

Submission from **Bromsgrove District Council**,
Redditch Borough Council and **Stratford-on-Avon District Council**
to **Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group**

About the CCG's Draft Prospectus on the future of **Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire**



Submission Document
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Bromsgrove
District Council
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CONTENTS

Forward	3
Introduction	4
Population	5 – 8
Transport	8 – 19
Socioeconomic Climate	19 – 25
Health	25 – 30
Conclusion	31 - 32
Bibliography	

FORWARD

“Redditch has the largest areas of deprivation across the county and that brings with it associated health problems. Indeed the prevalence of stroke, asthma and high blood pressure in Redditch are higher than the national average with over 28 per cent of adults obese.

With a clear link between physical and mental health problems and deprivation, the removal of key health services from the Alexandra Hospital to an inaccessible central base would put some of our most vulnerable residents at risk”.

Cllr Bill Hartnett, Leader of Redditch Borough Council



“Transport and access are key factors when considering the reconfiguration of hospital services.

While any removal of services at the Alexandra Hospital will impact on our residents, if there has to be change then the simple fact is this area enjoys good bus, road and rail links to Birmingham, whereas Worcester is inaccessible for many.

The NHS ignores this fact at its peril”.

Cllr Roger Hollingworth, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council



“With the Alexandra Hospital right on the County boundary, it serves many communities in South Warwickshire. The established transport network facilitates people getting to the Alex. Any loss of services will make the alternative far more remote and act against the local population”.

Cllr Chris Saint, Leader of Stratford On Avon District Council



Introduction

Redditch is a place like no other. Since its designation as a New Town in 1964 it has grown exponentially such that today it is a busy and populous area, with a wide spectrum of people. However, the area has substantial challenges and faces significant obstacles to ensure its future improvement, prosperity and viability. Redditch is capable of moving forward and achieving its ambitions for the future and making the town a positive and favourable place to live and work. However, loss of services at Alexandra Hospital, Redditch, represents a significant threat to future viability, livelihood and health not only for residents of the district, but thousands of other people who live in the surrounding districts of Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester and Stratford and their various towns and villages which are serviced by the Hospital and its acute care provision.

The loss of health provision at Alexandra Hospital would be detrimental to any district, but the particular circumstances of Redditch place the town in a precarious position and makes its potential effects catastrophic

The loss of health provision at Alexandra Hospital would be detrimental to any district, but the particular circumstances of Redditch place the town in a precarious position and makes its potential effects catastrophic. The economic, social and physiological context of the borough and its inhabitants means that amending service provision at the Alexandra Hospital or reallocating services to Worcester Royal Hospital or to Birmingham Queen Elizabeth Hospital is highly problematic and detrimental to residents. It would fundamentally undermine the 'duty to promote the health service' including 'the promotion...of a comprehensive health service designed to secure improvement— (a) in the physical and mental health of the people of England, and (b) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness' as well as 'provid[ing] or secur[ing] the provision of services'; 'the duty to improvement in quality of services' and; the 'duty to reducing inequalities...between the people of England with respect to the benefits that they can obtain from the health service' that are outlined in the NHS Act 2006.

...failure of duty to the residents of Redditch and surrounding areas that would ultimately have a negative effect on their lives

This document outlines the particular circumstances that make Redditch and its surrounding areas acutely vulnerable to any losses at Alexandra Hospital and highlight the inherent problems of moving service provision to Worcester and Birmingham. It offers evidential proof that health service provision must remain, at a minimum, at its current levels at Alexandra Hospital in Redditch and that any alternative would be a significant failure of duty to the residents of Redditch and surrounding areas that would ultimately have a negative effect on their lives. The maintenance of existing services at Alexandra Hospital is not only crucial to the health of the local population but also to the future of the district.

Population

Loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will mean that some nearly 200,000 people are deprived of not only their primary source for acute health provision, but also the most convenient and nearest hospital...

As of 2012, the population of Redditch stood at 84,419; an increase of 7 percent from 2001 when the population was 78,807. The growth rate in the Borough was faster than that of Worcester as well as major conurbations such as Stoke and Coventry. Indeed, Redditch has already surpassed the ONS 2008-based population projection for 2031 which stood at 83,500. In Bromsgrove, as of 2012, the population totalled 94,285. Whilst as of 2011, Stratford-Upon-Avon had a population of 120,485, with some 19,013 people in Studley (5,879), Alcester (6,083) and Bidford and Salford (7,051) in the west of the region, located next to the Worcestershire/Warwickshire boundary and near to Redditch. Loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will mean that some nearly 200,000 people are deprived of not only their primary source for acute health provision, but also the most convenient and nearest hospital. Worcester Royal Hospital or Queen Elizabeth Birmingham will face immediate added pressure from these additional patients and in the short-term may struggle to adapt to the increased numbers. Indeed, current populations for Worcester (99,604), Wyre Forest (98,074), Wychavon (117,670) and Malvern (74,980) total 390,328 which represents the general current catchment population of Worcester Royal Hospital. With the current populations of Redditch (84,318), Bromsgrove (94,285) and the westerly regions in Stratford-Upon-Avon (19,013), a total of 197,616 additional patients will be concentrated on Worcester Royal Hospital, totalling 587,944, an increase of 51% immediately, meaning that the hospital would have to meet double its current demand straightaway. This is likely to impact negatively on services and see efficiency decrease. Even if these numbers can be accommodated successfully it will increase demands on the hospital and its staff exponentially.

