

Immediate Release

20th June 2007

Nicholas Soames's reaction to the publication of the options paper this morning on the *Fit for the Future* Consultation and the future of the Princess Royal Hospital.

1. The Trust is presenting a fait accompli, saying that there must be a reduction from three acute hospitals in West Sussex to one. The 'options' are about which of the three should be downgraded. This is not a consultation – it is Hobson's choice.
2. The proposals for the Princess Royal Hospital in particular are totally unacceptable. We must retain our A&E and full maternity services and we regard the proposals as completely irresponsible.
3. The public have consistently said that they do not want any of their hospitals downgraded, yet their voice has been ignored. 18 months after the pretence of listening to the public, the real agenda is finally out in the open. The phoney war is over.
4. There will be a huge fight against these appalling plans and we will do everything in our power to voice the concerns of local people.
5. The underlying reason for all this is to bail out the Sussex County in Brighton which is financially unviable and needs the economies of scale of patients from Worthing and Princess Royal yet is struggling to cope with the demands on the hospital at that moment. We are sacrificing two perfectly good, cost effective and well liked hospitals to prop up Brighton which has an inferior track record on financial management, waiting times, hospital infections, accessibility etc.