

The Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Referral of Mid and South Essex Sustainability and Transformation Partnership – Orsett Hospital proposals**

As Chair of Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) I am writing to advise you that on 5 December 2018 members of HOSC agreed to refer for reconsideration the:

- Mid and South Essex Sustainability and Transformation Partnership's (STP) public consultation exercise 'Your Care in the Best Place' as it relates to proposals for Orsett Hospital; and
- The decision taken by the Mid and South Essex CCG Joint Committee to approve the relocation of services currently provided at Orsett Hospital to a range of locations within Thurrock for those services provided to Thurrock residents and Basildon and Brentwood for those services provided to Basildon and Brentwood residents, enabling the closure of Orsett Hospital.

There has been limited clarity on what those services are, when they might be relocated and where they may be relocated to or the impact on those services that will still be provided at Orsett Hospital until they are relocated elsewhere.

Thurrock HOSC wishes to submit a referral on 2 of the 4 grounds for referral as set out in the Local Authority Health and Scrutiny Regulations: June 2014 and Regulation 23 (Local Authority Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny Regulations 2013). The referral is being submitted on the basis of HOSC not being satisfied with the adequacy of the consultation and that the proposal to relocate services currently provided by Orsett Hospital are not in the best interest of health services in Thurrock.

This referral meets the conditions of referral as set out in regulation 23 parts (5)(a)(b)(c) (Local Authority Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny Regulations 2013) the STP team were invited to the Thurrock HOSC meeting of September 2018 where our concerns, as described in this referral were explained. However, the CCG Joint Committee decision to relocate services currently provided by Orsett Hospital remain.

I can confirm that as a Unitary Authority Thurrock Council formed a Joint HOSC (JHOSC) with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Essex County Council on 20 February 2018 as required by 'Guidance to Support Local Authorities and their partners to deliver effective health scrutiny', published by the Department of Health in June 2014. While the guidance permitted Local Authorities to delegate the power of referral to the JHOSC I can confirm that the power of referral has been retained by each of the Local Authorities.

Attached to this letter is detailed supporting documentation outlining HOSC's grounds for this referral, a summary of its reasons and evidence to support the referral, as per the expectation set out in the Local Authority Health and Scrutiny Regulations: June 2014.

We have sent a copy of this referral to the STP / Joint Committee for their comments. Attached is the response from the Chair of the CCG Joint Committee which I have considered but do not feel it changes the substance of our referral

As Chair of Thurrock HOSC I request that you provide full consideration to the issues outlined in the attached referral. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Darren Kristiansen, Business Manager on 01375 659739.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Holloway', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr Victoria Holloway  
Chair  
Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Thurrock Council

## **Referral to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care**

### **1. Grounds for Referral**

1.1 Thurrock Council's HOSC request that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care considers our concerns regarding Mid and South Essex STP (The STP) formal public consultation 'Your Care in the Best Place', particularly regarding proposals for services currently provided at Orsett Hospital

1.2 The grounds for this referral are that we are not satisfied that:

- The consultation exercise in relation to proposals to relocate services currently provided by Orsett Hospital were adequate.
- The decision taken by the Mid and South Essex CCG Joint Committee to approve the relocation of services currently provided at Orsett Hospital to a range of locations within Thurrock for those services provided to Thurrock residents and Basildon and Brentwood for those services provided to Basildon and Brentwood residents, enabling the closure of Orsett Hospital. There has been limited clarity on what those services are, when they might be relocated and where they may be relocated to or the impact on those services that will still be provided at Orsett Hospital until they are relocated elsewhere.

### **2. Context**

2.1 Thurrock is situated south of Essex and lies to the east of London on the north bank of the River Thames with an area of 165 square kilometres. It has a very diverse and growing population.

2.2 In June 2018, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) published new estimates which show the population of Thurrock (as of June 2017) had risen to 170,394, an increase of 1,966 people since the previous year, representing a percentage rise of 1.2%. The most significant increases from the previous year are in some of the older age groups, with the number of 50-54 year olds increasing by 3.82% and those aged 70-74 years increasing by 11.33%. Thurrock currently has a significantly greater proportion of young people than the England average and this trend is likely to continue into the future. Thurrock's older population is lower as a percentage of total population than the England average.

2.3 This 1.2% increase in Thurrock's population is approximately double the national population increase (0.6%), and can be attributed to two factors – "natural change" (which is the number of births minus the number of deaths) and migration. In 2017, there were 2,463 births and 1,290 deaths, representing a natural change of 1,173 residents. Internal migration (residents moving into Thurrock from other parts of the country) resulted in an extra 8,898 residents moving in and 8,650 moving out. A total of 1,109 people moved into the borough from areas outside England and Wales and 571 moved out.