As well as having to cope with existing demand, there is also the issue of future demand. Revised ONS mid-2011-based Population Projections for Redditch until 2021 predict a projected population increase of 3,600 and a total population of 87,900. Additionally, with the largest net inflow in the district of almost 600 people per annum, according to the ONS mid-2011-based population projections, the population in Bromsgrove is set to see the largest percentage increase with an extra 5,900 and a total population of 99,700 increase from 2011-2021. Meanwhile in Stratford-Upon-Avon the district is projected to experience substantial growth, increasing in population size by 24% between 2010 and 2035. Some 6,700 people will be added to the population in the five-year period from 2010-2015, a further 12,600 by 2025 and 9,600 by 2035 to contribute to a population of 149,100. By 2020 the population is set to rise by 13,200 to 133,400.

...increase will place considerable strain on Worcester Royal Hospital and/or Queen Elizabeth, Birmingham.

Across these three districts, the population is set to increase by some 22,700 by 2020-2021. The 9,500 increase in population for Redditch and Bromsgrove would have predominantly used the Alexandra Hospital, whilst a proportion of the remaining 13,200 population of Stratford-Upon-Avon would also have used the hospital. This increase will place considerable strain on Worcester Royal Hospital and/or Queen Elizabeth, Birmingham both of which will have their own growth to accommodate. Indeed, in relation to Worcester Royal Hospital, the hospital also serves Worcester,

whose population is set to rise by 2.7% to 101,400, Malvern whose population set to rise 6.2% to 79,400; Wychavon whose population set to rise by 5.9% to 123,900 and Wyre Forest whose population set to rise by 3.5% to 101,600. In total the population of Worcestershire that will be under the purview of Worcester Royal Hospital by 2021 will total some 593,800 an increase of 27,300 from 2010. With the addition of the population of Stratford-Upon-Avon in 2020 of 133,400, a proportion of which may use the service, the total population increases to 727,200. Instead of a patient population of 406,300 in 2021 from the existing four areas that are predominantly serviced by Worcester Royal Hospital (Worcester, Malvern, Wychavon, and Wyre Forest), the additional future populations of Redditch and Bromsgrove will mean the hospital has to cater for a population of 593,800, an additional 187,500 patients (46.1%), up to a maximum of 727,700 with the addition of Stratford-Upon-Avon, totalling an additional 320,900 patients (79%). Whilst it may be feasible for an extended Worcester Royal Hospital to accommodate natural increases in population, a move from its current catchment of 390,328 to between 593,800 and 727,700 in ten years, representing an increase of between 52% and 86% is hugely impractical and unrealistic. Best service, efficiency and patient care cannot be guaranteed in such instances, thereby negating the duties outlined in the NHS Act. Maintaining services at the Alexandra Hospital will help to spread the numbers more evenly and to dissipate the potential challenges and restrictions caused by overwhelming services. In order for the region to be best and most successfully served, not only for now, but in the future, it is therefore vital that Alexandra Hospital keeps its current provision.

...Redditch and Bromsgrove set to have some of the largest elderly communities in the region in the future therefore it reasons that acute health services should be concentrated in these areas.

Analysis has identified that Redditch's growth is naturally driven i.e. there are significantly more births than deaths and forecasts for Redditch indicate that this pattern is likely to continue with a projected population of over 88,000 by 2030, signalling an increase of over 10,000 residents (11%). Projections further indicate that by 2021 Redditch's over-65 population will have rapidly increased, with the over-90 population in Redditch and Bromsgrove set to treble, and these older groups necessarily place additional demands on acute hospital services. Already the effects have begun to be registered, with an additional 498 (11%) admission episodes for people aged over 65 in Redditch during the five-year period from 2002/2003 to 2007/2008. The majority of admissions for this age group per category have doubled – with 517 (75%) additional admissions for coronary heart disease; 93 (55%) additional admissions for cerebrovascular disease; 192 (46%) additional admissions for cancer; 102 (68%) additional admissions for falls; 15 (63%) additional admissions for coronary artery bypass; 38 (58%) additional admissions for hip replacements and 32 (44%) admissions for knee replacements.

