

Thank you – Members:

I start by making it clear that I oppose the closure of Community Hospitals – specifically the closure of Teignmouth Hospital.

On this occasion I will focus on evidence:

- ◆ not about the history of Hospital provision in Teignmouth and the surrounding area;
- ◆ not about the problems faced by many elderly people in the area, just getting to Dawlish Hospital;
- ◆ not about the stupidity of planing a Health Centre in a flood plain – especially with water levels rising;
- ◆ not about the waste of money all these plans represent.

My interest today is evidence on safety:

Evidence that existing Hospital provision is not meeting demand.

On the 16th of this month – the ‘Health Care Safety Investigation Branch’ published an urgent report stating that the delays in hospital admissions - evidenced by the queues of ambulances outside hospitals - was presenting a safety risk to the public. That’s us!

Evidence that the closure of nursing homes and care homes is reducing discharge from hospitals. That’s us!

Evidence that the number of home social carers is reducing – all again causing bed blocking. That us!

I have seen no evidence from the C.C.G. that numbers will start to ‘stack up’ if local Hospitals continue to be closed. Paignton, Dartmouth, and now Teignmouth – 100 beds lost in just a few years. While ambulances queue - all because of blocked beds – people can’t be discharged!

Can I respectfully ask this scrutiny committee to do two things:

1. Delay any decision to support the final disposal of Teignmouth Hospital, until the CCG produces evidence that the loss of the 25 or so beds in Teignmouth Hospital – that’s its capacity – is a ‘safe’ action.
2. Refer this proposal to the Health Care Safety Investigation Branch asking them to assess the impact on the safety of local provision.
When medical and social care staff have been recruited and trained and when the funding gaps are bridged, we will need to have premises available to create a worthy local health care service – variety of provision of course and a provision with no patients queueing at the door.

I am no longer involved in party politics and I have no wish to make Patient Care a party political issue, but in two days there is a by-election in Devon:

‘The Mail’ – 8 days ago – reported that canvassers were hearing that the NHS is one of the most significant issues – I quote from The Mail: “the Conservative Party allows rural health services to be cut to the bone.”

Please refuse to support the disposal of Teignmouth Hospital for now. Let us all see the C.C.G.’s evidence, have the safety of the plans analysed and refer to the Secretary of State.

Please! Pause – evidence and refer.

Thank you.