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Our ref:

Mr Nicholas Wells
Chairman
East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust HQ
Kent and Canterbury Hospital
Ethelbert Road
Canterbury
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Via email to Mr Stuart Bain, CEO, EKHUFT

05 December 2012

Dear Mr Wells

East Kent Hospitals Clinical Strategy Consultation

I am writing to let you know that through the recent East Kent Hospital Foundation Trust engagement process, Thanet District Councillors have heard a great deal about the proposed changes to services at QEQM, both from your Chief Executive, and from our local residents as part of our Overview and Scrutiny function.

The introduction of Major Trauma Units in Kent, and more specifically for East Kent at Ashford has raised concerns that essential surgical services will be drawn away from QEQM. Couple this with the expected consultation on changes to clinical services across East Kent, and I can say that many Councillors and Community representatives have expressed to me their genuine nervousness about a reduction in future services in our area.

I understand that on the 30th of November at your Board Meeting, you were to discuss your Consultation plans for the emerging Clinical Strategy for East Kent. Whilst I would have liked to have written to you earlier about this, I am sorry that our timetable did not allow for our points to be made to you before your Board meeting.

However, I would like to still urge you to ensure that the final consultation is both proactive and genuinely public. In essence, I would recommend that there is full engagement with local Councillors and community representatives; that the consultation and its questions are very visible to the public who understand what is being asked and that the options are clear and do not pre-determine the outcome, if other options are tabled.

I hope that you will find my comments of help to you during your discussions about the consultation and look forward to making our own response to the consultation in due course.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Mike Harrison
Chairman

EKHFT Clinical Strategy Task and Finish Group