Statistics by gender are even more compelling, with admissions for falls in men aged 65 and over increasing by 163%, knee replacement admissions by 126%, cerebrovascular disease by 99% and similarly high figures for hip replacements (70%) and coronary heart disease (68%). Whilst in women aged over 65, admissions for coronary bypass have increased by 100%, with coronary heart disease by 83% and cancer by 76%. Redditch's over-65 population is likely to have caught up with that of Worcester by 2021, with Bromsgrove and surrounding areas also increasing. Again this will increase pressure on services and it is therefore vital that the Alexandra Hospital can alleviate these issues by continuing to serve the local populations. In addition, many of these people and their age-related incidences will require quick responses and fast treatment and, as outlined in more detail below in

the transport section, this can only be guaranteed at the Alexandra site. Even those elderly who do not need to access acute health services in an emergency or hurry require easy, safe and convenient access, including the shortest possible journeys and the least complicated public transport options. Not only does Redditch offer this, whilst Worcester Royal Hospital and Birmingham Queen Elizabeth do not, but the location of the Alexandra Hospital also has some of the best access options in the region thereby ensuring that the future elderly population of the town are well-catered for. Given that this group suffer amongst the most in terms of health, as well as often facing accessibility and economic concerns, their needs should be amongst those prioritised. With Redditch and Bromsgrove set to have some of the largest elderly communities in the region in the future therefore it reasons that acute health services should be concentrated in these areas. A failure to do so will lead to unnecessary inequalities in health service provision that will disadvantage those in Redditch and Bromsgrove. The data suggests that the health need in Redditch and Bromsgrove, not to mention other areas currently serviced by the Alexandra Hospital, will by the start of the next decade be as great, and even potentially greater, than that in Worcester and the south of the county. Therefore services should be safeguarded in Redditch.

...natural increases represented by the population increase over the next decade or so will exacerbate services.

Redditch experiences the second highest number of births in the region, with only 219 births fewer than Worcester whose population of 99604 is 15185 (18%) larger than Redditch (2008-2011). In the same period, Redditch also emerges as area with the highest under 16 conception rates in the district and is second only to Worcester in the under-18 conception rates. Redditch has also seen the second highest (Worcester first) increase in the percentage of births with a low birth weight. Whilst birth rates in Redditch have been relatively consistent, it is only likely that as the population of the region increases by some 10,000 residents by 2030, these will grow proportionately. Whilst it may be possible for the current additional over 1000 Redditch births to be absorbed into an expanded Worcester Royal Hospital, natural increases represented by the population increase over the next decade or so will exacerbate services. With Redditch's high proportion of the district's under 16, under 18 and low birth weights the extra complications and demands of these births will place further strain on services than lower rates would. Births in Redditch, Bromsgrove and Stratford – the three largest districts that are currently serviced by the Alexandra Hospital – will contribute an additional 3214 (as of 2011) births to the Worcester Royal Hospital and with Worcester, Malvern, Wychavon and Wyre Forest having 4132 births in the same period, Worcester's capacity will be increased by some 78%. When considering the sub-region of Birmingham, there are some 25,000 births per year which will have to be accommodated between the two sites rather than three and with population increases throughout the various districts in the region by 2030 capacity will have to be significantly increased. Whilst the service providers may be able to cope with current levels of demand, it is unlikely that they will be able to support the region in the foreseeable future and certainly not in the long-term and it is likely that the region will require additional not fewer service providers.

Redditch, Bromsgrove, and the nearby areas of Studley, Bidford and Alcester already have a significant population and any loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital would place immediate substantial demands on services at Worcester and/or Birmingham. Whilst it may be possible for these services to react to and accommodate this initial influx, population projections for the areas

highlight significant growth in the near-future that would place extreme pressure on the services in Worcester and Birmingham. These services will also be facing increases in the populations of their existing catchment areas that are likely to be significant as well. The loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will see increased pressure and demand on these other services that far outweighs existing demand and is beyond the levels of adequate, natural growth. Services are likely to become stretched and as a result less efficient. The provision of effective health services is critical in safeguarding lives. It is therefore vital that services are retained at the Alexandra Hospital to ensure that residents not only in Redditch but across the county and indeed across the wider sub-region are provided with the best possible health provision. Maintaining service at the Alexandra Hospital will help to spread not only existing demand but also future demand. Furthermore, with the projections of significant increases in the older age groups in Redditch and Bromsgrove, as well as national trends pointing towards longer life expectancy and growth in these demographic groups, it is likely that there will be increases in age-related diseases and incidences that will increase demand on acute health services. Again maintaining services at Redditch will help to meet this demand successfully and effectively. But, furthermore, it will also ensure that this group, who are likely to both require the services more and also to present particular issues with regard to access, are ensured good access to health provision. In contrast, transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham does not take into account the particular needs and demands of this group and will increase inequalities in their health provision. In order to effectively meet the Government's health aims of freedom, fairness and responsibility, as well as the requirement to reduce inequalities, services must be retained in Redditch.

Transport

One of the key benefits of the Alexandra Hospital is its accessibility not only for the population of Redditch, but also for the neighbouring districts of Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester, Bidford, Salford and Stratford-Upon-Avon which do not have their own acute health service provision. Shorter transport times and improved accessibility cut demands on emergency calls but also improve efficiency, as well as allowing more people to access services more sustainably. It allows people to access services quicker and more effectively, which can oftentimes produce better results and save lives. Furthermore it provides greater convenience for patients and visitors, allowing them to take less time out of their days, including potential time off work. For those accessing services regularly, this means considerably less cumulative time in travelling. However, one of the main benefits of shorter journey times is the opportunity to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, which has widespread benefits not only at a local level or regional level but also a national level.

