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ID/JC

17th January 2008

Councillor Sylvia Tidy
Chairman
East Sussex Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
LEWES, East Sussex

Dear Cllr Tidy

We understand that HOSC will be considering how the PCTs have assessed the options for maternity services at its meeting on 28 January and have requested our comments on whether this Trust's senior managers and relevant clinical staff have been adequately consulted and whether we are satisfied with the robustness of the assessment of the range of proposals.

We believe that relevant medical staff have been consulted and involved throughout the process. As part of our own internal staff communications we have kept other relevant staff apprised of the consultation as it has progressed.

In relation to the robustness of the assessment, we cannot comment on this as we were not party to the detail of how the PCT undertook their assessment, but we were informed of their recommended preferred option and, of course, the outcome. During the process there were extensive discussions with key members of our staff. The PCTs would be able to provide further information on this point.

The Board of East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust has kept the PCTs, and HOSC, aware throughout the process of considering the future configuration of the service that the PCTs will need to work with the Trust to find a way to cover the costs of service delivery, which we understand has been acknowledged by them. Whilst there are significant risks in the current configuration of service, there will be different risks to be assessed and mitigated for the new model of care. We are committed to working with the PCTs and local GPs to ensure quality of care into the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Irene Dibben". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

IRENE DIBBEN
Acting Chair