

Message received by email 11/9/18

*Submission from the Shropshire councillors for Ludlow and Clee. 11 September 2018.*

The Future Fit proposals have been controversial from the outset. This is in part due to the top down process where that has too often followed idealistic models at the expense of the needs and desires of communities. It has also occurred because three different interlinked debates have been happening at the same time. These debates are about national, county and community resources.

To begin with the national debate, we do not believe that the NHS has enough resources. We support a hypothecated tax to support growing health care needs. That is not within the remit of Future Fit but we hope the county's MPs will support extra resources for the NHS overall, especially for rural areas.

Turning to community resources, the concept of Community Fit has been seriously eroded during the Future Fit process. Not only is Future Fit proposing to centralise health resources in the two largest towns, the earlier proposals for community provision seem to have sunk without trace.

We have no confidence that communities like Ludlow and the communities in its hinterland will be well served by the proposed health reorganisation.

We have witnessed the closure of Ludlow Maternity Unit to live births, the centralisation of Shropdoc GPs and mental health services in Shrewsbury and Telford, and the progressive withdrawal of health facilities in south Shropshire. Ambulance response times are increasing. This undermines our confidence in health reorganisation across the county. It is driven by a policy of centralisation of services. It will place an unacceptable burden on rural communities whose residents will have to travel further to protect their health and wellbeing at a time when public transport is being cut back.

We accept the need to change the way the NHS works locally to meet demands and resources. But we think the emerging model of forcing ill and vulnerable people to travel nearly 30 miles for non-urgent treatment is the wrong one.

We do not believe that Future Fit is the best approach to promote the health and wellbeing throughout Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

Turning to the specific proposals in the Future Fit consultation, we have no doubt that Option 1 is the best for Ludlow. In the very limited constraints of this consultation, we support that. If planned care is largely based in Telford, the CCG should help subsidise a new bus service from the southwest of the county to the Princes Royal, taking in isolated settlements such as Ditton Priors.

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