The location of Alexandra Hospital in Redditch means that the population of Redditch can use a variety of means to access the services and there is no reliance on cars as the only viable mode of transport. With the majority of the population, as well as that of Studley (1.2miles), being within 5 miles of the hospital this greatly improves transport options. As the Government's White Paper "Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making sustainable local travel happen" outlined, "Walking is the most common mode used for trips of less than one mile (79%). As trip length increases, walking becomes less prevalent, accounting for approximately one third of 1–2 mile trips and just five% of 2–5 mile trips. Cycling is at its highest where trips are 1–2 miles long (3% of trips) and 2–5 miles long (2% of trips). Bus use is at its highest (12%) where trips are 2–5 miles in length." These figures show that the Alexandra Hospital offers the majority of the population from Redditch and Studley the

requisite factors to facilitate other, sustainable means of transport, aside from the car. Although cars are inevitably used for journeys to the Alexandra Hospital as well, the hospital offers, at least a realistic and viable opportunity for alternative travel methods and can be used to support and encourage active travel plans.

Travel times to access acute health services will inevitably be increased and convenience and efficiency will decrease.

In contrast, Worcester Royal Hospital is situated 22.9 miles from Redditch (further in outlying areas) and 20.8 miles from Studley, whilst the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham lies 11.7 miles from Redditch and 16.3 miles from Studley. Alcester lies 5.8 miles from the Alexandra Hospital, Bromsgrove 8.6 miles, Bidford 10.7 miles and Stratford-Upon-Avon 13.7 miles. In comparison, it is 16.8 miles from Alcester to Worcester Royal Hospital, 12.4 miles from Bromsgrove, 19.4 from Bidford and 23.8 miles from Stratford-Upon-Avon. In terms of distances to Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, it is 20.8 miles from Alcester, 12 miles from Bromsgrove, 25.7 miles from Bidford and 30.6 miles from Stratford-Upon-Avon. All of these distances greatly exceed the optimum distances for encouraging walking, cycling or taking the bus. Residents of Alcester will be forced to travel an additional 11 (189%) or 15 miles (259%) to access acute health provision. Residents of Bromsgrove will have to travel an additional 3.8 (44%) or 3.4 (40%) miles. Residents of Bidford will be forced to travel an additional 8.7 (81%) or 15 (140%) miles, whilst those who travel from Stratford-Upon-Avon will see an increase of 10.1 (74%) or 16.9 (123%) miles. Travel times to access acute health services will inevitably be increased and convenience and efficiency will decrease. Although the distances from these areas to the Alexandra site in Redditch are largely outside those for walking or cycling and thus require vehicular transport, travel times and availability of public transport offer real options for residents other than by car.

...traffic and congestion is going to suffer significantly, only exacerbating the poor accessibility and travel times.

Although the distances from Alcester, Bromsgrove, Bidford and Stratford-Upon-Avon militate against walking or cycling to either the Alexandra Hospital or Worcester and Birmingham, whilst the location of the former is well-connected to these areas by public transport and has shorter journey times, the latter both have increased travel time and reduced availability of public transport services that make the car the predominant and unparalleled choice. And with a total population of some 227,904 in these areas, as well as the 90,298 from Redditch and Studley potentially using the Worcester Royal Hospital and Birmingham Queen Elizabeth traffic and congestion is going to suffer significantly, only exacerbating the poor accessibility and travel times. Additionally, as major cities, both Worcester and Birmingham experience significantly high levels of traffic and many of the routes from Redditch and surrounding areas to the hospitals are busy, again aggravating travel and accessibility, which will consequently diminish bus and taxi services as well.

Whilst the White Paper outlines that rail travel “becomes increasingly popular for longer trips, ranging from 4% of trips of 5–10 miles in length to 12% of trips of 25 miles and over” and would offer a means of transport to services in Worcester and Bromsgrove that would potentially challenge the dominance of the car, in reality there are a number of issues that make rail travel from Redditch and surrounding areas to either Worcester or Birmingham difficult, inconvenient and unappealing and negate moving services from Redditch. Indeed, firstly neither Studley, Alcester or Bidford, as

well as many of the various wards within these areas have railway stations. The nearest train station to Studley is Redditch which is located 5.7 miles away, from Alcester the nearest station is Wilmcote located 7 miles away, whilst Redditch is 9 miles away. All of these distances exceed those for walking, cycling or bus use and would therefore require either travel to the station by car or bus, both of which bring associated costs, including fuel costs and parking charges for the car and ticket charges on the bus on top of the train ticket fares. Even those in Redditch, particularly the least physically able, may need to take the bus or car to reach the train station and face the associated costs. It is likely therefore that people will be discouraged from using the train and will opt to take the car directly to Worcester Royal Hospital or Birmingham Queen Elizabeth.

In addition the rail journey from Redditch to Worcester would take approximately 1 hour 30 minutes, involving a change at Birmingham New Street, in comparison to a car journey of approximately 30 minutes. Journey times by train and car are relatively similar from Redditch to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, 27 and 23 minutes respectively, but with the costs outlined briefly above for train travel, as well as the fact that trains from Redditch only run half-hourly and offers a less comfortable and convenient service, as well as their being the prospect of delays and anti-social behaviour, the car would continue to be a more favourable option for many. For elderly people, those with injury and illness, having to wait for trains, negotiate the platforms and exits/entrances, and get from the train station to the hospital frontage is additionally likely to be impractical.

