

Cllr. Claire Wright (DCC) May Report

Date set to review effectiveness of system that replaced community hospital beds

The spotlight review into the effectiveness of the Rapid Response Service will take place on 6 June with a probable follow up meeting in July.

The Rapid Response System replaced community hospital beds here in East Devon, last year, following dozens of closures. Now there are no beds at Ottery St Mary, Honiton, Seaton, Crediton, Okehampton and Whipton, as well as many bed closures in South and North Devon. I made the proposal for the review at the January meeting when Sidmouth GP, Dr Mike Slot, spoke to the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny committee outlining his concerns that there aren't enough paid carers to do the home care work the system was designed to achieve.

I will chair the review and it is set to report back to the September committee meeting.

Local NHS denies reports that Seaton and Honiton Hospitals are at risk

NEW Devon CCG last week, moved to deny reports from campaigners that Seaton and Honiton Hospitals are at risk in the soon to be published Estates Strategy, which determines what it does with its built assets.

So far NHS England has covered the rents of over £3m across 12 community hospitals that NHS Property Services are charging (a bizarre and wrong system when previously the local NHS owned these buildings outright), but at some point the CCG is expected to have to pick up the cost of this.

Given that Devon is one of three most financially challenged health areas in the country it is likely to be hard for managers to find the money to cover this. In this scenario, the CCG could declare some of its built assets 'surplus to requirements' and allow NHS Property Services to sell them off. The money generated would return to a central government pot and not be held locally, despite the many hundreds of thousands of pounds (possibly millions) raised by local people to either build or enhance their local hospitals.

Dr Simon Kerr (GP from Ottery) had been quoted by campaigners as saying in a private meeting last month that Honiton and Seaton Hospitals may be at risk in the Estates Strategy.

But Dr Kerr has since said his words must have been misinterpreted and the CCG has denied that there are "any plans" to sell off these hospitals.

I have asked for an agenda item on this issue at the next Health and Adult Care Committee meeting, on 7 June.

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