

xx October 2021

Ms. Patricia Coker
Head of Partnerships and Performance: Social Care, Health and Housing
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford, SG17 5TQ

Dear Patricia,

Thank you for your time in attending the meeting of the Leighton-Linslade Health Services Task and Finish Group on Monday, 18 October 2021.

On behalf of the Group, may I thank you for the presentation provided. I understand there were reasons why this could not be circulated in advance of the meeting but as you will appreciate, Members would have liked the opportunity to read and digest the information beforehand and to therefore be in a better position to ask specific questions.

I know you are aware from our previous meetings that the Group has made several requests for sight of the strategic outline case for an integrated health and care hub in Leighton-Linslade. On Monday this request was repeated and a further request was made for sight of the findings of the stakeholder workshops held in May 2018. I understand that these documents contain sensitive information and are jointly owned. The town council does regularly receive confidential papers and if any restricted information is received, it will be treated in the appropriate manner.

In my previous letter of July, I passed on the view of the group that it would like greater involvement in the process of moving towards an integrated hub in the town. This was repeated on Monday with group members pleading for involvement in discussions so that local knowledge can be shared. The MP, the CBC councillors and the town councillors all feel strongly that residents hold them to account for local services and healthcare is one of the subjects about which residents hold strong views, particularly given the significant housing development in our locality.

Healthcare is the primary topic about which residents seek answers from elected Members, with concerns raised including the number of doctors, waiting times for appointments and for new residents, whether they will be accepted as new patients at busy practices. We would very much welcome the opportunity to pass on our detailed local knowledge when health provision in the town is being discussed.

Moving forward, we are aware that general updates about the overall hub programme are provided to the Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. However, the Town Council has no participation in that committee and the Group would like to focus on information specific to Leighton-Linslade.

To that end, I am seeking clear responses to the questions below and hope to receive answers from either yourself, the CCG or perhaps a joint response which will provide us with clarity and allow us to move forward with a shared understanding.

- 1) Is it possible to share with the Group the strategic outline case for an integrated hub in Leighton-Linslade? If so, when can we expect to receive this?
- 2) Is it possible to share with the Group the findings of the two stakeholder workshops held in May 2018? If so, when can we expect to receive this?
- 3) Is it possible to provide greater clarity on anticipated timescales and activity for the next stage of the planning process, i.e. the service modelling work leading to development of the outline business case? We have been advised this is now planned for 2022 but have no further detail to help our understanding and set our expectations – including the anticipated level of engagement with the Town Council.

The Group appreciates the commitment given in the meeting to return to future meetings to give progress updates about healthcare services generally as well as the integrated hub project. We appreciate the multiple demands on your time but would hope that an hour's update every six months would not be an unreasonable request. No specific date was set for the next meeting as we appreciate the difficulties in finding availability to suit everyone, but we would welcome your help and support in establishing an appropriate time in 2022 for a next meeting with sufficient notice that there is plenty of time to prepare in advance. My suggestion would be a date in April/May 2022.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Gordon Perham
Chair – Health Services Task & Finish Group
Leighton-Linslade Town Councillor & Central Bedfordshire Councillor