Travel from Redditch to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital costs £6 for a single ticket, £10 return and £30.70 for a 7-day season ticket...Travel from Redditch to Worcester Shrub Hill or Foregate Street would cost £12.60 for a single ticket and around £18.90 for a return...

Furthermore for those using the train there would be the associated charges for travel. Travel from Redditch to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital costs £6 for a single ticket, £10 return and £30.70 for a 7-day season ticket. Bus tickets to and from the train station may also be necessary for those who cannot drive or walk, or who live further afield in Studley, Alcester or Bidford, alternatively taxi arrangements with their associated charges. For those parking at the train station there is a set daily charge of £4.40, weekly charge of £16, monthly charge of £45 or annual charge of £451. Travel from Redditch to Worcester Shrub Hill or Foregate Street would cost £12.60 for a single ticket and around £18.90 for a return again with associated charges for travel to and from the station and any parking charges. Whilst day parking charges at the Alexandra Hospital are only slightly more than for a single train ticket, with a 6-24 hour stay costing £7.50, shorter stays offer cheaper options, with up to two hours costing £3.00, 2-4 hours £4.50 and 4-6 hours £6.00. Return tickets at £10, however, which would be the most likely option, would be more expensive. Whereas train travellers will face a fixed cost and are unable to find a cheaper option. Savings are even more pronounced when compared with train travel to Worcester, where even single tickets cost more than a 24-hour stay at the Alexandra Hospital. Travel from Bromsgrove to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital costs £6.80 for a single ticket, £9.80 for a return, and £26.70 for a 7-day season ticket. Travel from Bromsgrove to Worcester Shrub Hill or Foregate Street costs £3.80 for a single ticket, with return tickets starting from £4.70. Current car parking charges at the station are £3 per day but with a new railway interchange planned, these charges are subject to review. Whilst train travel to Worcester is comparable to a 2-4 hour stay at the Alexandra Hospital, car parking charges at the station or bus travel may increase the costs. Furthermore, a stay of up to 2 hours at Alexandra Hospital is cheaper than any rail option to

Worcester. Train travel from Bromsgrove to Birmingham offers a less economically sustainable option, with a 24-hour stay at Alexandra Hospital only 70p more than single ticket. With car parking prices at Worcester Royal Hospital equivalent to those at Alexandra Hospital and similar prices at Birmingham Queen Elizabeth, it is likely that should services be transferred from Redditch, patients from Redditch, Bromsgrove and neighbouring areas will more likely drive than take the train. As such, again this offers a severe threat to the congestion, traffic and accessibility of the hospital, as well as to the environment and climate change, and to the health and wellbeing of the population of Redditch, Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester and Bidford. Although parking prices are comparable with Alexandra Hospital, the additional distance for patients from these areas will mean that fuel consumption to Worcester and Birmingham is significantly more than to the Alexandra site and again will prove not to be economically sustainable or fair for residents.

At present there are 156 parking spaces at Redditch train station and 25 at Bromsgrove, although this is set to increase to 350 with the planned changes scheduled for summer 2015. With Redditch serving as the nearest station for residents of Redditch and Studley, and offering one of the nearest services for residents of Alcester and Bidford, the 156 existing parking spaces which are currently in high demand by commuters, would be substantially below required levels and there is no capacity on or near the site to be sufficiently expanded. Given the location of Alexandra Hospital there is currently no demand on the train station for hospital users in Redditch and its surrounding areas. However, as one of the possible travel choices for travel to Worcester and Birmingham demand will be significantly increased. Similarly, with no train route for hospital users travelling from Bromsgrove to Redditch but train routes both to Worcester and Birmingham, despite the plans to extend Bromsgrove car parking to 350 by 2015, this would be insufficient. For the some 13,108 households in Redditch, Bromsgrove and nearby areas without access to a car or van, train may be the preferred viable transport method, given its relative journey times to buses and prices to taxis. As such, the current facilities at both locations would not be able to support potential levels. Trains from Redditch currently run half hourly to Birmingham, including the University station of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and to Birmingham New Street for connecting trains to Worcester, but it should be pointed out that from December 2014 this will be increased to three trains an hour. Trains from Bromsgrove to Worcester and Birmingham only run hourly.

In terms of the taxi, this creates additional costs for travellers, on top of rail fares, which for a large majority of the population in Redditch would be unfeasible.

