

Dear constituent

I promised to come back to you about the current public engagement exercise by the Epsom and St Helier Trust about the future of local hospital services.

Firstly, it has been clarified to me that this is not a proper consultation exercise, and that the NHS is nowhere near making any decisions even about whether it will make changes to the current hospital set-up in South West London. It's pretty clear that the Epsom and St Helier Trust has ploughed ahead with this exercise with little or no enthusiasm from other parts of the NHS about what it is doing. I have been assured that the outcome of the discussion will have little or no bearing on future decision making.

This is probably fortunate, as the questionnaire put out by the Trust is extremely vague, and the timing, in August, is very poorly chosen if the public are to have a proper chance of expressing a view. I have questioned this with the Chairman of the Trust, as it feels as if the questions have been designed to secure vague answers that allow work to continue with a veneer of public approval.

I have always said that I support improvements to healthcare for our area, and I have also always said that if there were a genuinely credible plan for a new hospital, it would at least merit a serious discussion locally. But this exercise is not that credible plan. Crucially there is no commitment from the NHS to the principle of funding a brand new hospital in SW London, where in recent years the push has been to reduce and not increase the number of hospital sites. There are a whole range of other unanswered questions about the detail of this.

I remain as committed as ever to Epsom's future, as it seems is the NHS in Surrey. It is a part of Surrey's strategy going forward. It needs some improvement to its buildings, but it is doing a very good job for patients at the moment and I do not want that to change. I get far far more praise than concern about care at the hospital, and that is a real tribute to its staff. I believe that Epsom's future will prove to be as part of the NHS in the county.

It would be easy to ignore the current exercise, as it does seem to be of little actual importance.

However if you want to raise concerns, you can write to:

Chief Executive of the Trust at St Helier Hospital

Wrythe Lane

Carshalton SM5 1AA

or email me, using the [news@chrisgrayling.net](mailto:news@chrisgrayling.net) address, and I will forward all messages to him in

**The two points I would ask you to make:**

- are the questions he is asking the public over the summer period much too vague to give proper answers about the future.
- that our community remains committed to retaining acute services in Epsom.

With best wishes

**Chris Grayling**

[Translate](#) ▼

**These are the questions he is putting to the public:**

- *Do you agree with our aim to provide as much care as possible from our existing hospital sites at St Helier and Epsom and do this by working more closely with the other local health and care providers?*
- *Do you think we have made the case that we will improve patient care by bringing together our services for our sickest or most at-risk patients on a new specialist acute facility on one site?*
- *We have set out several scenarios on how we can do this. Do you think we should consider any other scenarios?*
- *How would you like to be involved in these discussions in the future?*
- *Is there anything else you would like to tell us?*

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