### **3. Consultation exercise – particularly in relation to Orsett supplement**

3.1 The STP launched a consultation exercise on 30 November 2017 "Your Care in the Best Place" which was originally scheduled to close on 9 March 2018 but was extended until 23 March 2018. HOSC do not consider the extension of the consultation exercise adequate, as outlined at section 6.

3.2 It was proposed that clinical services would transfer from Orsett Hospital to one of the four Integrated Medical Centres (IMC) being developed in Thurrock for Thurrock residents or in facilities in Basildon and Brentwood for residents from those areas. This means that for Basildon and Brentwood patients, there is a potential to offer services that are currently offered at Orsett Hospital to facilities within Basildon and Brentwood. The underlying key principle behind this was to deliver care closer to home in settings that allowed stronger integration between primary, community and social care. Orsett was a valued service but was difficult to access from some parts of

Thurrock and as an ageing building, required significant investment to bring it up to modern standards.

- 3.3 An external consultancy company commissioned by Thurrock CCG met with service leads from Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital (BTUH), Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT), North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) and Southend NHS Hospital Foundation Trust (SUHFT) to discuss and analyse both the provider and patient's requirements for services at Orsett presently, and incorporating projections to account for expected population growth. A Strategic Outline Programme was produced which detailed what services would transfer out of Orsett to align with the proposed development of the IMCs which had already started as a project to improve primary and community care.
- 3.4 STP proposals were based on seeking feedback from the public and professionals on several broad principles. In terms of Orsett consultation respondents were invited to provide views on proposals to transfer services from Orsett to a number of new centres closer to where people live in Thurrock (for Thurrock residents) and to Basildon, Brentwood and Billericay (for residents of those areas), as previously described. A commitment was provided in the consultation document that only when new services were up and running, would it would be possible to close Orsett Hospital.
- 3.5 As part of preparing and informing the consultation process we recognise and acknowledge that the STP programme team engaged partners in Thurrock by providing regular updates to Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board, Thurrock HOSC and a joint HOSC comprising elected members representing Thurrock, Southend and Essex.
- 3.6 Thurrock HOSC has been provided with updates on the STP across 9 meetings held between the periods of 1 December 2015 to 14 June 2018. However, our view is that Orsett changes were so significant that they should have been part of a separate consultation and not part of the wider discussion over acute hospital reconfiguration.

#### **4. Consultation outcomes**

- 4.1 The consultation responses were analysed independently and a comprehensive report published. Key findings included:
- There is broad agreement with the overall approach, outlined in the consultation, to provide care in the best place in the home and community settings and in hospitals. The principle of care provided closer to home was particularly appreciated by many.
  - However, there are concerns raised consistently across all the responses about the feasibility of delivering such a plan given current staffing issues - including the difficulty in recruiting GPs, community nurses and the shortage of specialist hospital staff - and given the resource challenges that the NHS is facing.
  - There are strong views expressed from groups and areas who feel they are most impacted by the proposals. These were mainly:
    - patients and residents from Thurrock who are concerned about the potential impact on the community if the proposals for Orsett Hospital go ahead.
    - patients and residents from Southend who are concerned that services currently being provided at Southend Hospital are being downgraded and that patient outcomes will be impacted if current specialisms, in particular stroke services, are located elsewhere.
    - older, more isolated and less mobile groups of patients who are concerned they will have to travel further to access hospital services.

4.2 In response to the supplementary consultation document focussed on relocating services currently provided by Orsett Hospital feedback received included:

- People who regularly used Orsett Hospital praised its services, the staff and the quality of care received. There were a number of anecdotal stories about the assistance they or their families had received from the Hospital and how much of a loss it would be if it did not exist anymore.
- Many of the respondents also queried the claim in the consultation documentation that Orsett Hospital was difficult to access via public transport. There had been recent improvements in bus services from a range of nearby providers and many felt it was as easy to get to as some of the other centres and hospitals mentioned in areas such as Basildon, Billericay, Chafford Hundred and Brentwood. Others felt that if transport had been cited as a key reason for closing the hospital then more should have been done to address this, for example providing shuttle buses to and from neighbouring areas.
- A number of respondents were also concerned about the loss of services that only Orsett Hospital provided in the Thurrock area if the hospital were to close. The key service mentioned was renal dialysis but others such as orthopaedic care, eye care and minor injuries unit were also mentioned. Patients receiving dialysis were particularly concerned by the proposals with some stating that the nearest current alternative, Basildon Hospital, was quite difficult to get to for them.
- There was also a case made by some that since Thurrock was a growing borough, with a possible 30,000 new homes due to be built, including additional homes in the nearby Dunton Hills estate, that there was a case for keeping services at Orsett Hospital to be able to meet future need.
- Many respondents felt that one of Orsett Hospital's strengths was its good parking provision – a feature which was not available at some of the other centres.
- A small number of people also felt that the decision to close Orsett Hospital was driven by the financial benefit that could be made by selling the land off to developers since it was in a valuable location.
- There were some respondents who agreed that Orsett Hospital was becoming difficult to maintain and that it was no longer fit for purpose and that investing in the new approach was the way forward.
- There were a number who also felt that it was quite difficult to access from other areas so it would make sense to transfer its services to a number of new centres closer to where people lived.

