

11th March 2024

Maggie MacIsaac, CEO Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board
Alex Whitfield, CEO Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Subject: Ongoing work to improve NHS services for Hampshire

Dear Maggie and Alex,

I would like to express my thanks to your colleagues for taking the time to meet us at the Winchester Liberal Democrat office to discuss the new acute hospital proposal for Hampshire, which is currently in public consultation. I have also personally attended two of the listening sessions organised by Hampshire Together.

Over the last few weeks, my team and I have examined the proposals in depth. In addition to attending the listening events and Winchester City Council scrutiny session, we have spoken to many interested parties and individuals. In my capacity as a parliamentary candidate, I have spoken to hundreds of people on their doorsteps and access to local NHS services, including A&E services, are brought up more often than any other issue.

Most people state their preferred option would be to invest in and modernise our current Royal Hampshire County Hospital (RHCH), including our A&E and consultant-led maternity departments. Your consultation is currently asking people to choose between building a new hospital in Basingstoke, or near Junction 7 of the M3 with a new clinical model for acute treatment. Under this public consultation there is no option for the new hospital to be built in Winchester to serve our growing and ageing population.

After much consideration, and with conversations with local clinicians, my position is that we should retain an A&E department in Winchester, along with a consultant-led maternity department. This is not a knee-jerk reaction to the potential for downgrading of services in Winchester. I believe this could be achieved while also providing better healthcare for the whole of Hampshire.

There have been some very significant and unanticipated changes outside of your control since the locations of the potential new hospital at either Basingstoke or Junction 7 of the M3 were proposed:

- 1) Frimley Park Hospital has been prioritised for rebuilding due to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) - with the potential of a new hospital being built nearer to Basingstoke.**
- 2) In addition to the current RHCH site, three potential sites for a new hospital in Winchester have become available since the site options analysis work was completed in 2021.**
- 3) The Government announced in May 2023 that your currently unfunded project is to be delayed by 2 years until 2032.**

Together, these developments completely change the options available when considering the restructuring of healthcare services in Hampshire.

The need to completely rebuild Frimley Park Hospital due to the presence of RAAC is an unexpected challenge for the NHS, but provides an opportunity to improve and join-up NHS services in the region.

Although Frimley Park is not one of HHFT's sites, creating two very similar facilities in such close proximity seems to make little financial or clinical sense, particularly given the emphasis that your proposals place on resolving the current duplication of services, staff and equipment in Basingstoke and Winchester. Basingstoke and Frimley Park are very well connected along the M3, so it would make sense to restructure Basingstoke to work with Frimley Park when it comes to delivering A&E and certain other services. The location would serve the region around Basingstoke very well, meaning that a new hospital would be better placed further south in Winchester.

Locations for a new hospital in Winchester include the current site of the Sir John Moore Barracks, which met your site suitability criteria as a location of a new hospital, but was dismissed because at the time it was "not available." However, we are now aware that the future of this site is still undecided and it is available.

The Sir John Moore Barracks site has the added advantage of already being government property - saving the many millions of pounds required to buy new land at Dummer, near Junction 7 of the M3.

There are other sites that are also worthy of consideration in Winchester, including Bushfield Camp and the Hampshire County Council owned M3 highways contractor's compound opposite, which is again publicly-owned.

All of this suggests the need to update the property analysis, using a land requirement benchmarked against other New Hospital Programme schemes. If these sites are not suitable, the reasons should be clearly explained.

In summary, linking Frimley Park and Basingstoke and then building a new hospital in Winchester has the advantages over building a new hospital at Junction 7 of the M3 by:

- Being significantly better value for money for the taxpayer
- Reducing pressure on the ambulance service by reducing travel times to hospital in an emergency for people from Andover, Romsey, Chandler's Ford and Eastleigh and the Meon Valley

- Reducing travel time to an A&E for people north of Basingstoke and south of Winchester
- Keeping consultant-led A&E and consultant-led maternity services in Winchester
- Avoiding creating extra pressure and footfall on University Hospital Southampton and Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth
- Taking into account the climate emergency and local environment by utilising a brownfield site, and minimising journeys.

For all the reasons above, I urge you to consider the feasibility of building our new hospital on a site in Winchester, with particular consideration to the site at Sir John Moore Barracks.

I am also concerned that the implications of a centralised acute hospital on South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust have not been included or explained in this consultation. It is essential to maintain public confidence that the ambulance service has adequate staffing, vehicles and infrastructure to cope with the multiple additional transfers the proposed clinical model will generate, and I urge you to include their financial requirements in any proposals going forward to ensure the highest level of patient safety possible.

My Liberal Democrat colleagues and I would like to work with you to help this exciting project onto a pathway towards success, and ensure that we transform healthcare delivery in Hampshire for the decades ahead.

Your team has consistently said that you are open to and will welcome all suggestions and I trust this proposal will be given due consideration before a final decision is made.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny Chambers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Danny Chambers MRCVS
Parliamentary Candidate, Winchester Liberal Democrats