

CEO 18/8/17

COUNCILLOR PAULINE COWPER
(Labour, Cannon Hill Ward)



Mr Daniel Elkeles
ESTH 2020-2030
Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust,
Ferguson House
St Helier Hospital
Wrythe Lane
Surrey SM5 1AA

London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 3424 (Civic Centre)
Mob: 07811 595 559
Email: pauline.cowper@merton.gov.uk

Date: 17 August 2017

Dear Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust,

RE: Consultation on the future of St Helier Hospital

I am writing regarding the ongoing engagement and in support of the improving of St Helier Hospital at Rose Hill. I strongly believe that St Helier should remain on this site with all its current acute services intact, including a consultant led maternity unit and all of its Accident and Emergency services.

I am a Councillor in Wimbledon representing Cannon Hill ward. My ward has a great need for St Helier hospital to remain on its current site. My residents by and large use St Helier Hospital for all their needs especially as we have an ageing population plus a large number of young families.

My residents, compared to the residents in Epsom and Belmont also have the greater health needs. The needs could not be clearer: if acute services from St Helier were moved to Belmont or Epsom, you would literally be taking acute services from an area of need to an area of considerably better health.

In addition to health needs, residents would find it more difficult to get to either Belmont or Epsom. At its site in Rose Hill, St Helier has good bus routes, and is a quick 10 minute bus ride from the tube station. If acute services are moved to Belmont or Epsom, travel times would increase and disproportionately affect our residents especially those without access to a car.

There were 2,987 babies born in St Helier hospital in 2015, compared to 1,988 in Epsom, highlighting the need for consultant led maternity services at St Helier. The evidence is undeniable: the general health of those living in Belmont and Epsom is considerably higher than those living in Rose Hill.

I believe that losing consultant led maternity units, or major A&E services, at the Rose Hill site would lead my residents to use St George's Hospital instead. But the pressure on St George's is already overwhelming and this could bring it to collapse. Some weekends at St George's the Maternity Unit

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has had to close because of need. My local area is already feeling the impact of the loss of the 7-day walk-in centre at the Wilson Centre that closed in April of this year and I know that many of my residents now turn to St Helier A&E instead.

I would like to put on record that no one from St Helier and Epsom University Hospitals NHS Trust has contacted me regarding this engagement. I am also shocked that the process is being held in this manner. This is an engagement being run whilst Parliament is in recess and the schools are on summer holidays, avoiding the chance for our parents and politicians to properly scrutinise the proposals. I do not understand there to be any money in the Government's budget to open a new site and so consider the engagement a misuse of public funds.

5 consultations in 18 years have all come to the same conclusion: St Helier hospital should be kept at the current site with full services including all Accident and Emergency services, and a consultant led maternity unit. Any capital available should be invested in improving St Helier hospital on its current site.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Pauline Cowper
Cannon Hill Ward