



Cyngor Gwledig **LLANELLI** Rural Council

MEDIA RELEASE

PRESSURE INTENSIFIES ON HYWEL DDA

Llanelli Rural Council is determined to keep up the pressure on the Hywel Dda Health Board: that's the message in the Council's latest bid to help safeguard A & E and other essential health services at Prince Philip Hospital (PPH). In a new twist in developments the Council plans to seek urgent clarification from Hywel Dda's Chief Executive regarding uncertainty that has emerged over the future of the hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

It was reported at its council meeting on Tuesday night that plans were afoot to reconfigure ICU by reallocating the number of beds from four to two, with one bed being used for intensive care and the other bed used for coronary care.

Council Clerk, Mark Galbraith, commented "Members expressed concern over the level of uncertainty and the impact the change might have on other essential key services at PPH. The position is very worrying and the Council has asked me to seek clarification and assurances from the health board over the ICU's future".

Council Leader, Cllr Bill Thomas, stated: "The Council believes this is another example of asset stripping, much like the impending closure of Ward 5 with essential beds being removed from the hospital. Moreover, the Post Mortem service has been relocated to Glangwili. By the time the health board embarks upon its formal consultation process over the hospital's future there will be nothing left to reconfigure. The public will be left with a fait accompli over which services remain safe and sustainable and the knock on effect will be detrimental to the hospital's status going forward.

The health board's plans for consultation appear to be disjointed compared to other neighbouring health boards whose consultation programme will not commence until later in the year and you have to wonder why Hywel Dda is adopting a different strategy. You would think the various consultation processes would coincide with one another especially since there are serious implications over the on-going sharing of resources".

During the meeting the Council agreed to contact the health board over this important development and other on-going issues which still remain unanswered.

Cllr Thomas added “the Council has previously informed the health board it intends to engage management consultants to formulate counter proposals to safeguard A & E services at PPH and has requested the release of patient data to carry out the exercise. However, getting access to the information is proving difficult, with the health board being evasive in not releasing the information”.

It was revealed during the meeting the health board hadn’t even acknowledged the Council’s second formal request for the patient data which also sought answers on the status of Ward 5 and why Post Mortem services had been transferred to Carmarthen.

In other developments the Council had also written to Mr M Collins, Regional Director, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) with a list of questions over its role in any reconfiguration of services affecting PPH. To date the Council’s letter to that body also remained unanswered.

Council Clerk, Mark Galbraith said “it’s very disappointing not to even receive a letter of acknowledgment from colleagues in another public body and perhaps the silence speaks volumes for the way matters are being planned and handled by the health care providers. Public bodies have an obligation to respond to information requests”.

“The Council is generally dissatisfied with the lack of communication and is to hold a special meeting in August in an attempt to obtain answers to its information requests. It intends to invite senior representatives from WAST to attend along with Mr Keith Davies AM to garner their views on the reconfiguration of services at PPH”.

(ENDS)

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