



Richard Partington Managing Director

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Date: 4th October 2016

Dear David

Re: Future Fit Decision Making

We are following up on earlier conversations that we have had with you in the light of initial advice that we have received from Queen's Counsel.

We have been advised to formally raise our concerns with you about the decision-making process adopted by the Future Fit Programme Board ("the Programme Board"), to ask you to delay determining a preferred option for consultation and to invite the Programme Board to discuss with the Council how its concerns might properly be addressed.

We recognise that a decision needs to be made in respect of this contentious issue – we understand and respect that, however the process must be fair and be seen to be fair for the sake of all the residents affected across Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Powys.

We are aware that no decision has been made yet about the configuration of hospital services in our area and that, at this stage, the only "decision" to be made is about the preferred option. However that is exactly where our concerns are currently focussed, namely the process and resulting outcome of the evaluation panel scoring that took place on 23 September 2016.

We understand that the decision about the preferred option is due for consideration by a joint CCG committee soon. We ask you to agree to delay this meeting. We are concerned that the decision, if taken now, would be taken upon a flawed basis.

Our principal areas of concern are:-

-) The composition of the Panel undertaking the assessment of the non-financial appraisal;
-) The evaluation and scoring process;
-) The accuracy and sufficiency of the information supporting both the non-financial and financial appraisal.

The defects in the process which have been identified by the Council are significant. The identification of a preferred option, particularly if it is said to be preferred based upon the responses of stakeholders involved in the evaluation exercise, is likely to have a material effect on the nature of responses to the consultation, even if other options are still presented in the consultation document. If the public consultation is allowed to proceed upon such a flawed basis then it is likely to contaminate the whole decision-making process. If the responses to consultation are based on misinformation then any final decision relying upon that consultation will in turn be flawed and unreliable.

This is why the Council is giving the Programme Board the opportunity at this stage to respond to our concerns in order to avoid more serious difficulties later in the process.

Given the timescale for a decision to be made in reliance on this process, the Council asks you to respond to this letter by midday on 7 October 2016.

Whilst we do not want to go down this route in the absence of a satisfactory response, the Council will have no choice but to give serious consideration to what legal remedies are available to it.

Yours sincerely



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