

Date 10 July 2015  
Ref QEQM/PJB



Councillor Brookbank  
Chair of Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
C/O Lizzy Adam  
Room 1.99, Sessions House  
County Hall  
Maidstone  
ME14 1XQ

Dear Cllr Brookbank

Following on from a petition received by Thanet District Council Full Council on 5 December 2013 protesting against changes to emergency services at Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mothers accident and emergency department the overview and scrutiny panel established a task and finish group to look into matters.

The terms of reference for the task and finish group were:

1. To investigate the process currently adopted by East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) in the provision of trauma services, including how choices are made regarding the transfer of trauma unit patients;
2. To investigate the process for undertaking major changes to trauma services, including the way in which public consultation is undertaken ; and if public consultation is not undertaken, the way in which urgent decisions are taken and who is informed;
3. To investigate how a public body like Thanet District Council is informed in urgent cases where there will be no public consultation on a health delivery services decision that is significant to the local community due to the timescales involved; and how public/stakeholders views are taken into consideration;
4. To investigate whether and how accessibility issues are taken into consideration when making health delivery decisions (for example, the ability of relatives/friends to visit trauma units some distance from Thanet);
5. To investigate the pattern of visits to the Accidents & Emergencies Department at QEQM Hospital, to explore whether there are "repeat patients", and if so, the factors that might contribute to that, and how it might be avoided;
6. To investigate whether the delivery of emergency services is driven by clinical issues or lack to funding;
7. To produce a final report with recommendations for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and if appropriate to Cabinet for forwarding to the EKHUFTBoard.

In order to inform these terms of reference a number of health professionals were invited to attend meetings throughout 2014, these included representatives from the ambulance service, health consultants, accident and emergency union officers, Royal College of Nursing and the Chief Executive of East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust. Unfortunately none of

these agencies were agreeable to informing the task and finish group and as such they were unable to scrutinise the concerns of the residents of Thanet.

The petition was referred back to Full Council by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel with the following recommendation which were approved by Full Council on 23 April 2015:

“That in view of the observations in paragraph 6.1 (of the Council report); Full Council gives its consent to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel to refer the key questions of the petition on the perceived ‘changes to the QEQM Hospital A&E Services’ to the Kent County Council’s Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.”

I am therefore requesting your support and assistance in addressing the key issues raised in the terms of reference highlighted above.

Yours sincerely



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