

13<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Dear Sir Graeme,

**West Sussex Primary Care Trust - North East County Review**

I am writing simply to put down a marker with you and your Review Panel.

As you know, both the Support the Princess Royal Hospital Campaign and I have been actively involved in seeking to represent public views and concerns to the PCT in connection with the *Fit for the Future* exercise.

We are heartened that the PCT has had the good sense to adopt your recommendation for the preservation of A&E facilities at the two hospitals in the county to be designated LGH-plus (which, by the way, we believe should now revert to a DGH designation), but we continue to be concerned about the outstanding issue of maternity services – and, more particularly, the level of service which is to be maintained at the PRH in Mid Sussex. You will know that we are anxious to retain a full obstetric service but, at absolute minimum, it would be profoundly wrong if the PRH was left with anything less than a stand-alone midwife-led unit. That downgrade of itself would mean the displacement of some 2,000 births from the PRH to other less convenient (and we believe, less safe) venues.

To this end, and without in any way seeking to pre-judge the final outcome of the *FFF* determination process, we are concerned to have a real voice in connection with the forthcoming NE County review. We believe that women and their babies in central and northern Mid Sussex need local care, and that your review will need to look urgently at the possibility of there being more than one stand-alone midwife-led unit to cover the rapidly growing populations of northern Horsham, Crawley and northern Mid Sussex – assuming that the PRH loses its obstetric and neo-natal function.

This, of course, would have to be funded outside the envelope set aside for *FFF* changes, but we believe that that should not impose an insuperable problem.

In summary, we should be grateful if you would formally note our interest as stakeholders and would ensure please that your supporting staff keep us updated with information and afford us adequate opportunity to make robust representations to the panel at the appropriate time.

Thank you in anticipation of your response.

Sir Graeme Catto,  
Chairman,  
North East Review Panel,  
C/O West Sussex PCT