

## MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL 1 FEBRUARY 2017

This council notes the current crisis in the NHS as outlined by the President of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, the President of the Royal College of Surgeons, the Conservative Chair of the Health Select Committee, the Nuffield Trust and the British Red Cross.

Rather than increase funding for the NHS or achieve efficiencies by integrating health and social care, government has instead asked the NHS in all 44 local “footprint” areas in England, including the South West London footprint which Merton is a part of, to create a local cost cutting “Sustainability and Transformation Plan” (STP) in order to bridge the budget gap of £20bn which is expected to have developed in the NHS by 2020.

In South West London proposals are currently being drawn up by the NHS. The council has engaged proactively with the local NHS where we can add value, in particular in relation to configuring community based services fit for the 21st century. However, in relation to acute hospitals, already it seems clear that the STP plans will be based on closing at least one of our local accident and emergency departments. Given repeated recent attempts to downgrade St Helier Hospital, local people will be justifiably concerned that the STP is simply another attempt to downgrade or close our much loved local hospital.

Whilst agreeing that government needs to find sustainable ways of addressing the £20bn funding gap it has allowed to develop in the NHS, this council reiterates its strong opposition to any plan that could result in the downgrading or closure of St Helier Hospital.

Whilst acknowledging the importance of improved community based services and the work to date the council has undertaken to feed into the NHS plans in this regard, Council calls on the Leader to ensure Merton Council proactively publicises the potential threat to our local acute hospital from the STP, the council’s absolute opposition to any closure or downgrading of St Helier Hospital, and the importance of residents making their voices heard in support of their hospital. Council also calls on local residents to attend the consultation event the NHS is holding in Merton, date to be agreed, and to make clear to the government that we will not accept any downgrade of St Helier Hospital.

Councillor Pauline Cowper

Councillor Sally Kenny

Councillor Jerome Neil

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