Finally, Worcester Shrub Hill Railway Station is located 1.5 miles from Worcestershire Royal Hospital, whilst Worcester Foregate Street Station is located 4.4 miles from the Hospital. Whilst the distance from Shrub Hill Station to the Hospital falls within the optimal distance to encourage walking, this would add significantly to the overall journey time from Redditch or Studley, taking the total up to around 2 hours. If appointment times need to be met or the hospital needs to be reached, or there is inclement weather, walking is likely to be unfavourable. Similarly, it would increase the time taken out of a person's day and if they need to get back to work, for childcare arrangements etc, again walking would not be favoured. Cycling from the station to the hospital would similarly not be favourable, despite being within the optimal range, because of having to transport a bicycle. It is likely therefore that buses that run from both Shrub Hill and Foregate Street Station or taxis would be the preference, limiting the transport options, particularly the healthiest choices, for those travelling from Redditch and neighbouring areas. In terms of the bus, which are discussed in more

detail below, again this poses a problem in scheduling and delays, potential costs for non-pensioners, as well as the issue for the elderly, ill or injured of having to wait in potentially inclement weather and negotiate embarking and disembarking. In terms of the taxi, this creates additional costs for travellers, on top of rail fares, which for a large majority of the population in Redditch would be unfeasible (see section on Economy).

Rather than presenting patients with viable and sustainable transport choice and options, transferral of services outside of Redditch will provide patients with few realistic choices and will significantly limit the options compared with those available to them at the Alexandra Hospital site.

Whilst getting to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham is relatively feasible from Redditch, Bromsgrove, Henley in Arden and Tanworth in Arden by rail, particularly when compared with bus services which are longer and less frequent, and is perhaps more viable than travel to Worcester Royal Hospital given the limited corridors out of Redditch, when viewed against the additional comfort, convenience and accessibility of the private car, there is little incentive to travel from Redditch, Bromsgrove and neighbouring areas to Worcester Royal Hospital or Queen Elizabeth Birmingham by train and would offer significant financial disincentives which further disadvantage these populations and introduces inequalities between areas in the county as to their access to, and the provision of, health services. Rather than presenting patients with viable and sustainable transport choice and options, transferral of services outside of Redditch will provide patients with few realistic choices and will significantly limit the options compared with those available to them at the Alexandra Hospital site.

At present there are a number of buses that run within Redditch to the Hospital (55/55A/56/56A/58A/59), all of which have a travel time from the bus station of around 20m. These buses directly service Walkwood, Crabbs Cross, Oakenshaw, Church Hill, Winyates, Matchborough and Woodrow. In addition, bus services link Alcester, Bidford, Studley, Stratford, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Birmingham and various locales in between directly to the Alexandra Hospital. The 142/143 service travels from both Bromsgrove and Studley to the Alexandra Hospital and its route also takes in Webheath, Headless Cross, Lakeside and Greenlands in Redditch, ensuring that much of Redditch has direct access to the Hospital. The journey from Studley to the Hospital takes around 10 minutes on this route and from Bromsgrove to the Hospital about 1 hour. The 247/248 service from Evesham offers direct access to the Hospital via Bidford, Alcester and Studley. The journey from Bidford to the Hospital takes about 20m on this route, from Alcester about 15m and from Studley about 5m. In addition the 145 and 182/183 services from Bromsgrove alight at Redditch Bus station from which passengers can take onward buses directly to the Hospital. A bus journey from Bromsgrove to Redditch Bus Station takes around 20m and onward journeys a further 20m, resulting in a total journey time of around 40m. Although there is no service that runs directly from Stratford-Upon-Avon to the Alexandra Hospital, the 26 runs from Stratford-Upon-Avon to Redditch Bus Station, taking around 55m, whereby an outbound bus can be caught directly to the Hospital. Alternatively the route takes passengers through Studley, alighting them in the town centre after 40m, which lies 1.2 miles from the hospital and therefore potentially within walking distance, or allowing them to catch either the 142/143 or 247 which will pick them up from the same place and will get them to the Hospital within 10 minutes, meaning the Alexandra Hospital can be reached from Stratford-Upon-Avon in 50 minutes. Bus services from Redditch bus station to the Hospital run

every 20 minutes to half hourly; the 142/143 and 247 run hourly; whilst the weekend 248 service runs every two hours. Bus services to the Hospital start as early as 0500 and run through to 23.30. Typical prices for a day pass within Redditch that will include unlimited journeys to the Hospital cost from £1.50, with concessions for children, as well as family tickets available and free travel for pensioners. A week pass costs around £6 and a month pass around £22. For the main 142/143 route from Bromsgrove and 247/248 from Bidford, Alcester and Studley prices are only slightly more from around £1.80 per day, £7 per week and £28 per month. The bus currently offers a feasible and practical travel choice, especially for the population of Redditch, although Studley is well-linked to the Hospital and Bromsgrove and Alcester and Bidford all have fairly regular direct connections, and in particular is a cost-effective solution for pensioners.

...there is just one bus from Redditch that directly serves the Worcester Royal Hospital... Stratford-Upon-Avon, Bidford and Alcester only have direct bus services to Worcester Bus Station on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays...there is no direct service between Studley and Worcester so the majority of travel from Stratford-Upon-Avon, Bidford, Alcester and Studley to Worcester would require a bus connection to Redditch and then an onward journey to Worcester.

