

Council 19 April 2023

Labour Motion: St Helier Hospital

Proposed by: Cllr McCabe
Seconded by: Cllr Williscroft

Motion text:

Council notes:

- In 2020, a joint meeting of NHS Surrey Heartlands and NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning groups approved plans to close the emergency, maternity, and children's in-patient services at both Epsom and St Helier Hospitals and to build a new facility for the provision of these services in Belmont.
- That since this decision was taken, the health landscape has changed dramatically because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the increasing demand on health services, and the cumulative effects of underfunding of the NHS by successive governments since 2010.
- That Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority groups, those living in areas of deprivation, those with underlying health conditions, older people, and residents with a learning disability. And that hospitalisation and mortality rates during the pandemic have been disproportionately higher among Black, Black British, Asian, and Asian British communities.

Council further notes:

- That St George's Hospital in Tooting is struggling to cope with local demand, with the Integrated Care Board consistently describing the pressures on the hospital over the most recent winter period as unprecedented.
- With concern, that pressures are also being experienced at Epsom and St Helier's hospitals, where bed occupancy levels have continued to increase over the last year, and that reducing provision at St Helier will also impact St George's and neighbouring hospitals in South West London.
- The serious issues which exist at St Helier Hospital with disrepair and decline, and the backlog of much needed maintenance throughout parts of the site, which were highlighted in a recent report by ITV News.

Council believes:

- That decisions taken in 2020 on the proposed downgrading of St Helier Hospital need to be urgently reviewed so that they can be taken with a fuller understanding of the impact of the post-Covid-19 pandemic healthcare landscape.
- That the proposed downgrading of St Helier hospital will have a detrimental impact on the residents of Merton, taking services that the most vulnerable rely on further away from where they are needed.
- That our dedicated and hard-working healthcare staff deserve better, to be paid a decent wage, and to be able to work in appropriate environments which keep themselves, patients, and visitors safe.

Council resolves:

- To support the formal request of the Leader of the Council for a new Impact Assessment pursuant to the Public Sector Equality Duty is completed before any decision is taken to proceed with the planned downgrading of St Helier Hospital.
- To write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to demand that the government provides the necessary capital funding to the address disrepair at the St Helier Hospital site.
- To write to the CEO of St George's and St Helier Trust and the CEO of the South West London Integrated Care Board to demand that they maintain all existing services on the St Helier site and outline their planned investment in the site over the next few years in light of the delay to the future hospital programme to ensure that the hospital provides an appropriate environment for local people.

Cllr Peter McCabe

Cllr James Williscroft

Cllr Sally Kenny