

Llanidloes Statement on maintenance of services in Llanidloes Hospital to Chief Executive Andy Williams

6 November 2006

Mr Andy Williams
Chief Executive
Powys Local Health Board
Headquarters,
Mansion House,
Bronllys
Brecon
Powys LD3 0LS

Dear Mr Williams

I have read reports on the BBC that the consultation process regarding the implementation of the proposals that you put before the board on 27th September is likely to be substantially delayed until next summer at the earliest.

I appreciate that this must be frustrating for you as it delays the implementation of proposals that you felt were necessary both in terms of Doing More, Doing Better but also presents as being financially imperative for the service provision of the LHB. It will be interesting to see where the savings will be made in the meantime as any cut in elective services, which is another option that was mentioned would have equally severe political ramifications and I am sure that the WAG would not welcome those either.

I also find it intriguing that the proposals put to the board involved the withdrawal of clinical services and effective closure of four hospital sites when you would surely have had some knowledge of the impending WAG document regarding the future of community hospitals.

I would hope that you use this time to review your plans and come to the conclusion that the community hospitals provide a service in rural situations that cannot be compared to urban localities and that whilst the services may be more expensive to provide that they are integral to the effective delivery of healthcare and very highly valued by the populace. Indeed a BBC Wales survey showed that a significant majority would prefer to have locally accessible health care rather than "Gold Standard" care at a distance.

The community hospitals within Powys provide both excellent and local care.

I have fears that during the delay in consultation there will be continued erosion by stealth of the services provided in the threatened hospitals and that this will result in the consultation process being a "fait accompli".

I would urge you to make a public commitment to maintain services in all these sites at the present level as a minimum.

In Llanidloes in particular, I would request a written statement in the public domain that the hospital services will not be diminished further. In this respect I would wish to see the bed numbers remain at 17 as a minimum, no attempt to re-deploy staff and all remaining outpatient clinics to remain operational without any attempt to influence the provider trusts or consultants to re-locate these services.

Yours sincerely

Dr A D Raynsford

CC Dr B Gibbons, Builth Medical Practice, Hay Garth Medical Practice, Matron (Llanidloes Hospital), Llanidloes Town Council, Save Llanidloes Hospital Action Group, Mr Lembit Opik MP, Mr Mick Bates AM, Ms Kirsty Williams AM