



**Statement from
Councillor Sylvia Tidy
Chairman
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Fit for the Future: HOSC decision and referral to Secretary of State

HOSC met on 28th January 2008 to consider the PCTs' decision on the Fit for the Future. I am pleased to confirm the outcome of the meeting. HOSC agreed the following:

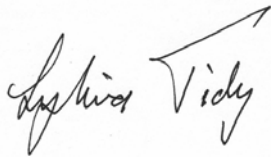
1. To support the PCTs' decision to improve ante and post-natal care and associated outreach services as there is strong evidence that this is in the best interests of health services for East Sussex residents.
2. That the PCTs' decision to establish a single obstetric unit in Hastings and a midwife-led unit in Eastbourne is not in the best interests of health services for East Sussex residents.
3. That HOSC will refer the PCTs' decision to the Secretary of State subject to 3 conditions:
 - i) The improvements to ante and post natal care being excepted from the referral.
 - ii) The PCTs' being given the opportunity to respond to HOSC's agreed position.
 - iii) The PCTs' response confirming their intention to proceed with implementing their decision or no response being received from the PCTs within 28 days.

The main reasons for HOSC's decision to refer the PCTs' decision to the Secretary of State were agreed as follows:

1. Evidence relating to the impact of longer travel times to the obstetric unit on the safety of women and babies.
2. Evidence of safety concerns relating to the distance of the midwife-led unit from the consultant-led unit and questions over whether this is the best configuration for midwife-led care.
3. A lack of convincing evidence that patient outcomes will be improved with a single site configuration for consultant-led care.
4. Evidence that there may be a reduction in choice due to the geography and the proposed configuration of services, which may be compounded in areas where there is significant deprivation

5. Evidence that possible alternatives which could maintain services on two sites may not have been fully explored and considered.
6. The divergence of clinical opinion on what configuration of maternity and obstetric services will be best for the residents of East Sussex.

HOSC has invited the PCTs to respond to the Committee's decision and to confirm whether or not the PCTs intend to proceed with the decision made by the joint boards on 20th December 2007. As mentioned above, HOSC requested a response within 28 days and if no response is received, the Committee will proceed to make the referral to the Secretary of State for Health.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sylvia Tidy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy
Chairman
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee