

BUILDING A BETTER MERTON TOGETHER

Councillor Peter McCabe
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care



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Dear Mr Shaw,

RE: Safeguarding the future of Maternity Services at St Helier Hospital

We are writing to seek urgent assurances about the future of Maternity Services at St Helier Hospital. This follows the troubling news that the Trust is considering temporarily closing, relocating, or reducing Maternity Services at the hospital due to serious concerns regarding the condition of the estate.

St Helier is a vital hospital for people living in Merton, particularly for many residents in both Mitcham and Morden, where St Helier is their closest and most convenient hospital to get to. As local elected representatives, we have campaigned tirelessly for many years on the importance of protecting existing services at St Helier and ensuring that local people have access to safe, high quality, and accessible hospital care. This is also the position of Merton Council, which has worked extensively on this issue.

We have long been aware of the state of disrepair at St Helier Hospital and have campaigned for governments of all political colours to provide the hospital with the much-needed funding to address the backlog of maintenance and protect existing services. However, following our discussions with you on Monday 15th June 2026, we now understand that serious concerns have emerged specifically relating to the current location of Maternity Services, including compromised pipework in the building.

We welcome the way you as the new Chief Executive have engaged with us proactively and openly on these issues, but we need to emphasise that any proposal to close, relocate, or reduce Maternity Services at St Helier, even temporarily, would be highly significant for the communities we represent and cause deep concern and distress amongst our residents.



IMPORTANT - PERSONAL

We also welcome the recent announcement of up to £57million investment from NHS London to expand and improve the Accident & Emergency Department at St Helier Hospital. This is positive news and important investment in the future of the hospital. However, we feel it is important to seek clarity on the relationship between this investment and the wider extensive maintenance backlog which exists at St Helier, including the seriously compromised pipework and any implications it has on existing Maternity Services. It is vital that this welcome investment in emergency care does not obscure the urgent need for a clear and funded plan to maintain safe, sustainable services across the hospital.

We would be grateful for clarity on the following:

- Whether there is any formal proposal to close, relocate, or reduce Maternity Services at St Helier, and what governance processes are required for this decision?
- Whether any change to existing Maternity Services at St Helier being considered would be temporary or permanent?
- What specific estate issues are driving the current concern around Maternity Services, including the condition of the pipework and if any further investment is required to keep services safely in the hospital?
- What impact any proposed change to Maternity Services would have on Merton residents, particularly in the Mitcham and Morden areas, and how any impact will be mitigated?
- What engagement or consultation is planned with residents, Healthwatch, Members of Parliament, Councillors, Merton Council, and other local partners on proposed changes to Maternity Services?
- How proposed changes in Maternity Services would fit within the wider plans for St Helier Hospital, and delayed proposals for a new specialist emergency care hospital at Belmont?
- What the plans, timeline, and intended works starting dates are for the recent injection of £57million investment in the Accident & Emergency department?
- Whether the £57million investment is sufficient to protect key services at St Helier Hospital, including Maternity Services?

Our position has always been and continues to be that we support proper investment to secure the long-term future of St Helier Hospital and the services which already exist there, including its Maternity Services. Residents should not be asked to accept the loss of vital services at their local hospital because the estate has not received the investment it needs and has fallen into disrepair.

Estate repairs at St Helier Hospital are due to be considered at Merton Council's Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny meeting on Monday 29th June 2026. This will provide an important opportunity for local councillors to ask questions about the condition of the hospital, the risks to current services, and the level of investment required to clear the maintenance backlog.

It would therefore be helpful to receive an update on the questions we have raised in this letter, along with a clear confirmation that Maternity Services will be retained at St Helier in the long-term, so that members of the committee have the clearest possible understanding of the current position.

We would be grateful for your early response on these matters.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Peter McCabe
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care



Dame Siobhain McDonagh DBE MP
Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden

Cc. Mr Andrew Bland, Chief Executive of South West London ICB
Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of Merton Council