



**Polegate Town Council, 49 High Street, Polegate, BN26 6AL**

Telephone: 01323 488114

Fax: 01323 487517

Town Clerk - Mr R C Tice CPFA

e-mail: [rod.tice@btconnect.com](mailto:rod.tice@btconnect.com)

Assistant Town Clerk - Mrs R McGlave

Direct dial: 01323 488696, e-mail: [rochellemcglave@btconnect.com](mailto:rochellemcglave@btconnect.com)

Town Mayor - Cllr Gerald Carter

04 July 2006

**Ms Candy Morris**

Chief Executive

Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority

York House

18-20 Massetts Road

Horley

RH6 7DE

Dear Ms Morris

**Proposed Downgrading of the Eastbourne District General Hospital and Amalgamation with the Conquest Hospital, Hastings**

On behalf of the Town Council I am writing to express the utmost concern at the proposals to downgrade the District General Hospital to what would effectively be little more than a Cottage Hospital facility.

There is no doubt that the residents of Polegate would be very badly affected particularly in view of the impending large scale housing development planned for the town over the next five years which could result in a possible 2200 new houses. To expect people to travel to Hastings for treatment, particularly urgent treatment, is unacceptable. The existing public transport system does not provide anywhere near the required level of service and the ambulance service is already stretched to the limit.

The idea that local people should use local services is in itself sound and sensible, unfortunately however, the proposals as outlined in your document, Creating an NHS fit for the future, proposes to move some services to a central facility which is out of the area and virtually inaccessible except by car, taxi or ambulance.

The Accident and Emergency Department at the DGH is extremely well used and has long waiting times for treatment. There is therefore no justification for scaling down this facility especially as it serves a large catchment area and is a vital service that needs to be retained.


With regard to the recent consultation meeting held in Eastbourne, Councillors that attended were concerned and somewhat angered that the essence of the meeting was to convince participants of the need to centralise services and that this was conducted in a particularly manipulative way. For instance, the question 'what are you prepared to go without' or 'what sacrifices would you make' to achieve retention of the services you desire should remain at the DGH and within the local area.

The point is that the people of Polegate and indeed Eastbourne and the area served by the DGH are not prepared to 'give up' any essential services nor can agreement be forthcoming to the proposals put forward at this meeting and in your discussion document.

It would seem that your consultation exercise is merely a paper one as it obviously appears that despite input from people well equipped to advise, and with local knowledge, is being ignored to the detriment of the whole community. The implementation of your proposals spells nothing short of disaster for this area and we at Polegate Town Council have no doubt that there will be many more fatalities and deaths through accident and illness purely because people will not be able to access the type of medical assistance required particularly in emergencies.

This Council therefore strongly objects to the proposal to merge the DGH and Conquest Hospitals and the downgrading of facilities and would urge you to let common sense prevail especially in the light of overwhelming opposition from the very people who would be so badly affected by this decision.

Yours sincerely



Rochelle McGlave

cc: Kim Hodgson, Chief Executive, East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust  
Debbie Bamford, Chief Executive, Eastbourne Downs Primary Care Trust  
Rt. Hon. Patricia Hewitt, MP, Secretary of State for Health  
Norman Baker MP  
Nigel Waterson MP