

Councillor Stephen Cowan

Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU



12 June 2017

Clare Parker
Chief Officer
CWHHE and SRO for Shaping
a Healthier Future

Dr Tracey Batten
Chief Executive
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Dear Ms Parker and Dr Batten

In your letter dated 27 March 2017, you say quite openly that you intend to “continue” with the proposals for Charing Cross Hospital “set out in the service strategy [Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF)] for NW London, agreed in 2013”. Your own documents explain that those proposals involve:

- Demolishing the current Charing Cross Hospital and selling off most the site
- Replacing the current Charing Cross Hospital with a series of clinics on a site no more than 13% the size of the current hospital
- Re-branding these clinics as a “local hospital”
- Replacing the current A&E with an urgent care clinic
- Losing more than 300 and possibly all the acute care beds.

So when you write that “there have never been any plans to close Charing Cross Hospital” you are not in any way presenting the whole truth of what you propose to do.

Indeed, your case that you’re not closing Charing Cross Hospital appears to rely on the fact that you are planning to name the new clinic, that you’re planning to open, a “local hospital”. That strikes me as playing fast and loose with the English language and demonstrates a contempt for the public who you evidently hope are taken in by such misrepresentation.

It is clear from your publication of the implementation business case, or strategic outline case part 1 (SOC1), that your plans have not changed in any way. In fact, that document reiterates your plan (see p6 of the executive summary).

The public version of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) has carefully omitted mention of the SaHF plans for Charing Cross Hospital but the “NW London delivery plan for the STP” (marked “strictly confidential not for wider circulation”) reconfirms, on page 59, that there are continuing plans to downgrade two major hospitals to “local hospitals” which, as you well know and state in the SaHF plans, are Ealing and Charing Cross hospitals.

As you know, it was the conclusion of the Michael Mansfield Independent Healthcare Commission and the subsequent independent review of health and social care in North West London that your plans for Charing Cross and Ealing hospitals are flawed.

This council has consistently sought assurances from you that you would change your plans for Charing Cross Hospital. You have repeatedly refused to do that. In fact, you have consistently failed to meet your own deadlines to even publish the business plan detailing how your proposals for Charing Cross will work. Despite this, you have also repeatedly confirmed that you still intend to implement the plans after 2021.

You published your letter of complaint to me on your website and briefed the media on it before sending it to me. Please explain:

1. What meetings took place in developing this approach and who attended the meetings?
2. What discussions took place with government and all other stakeholders, when where these discussions, and specifically who were all the people consulted and briefed about your complaint?
3. What meetings did Mr Christian Cubitt, Director of Communications for CWHHE, and other communications staff in your organisations attend, what advice did they give, and what was the role they played drafting and briefing the media and all stakeholders?

I wholly reject your assertion that the council's letter to H&F residents highlighting the continuing threat to services at Charing Cross Hospital has breached the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Your complaint appears to be a crude attempt to gag the council from letting people know what your actual plans for Charing Cross Hospital are.

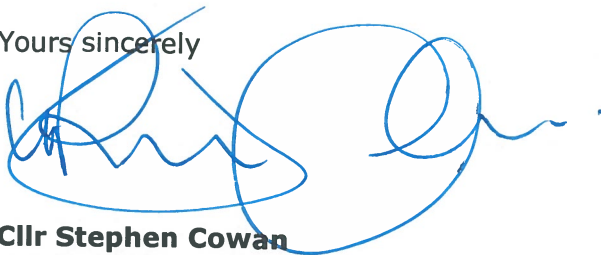
Furthermore, I should be grateful if you would explain your thinking in putting these quotes into the public realm a day before the general election and two council by-elections in LBHF during purdah:

<http://www.prweek.com/article/1435595/war-words-hospital-closure-plan-escalated-following-general-election-say-nhs-chiefs#sJx5OjTM2IDJxXst.99>

The Independent Mansfield Healthcare Commission was very clear in its criticism of your plans. The council, as the body responsible for public health in the borough, supports their view and considers that it has a duty to alert the public as to what it is you propose to do.

Your approach to communicating with the public is at best thoroughly disingenuous. We call on you to review this and instead work positively with us to put the health and wellbeing of the public first.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Stephen Cowan

Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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- **The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP**, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- **Jonathan Ashworth MP**, Shadow Secretary of State for Health
- **Andy Slaughter MP**, Member of Parliament for Hammersmith
- **Cllr Ben Coleman**, H&F Cabinet Member for Health and Adult social care
- **Kim Dero**, H&F Chief Executive