediate paediatric care!

How can an amazing service that is already stretched be considered to be removed...

The increased traffic going to the John Radcliffe, difficulty parking are among other concerns.

Please please do your best to oppose these plans.

Constituent 40

I would like to call your attention to the recent meetings relating the Horton hospital in Banbury and the discussions on moving from consultant led with SCBU to a midwife led only department.

I would like to express my concern about this move and would like to understand your position on this - myself and my wife had the pleasure of having our first baby in the Horton last year however my wife had to have an emergency C-section and our little one was taken directly to the special care unit with breathing difficulties - both mum and baby are fine and doing fantastically in part and probably wholly down to the ability of the Horton to act quickly and provide those services.

I hate to think what would have happened should those services not have been available and should we have needed a long ambulance trip to another hospital - I am sure the consequences could have been substantial and life changing for our family.

I would appreciate feedback from your perspective as our MP in Middleton and feel the Horton is a vital service to both Banbury and our village.