## **5. CCG Joint Committee Decisions**

5.1 On 6 July 2018 the five CCG's across mid and south Essex, meeting as a CCG Joint Committee, met to consider the recommendations from the STP.

5.2 Recommendation 15 of the decision making business case focussed on Orsett Hospital and was agreed:

- Approved the relocation of services currently provided at Orsett Hospital to a range of locations within Thurrock, Basildon and Brentwood, enabling the closure of Orsett Hospital.
- Noted that there will be a period of co-production with the local community through the establishment of a "People's Panel" supported by Healthwatch organisations in Thurrock and Essex to determine the best site(s) to relocate these services to.
- Noted that, alongside the period of co-production, further detailed assessments will be undertaken on equality and health inequality impacts, and the quality impact of proposed service relocations.
- Noted that once the period of co-production is complete, and with the detailed work on impact assessment, the CCG Joint Committee will be asked to make a decision on which sites will provide the relocated services.
- Noted that, in accordance with the agreement between Thurrock CCG, Thurrock Council and the three mid and south Essex hospitals, the Orsett

Hospital site will not be closed until the new services are in place at the agreed new locations.

## **6. Reasons for referral and supporting evidence**

### Criteria One: Consultation in relation to Orsett Hospital was inadequate

6.1 On 9 January 2018 Thurrock Health Watch raised concerns about the availability and accessibility of the STP consultation exercise, which was supported by HOSC members. Primarily:

- The consultation was inaccessible for some groups within Thurrock.
- That the consultation was hard to access with only an on-line option available at that time.
- Requests made for hard copies, were not being made available for Thurrock residents.
- Given the complexity of the consultation exercise easy read versions were not available and it is the view of HOSC that residents with learning disabilities should be given every opportunity to engage and be involved.
- Versions printed in different languages were not being made available to residents.

6.2 While we accept that some of these points were addressed by the STP team this should have all been in place before the consultation started.

6.3 This section of the referral sets out evidence that reflect the points raised above and additional concerns about the consultation exercise.

### **The overarching STP consultation document provided limited information about proposals to relocate services currently provided at Orsett Hospital and the Orsett supplement did not present information consistently**

6.4 Page 25 of the overarching STP consultation document set out some broad principles for relocating services currently provided at Orsett Hospital but did not provide sufficient details for Thurrock residents to consider and respond to.

6.5 The Orsett supplement provided as part of the overarching STP consultation material did not present proposals in a consistent manner to support residents with understanding them. Page 7 of the Orsett Hospital consultation supplement set out services currently provided at Orsett Hospital. Page 9 set out a list of potential locations for services in the future. The language used was inconsistent and residents would not have been able to easily identify whether the services currently provided at Orsett Hospital were to be relocated to all or indeed any of the IMCs.

6.6 HOSC noted that the proposals on future locations for services did not include treatment facilities being made available at either Corringham or Tilbury Integrated Medical Centres. This provides an inconsistent offer for residents and could result in some patients being required to travel further for treatment, contrary to the aim of providing services closer to local residents' homes, as described at paragraph 3.2.

### **The consultation document was inaccessible for some groups within Thurrock**

6.7 Given the complexity of the wider STP consultation exercise we are concerned about reports suggesting that easy read versions were not available for either the overarching consultation documentation or the Orsett Hospital supplement at the commencement of the consultation exercise. It is the view of HOSC that residents who require some form of easy read version should be given every opportunity to engage and be involved at the start of a consultation exercise.

6.8 The consultation was initially hard to access and it has been reported to us that only an on-line option was available in January 2018 for both the overarching consultation documentation and the Orsett Hospital supplement, approximately two months after the consultation exercise commenced. Evidence in Thurrock suggests a proportion

of residents do not have access to the internet so would have been restricted from responding to the consultation exercise until it was already substantially underway.

6.9 Versions of the Orsett Hospital supplement were not made easily available to Thurrock residents in different languages, potentially excluding a proportion of Thurrock's population who are affected by the proposed changes. Residents that have English as a second language would have been required to contact the STP team to request copies of the consultation material in different languages if they wished to engage with the process.