In contrast, at present there is just one bus from Redditch that directly serves the Worcester Royal Hospital (350). Indeed this is the only bus that runs between the two areas. However, this service is currently at risk as it is subsidised by Worcestershire County Council which is consulting on the withdrawal of up to £3million of bus subsidy. Potentially this could result in the removal of the only direct bus link between Redditch and Worcester. In Bromsgrove, there is also only the one service (144/144A) that runs to Worcester. However, the service does not directly travel to the Hospital and alights instead at Worcester Bus Station from which an onward bus would be required to reach Worcester Royal Hospital. Stratford-Upon-Avon, Bidford and Alcester only have direct bus services to Worcester Bus Station on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, whilst there is no direct service between Studley and Worcester so the majority of travel from Stratford-Upon-Avon, Bidford, Alcester and Studley to Worcester would require a bus connection to Redditch and then an onward journey to Worcester. The bus journey from Redditch to Worcester Royal Hospital takes around 55m. Travel from Stratford-Upon Avon to Redditch Bus Station takes around 55m, from Bidford around 35m, Alcester 25m and Studley 20m, resulting in a journey time from Stratford-Upon Avon to Worcester of around 1 hour 50m, from Bidford of 1h 30m, Alcester 1h 20m and Studley 1h 15m. Compare this with a travel time from Stratford-Upon-Avon to Alexandra Hospital of around 45m, Bidford 20m, Alcester 15m and Studley 5m, which see increase in journey times of 1h 5m, 1h 10m, 1h 5m and 1h 10m respectively correlating to 1.4, 3.5, 4.3 and 14 times the current journey time to Alexandra Hospital, highlighting the disadvantageousness and inferiority of transferral of services from the Alexandra Hospital site.

Whilst Birmingham may offer a slightly better bus linkage than Worcester for those in Redditch and outlying areas, there are still huge inequalities and weaknesses in services...

At present, there are two bus services from Redditch to Birmingham (150/X50 and 146), neither of which travel directly to Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and would therefore require an additional bus. In Bromsgrove, the 144/144A service connects to Birmingham but again not directly to the hospital. The X20 provides a route from Stratford-Upon-Avon to Birmingham, but Bidford, Alcester and Studley have no direct connection and would require an initial bus connection to Redditch. The bus

journey from Redditch to Birmingham takes between 50m and 1h 20. With bus connections from Bidford, Alcester and Studley, shortest travel times to Birmingham would be around 1h 25m, 1h 15m and 1h 10 minutes respectively. Again compared with existing travel times to Alexandra Hospital, the population of Redditch would suffer at least a 30 minute additional journey, notwithstanding the additional bus journey to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Those from Stratford-Upon-Avon would have an additional journey of around 50m, from Bidford of around 1h 5m, Alcester 1h and Studley 1h 5, correlating to 1.1, 3.25, 4.00, 13 times the current journey to Alexandra Hospital respectively. Whilst Birmingham may offer a slightly better bus linkage than Worcester for those in Redditch and outlying areas, there are still huge inequalities and weaknesses in services when compared with those available to the Alexandra Hospital. Indeed, as well as increased prices, bus services from Redditch to Birmingham generally run only hourly, with no service on Sundays or bank holidays. The 150/X50 service runs from 5.52 a.m with the last bus from Redditch at 6.30p.m. reaching Birmingham at 7.25. The last return 150/X50 bus from Birmingham departs at 5.49 arriving in Redditch at 7.10. The infrequency of the buses from Redditch to Birmingham, especially on Sundays, Bank Holidays and evenings, as well as the significantly longer journey times and indirect access to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital make it a much less viable and accessible service than that in the current location at the Alexandra site. Particularly for the less able and elderly, the extended times of, and between, journeys will take a lot more time and effort out of their days, and more time in difficult weather conditions. There is also the added concern of negotiating two bus journeys.

Whilst bus travel is possible to both Worcester Royal and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, it is far from convenient, frequent or comprehensive and for many will not pose a viable transport choice. It will severely reduce and restrict accessibility to acute health services for those in Redditch, Bromsgrove, Bidford, Alcester and Studley from existing levels available at the Alexandra Hospital site. Whilst the Government aims to enable people to make more sustainable choices, to offer a wider range of genuinely sustainable transport modes and to improve local transport, the removal of health services from Redditch and transferral to Worcester or Birmingham will undermine all of these goals by making the bus a less viable and sustainable option. The option of bus travel will be much less appealing for those visiting Worcester Royal Hospital or Birmingham Queen Elizabeth than the Alexandra Hospital, given the extended journey and waiting times, the infrequency of services and the reduced convenience and more people are likely to turn to the private car adding to problems of congestion, carbon emissions, and health. Indeed, although bus services could potentially be increased, they will still be unable to compete with the private car in terms of comfort, convenience and reliability.

...only 22% of Redditch's population can reach Worcester Royal Hospital during weekdays...

