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Mrs. Ann O'Hanlon,
Chair - Joint Committee,
Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust,
FREEPOST NEA 9906
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20th December, 2005

Your ref.

Our ref. SG/PH SSM/051202

Dear Madam,

**A Consultation on Professor Ara Darzi's Report -
'Acute Services Review - Hartlepool and Teesside'**

I refer to the ongoing consultation exercise regarding the Darzi Review of Acute Health Services North and South of the Tees and would like to place on record the views of District of Easington Council in respect of the recommendations of Professor Darzi and the potential impact of these on residents of the District of Easington.

Regarding the recommendations of Professor Darzi in respect of the provision of acute health services at University Hospital of Hartlepool, University Hospital of North Tees, The James Cook University Hospital and the Friarage Hospital, the Council would simply note these proposals.

The main concern of the Council arising out of the Darzi Review remains the impact of the proposals on the ability of patients, their families and visitors to access those NHS services transferred, particularly in terms of availability and affordability of sustainable transport solutions.

At an early stage, the Council recognised that the proposals have the potential to have a major impact on some of the district's most vulnerable residents. Accordingly, the Council's Partnership Scrutiny Committee have undertaken an investigation into the issue of access/transportation to NHS services affected by the Darzi Review.

Arising from the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's deliberations, I would also like to submit the following recommendations in respect of the Darzi Review, namely that:-

- the proposed changes to hospital services detailed within the Darzi Review be deferred until such time as appropriate transport solutions can be agreed and implemented which address the problems identified in the attached report of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee;
- the assurances given by the Chief Executive of Easington Primary Care Trust that transport solutions will be implemented within Easington District from January 2006 in advance of Trust re-configuration be welcomed and supported and the

sustainability of these solutions be examined as part of the PCT's 2006/7 budget setting process.

- the concerns raised by this investigation in respect of the availability, accessibility, reliability and affordability of public transportation to health services affected by the Darzi Review be incorporated into the Council's response to the consultation exercise as the Partnership Scrutiny Committee believe that appropriate transport solutions will not be met wholly by commercial bus operators.
- the development of Community Transport Schemes be investigated as a real alternative solution to commercial bus operators. This may require a significant level of investment from partner organisations to ensure the sustainability of any Community Transport Scheme. This should be examined by the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership.
- the Strategic Health Authority seek to ensure that as part of the implementation of patient 'choose and book' schemes as well as other patient appointments that access to real-time transportation is available to ensure that appointments arranged for patients can be attended.
- the issues highlighted in section 6.7 of the attached report relating to the availability of improved information for the public in respect of transportation to those hospital services affected by the Darzi Review be addressed as part of any proposed transportation solution.

A copy of the report of the Partnership Scrutiny Committee is attached for your information.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor A. Napier
Leader of Easington District Council