6.10 Hard copies of the supplementary consultation document setting out proposals to relocate services being provided by Orsett Hospital were made available in February 2018, three months following the launch of the consultation. While HOSC acknowledges that the consultation exercise was extended from 9 March until 23 March 2018 we do not believe that the extension sufficiently addresses the delay in providing hard copies of the Orsett supplement.

### **Limited consultation responses and consultation outcomes not being addressed**

6.11 HOSC recognises that the STP consultation exercise was wide ranging and included an independent telephone survey, 16 large scale public meetings and 40 deliberative workshops and specific events for people who were most likely to be affected by the proposals. There was also an online presence which reportedly reached in excess of 350,000 people. It is disappointing that only an estimated circa 3,500 people took the opportunity to participate. Given the population of the Mid and South Essex footprint comprises circa 1.2 million people this equates to 0.3% of the population. This suggests that the residents of Thurrock did not engage in as great a number as you would expect for a change of this significance. We believe that the issues outlined at paragraphs 6.4 to 6.10 could have adversely impacted on the response rate.

6.12 The decision making business case makes clear that further detailed assessments will be undertaken on equality and health inequality impacts, and the quality impact of proposed service relocations. There will be a period of co-production with Thurrock residents via a newly established People's Panel which, once completed, the CCG Joint Committee will be asked to make a decision on which sites will provide the relocated services. This evidence shows that Thurrock residents could not have been invited to provide their feedback on how services currently provided at Orsett Hospital will be relocated elsewhere as part of the consultation exercise, due to those decisions not having been taken at that stage.

6.13 The STP reports that strong views were provided by patients and residents from Thurrock who are concerned about the potential impact on the community if the proposals for Orsett Hospital go ahead. The decision making business case provides a review against national tests for service reconfiguration for Orsett Hospital. It makes clear that patient and public support for proposals, provided through evidence collected through the consultation exercise, had less support.

6.14 Thurrock HOSC acknowledges that the purpose of the consultation was to understand issues and concerns that residents might have about a service change the decision to relocate services currently provided at Orsett Hospital does not reflect feedback provided by Thurrock residents, contrary to information set out in the Orsett Supplement, as set out in paragraph 4.2.

Criteria Two: The decision taken by the CCG Joint Committee to relocate services provided at Orsett Hospital to a range of locations within Thurrock, Brentwood and Basildon are not in the best interest of health services in Thurrock.

- 6.15 The proposals are dependent on the need for more detailed and costed plans for patients, NHS staff and public to better understand how this vision will work in practice. However, there are a number of important associated matters about the deliverability of the IMC programme and important factors around transport and travel requirements that clearly the STP consultation exercise was unable to answer. Relocating services currently provided at Orsett Hospital without clarity being provided on the transport infrastructure is not in the best interest of health services in Thurrock.
- 6.16 The Decision making business case makes clear that neither the Clinical Senate nor Clinical Cabinet have been asked to review the proposals for the relocation of services from Orsett Hospital. It is suggested that this is because proposals do not involve a significant redesign of the existing services, rather a relocation of these services to new locations. Thurrock HOSC suggests that the proposals create a serious enough change to local health services in Thurrock that the Clinical Senate and Clinical Cabinet should have been asked to review the proposals in this case.
- 6.17 The STP consultation material explains that Orsett Hospital is an ageing building and it is estimated that it would cost in the region of £10m to bring the facilities up to date. The documentation suggests that the system needs to make the best use of all resources and to improve access to services for existing and future patients and that closing an older building allows the NHS to free up funds for newer, purpose built facilities. The decision making business case did not consider upgrading Orsett Hospital and the benefits of continuing to use an existing site, valued by the local population, to provide services.
- 6.18 We are concerned that there is a lack of certainty over IMCs and a lack of clarity on when IMCs will be in place, how they are to be funded, how services will transfer, whether all services will be transferred to all IMCs and the impact on Orsett Hospital while the services are being relocated. The decision making business case sets out some implementation considerations and explains that the Trusts have committed not to close the Orsett Hospital site unless and until services are satisfactorily re-provided in agreed alternative locations. It is acknowledged that this is reliant on the delivery of new integrated medical centres in Thurrock, and the development of existing premises across Basildon and Brentwood – for patients from those areas.
- 6.19 There is also no available information to explain contingency plans should an IMC development be delayed or not take place. We suggest that the lack of clarity on proposals for Orsett Hospital are not in the best interest of health services in Thurrock.
- 6.20 According to latest available data, a total of 20,913 patients visited Orsett Hospital either for planned care or minor injuries and 19,973 patients attended Orsett Minor Injuries Unit in one year. There is no detailed implementation plan on how any decant of services will be managed. This will cause uncertainty for thousands of patients that use Orsett Hospital on where the service they access will be provided in future, when that service may be relocated elsewhere in future and where it might be relocated.