According to the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Accessibility Study 2010, 99% of the Redditch population can reach Alexandra Hospital via passenger transport within 60 minutes during the day and evening on weekdays, with 98% on Sundays. In comparison, only 22% of Redditch's population can reach Worcester Royal Hospital during weekdays, whilst none of the population can do so during evenings or on Sundays. Similarly, only 4% of the population can reach Kidderminster General Hospital during weekdays, rising to 26% on Sundays, but falling to 0% on evenings. Moreover, the Alexandra Hospital offers the significantly most accessible choice for the population of Bromsgrove, with 73% able to reach the hospital on weekdays, rising to 75% on evenings, with 8% at weekends. In comparison only 32% can reach Worcester Royal Hospital during weekdays, falling to 13% at

weekends and 3% on Sundays. The loss of service provision at the Alexandra Hospital would severely disadvantage the population of Redditch and Bromsgrove and their ability to access acute health services. Furthermore, the populations of Redditch and Bromsgrove would have the worst accessibility rates across the whole county, with Malvern having 78% of its population being able to reach Worcester Royal Hospital on weekdays, 67% on evenings and 31% on Sundays; Wychavon with 62% on weekdays, 44% on evenings and 29% on weekends with satisfactory levels of accessibility also at Kidderminster General Hospital during days (23%) and evenings(33%); Wyre Forest with 99% of the population able to reach Kidderminster General Hospital during days, 96% in evenings and 95% on Sundays and; Worcester with 100% of its population able to access Worcester Royal Hospital during weekdays and evenings and 98% on Sundays. Whilst the lowest accessibility rates to the closest hospital in the county are those for Wychavon with 62% weekdays, 44% evenings and 29% weekends, Redditch and Bromsgrove would be significantly worse off with rates of 22% weekdays (Worcester), 0% evenings and 26% (Kidderminster) and 47% weekdays (Kidderminster), 13% evenings (Kidderminster/Worcester) and 35% Sundays (Kidderminster) respectively. In all instances, less than half of the population of either Redditch or Bromsgrove would be able to reach Worcester Royal Hospital or Kidderminster General in under 60 minutes by passenger transport, whilst in many instances three quarters of the population cannot do so, with even 100% in the case of the Redditch population in the evenings. The Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Accessibility Study confirmed that 'passenger transport access is not competitive when compared with access by car', noting that 'during evenings and Sundays, passenger transport access to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital is markedly poorer.'

It may follow that when it is not necessarily an emergency but people need treatment they may be more likely to call out an ambulance than they would be if services were in Redditch.

Not only are the bus and train times and arrangements to Worcester Royal Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham largely inconvenient and impractical, particularly when compared with public transport options for local populations to the Alexandra Hospital, for those in full health, but for those who are ill, injured, elderly and disabled, of which there will evidently be a large number, public transport to Worcester and Birmingham becomes even less practical and, in cases, unfeasible. Having to negotiate the longer journeys and waiting times and change overs on journeys on public transport to Worcester and Birmingham compared with those to Redditch when not in full health is severely disadvantageous. Furthermore, for those who require treatment outside of the running hours of the buses and trains, options to Worcester and Birmingham are again significantly more limited and disadvantageous than to Alexandra Hospital. Indeed, in these instances, a taxi journey in Redditch to the Alexandra Hospital would cost around £5.00, in comparison one to Worcester would be £30.00 and to Birmingham £25.00. It may follow that when it is not necessarily an emergency but people need treatment they may be more likely to call out an ambulance than they would be if services were in Redditch. As such, this could place unnecessary pressure on the service and ultimately cost lives. Furthermore, when people are taken into hospital, they may automatically be taken to Worcester or Birmingham instead of Redditch, which will mean that visitors and discharged patients will have to make transport arrangements. It is not fair, particularly when people are ill or injured, to force them to travel twice the distance than they would if they were taken to the Alexandra Hospital. This is particularly unreasonable for elderly people and given the information outlined in the section above on population about the increase in this age group in Redditch it will disadvantage a significant number of people.

Reducing emissions is...a priority both in order to mitigate climate change and make people healthier, neither of which will be achieved by transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham.

The car is overwhelmingly likely to be the most common mode of transport to either Worcester Royal Hospital or the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for those in Redditch and Studley. As well as undermining the Government's policy to enable choice, the transferral of services from Redditch to Worcester or Birmingham and the subsequent reliance on the car will also severely negate the Government's policy to reduce greenhouse gases and other emissions from transport. As they outline, 'transport is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Around a quarter of domestic carbon (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions in the UK come from transport. Transport is also a source of emissions which have an impact on air quality. Reducing greenhouse gases from transport will help the government's long term goal of reducing the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% compared to 1990 levels by 2050.' The Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Accessibility Study Jan 2010 highlights as a particular concern the emergence of a borderline air quality management area close to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital as it suggests that congestion caused by persons trying to access this hospital is actually contributing directly to this phenomenon with its associated health disbenefits. Transferral of services from Redditch to Worcester or Birmingham will not only fail to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but will likely serve to increase them, as the car will become the most viable form of travel to the acute health services whereas the bus, walking and cycling are equally viable at the current location of the Alexandra Hospital.

Both the Marmot Review and Our Health and Wellbeing Today outline the fact that climate change represents significant and potentially catastrophic risks to our health as well as a challenge to health services. As transport accounts for approximately 29% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions, it is a leading factor in climate change. Reducing emissions is therefore a priority both in order to mitigate climate change and make people healthier, neither of which will be achieved by transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham. The Marmot Review also outlines that transport 'contributes significantly to some of today's greatest challenges to public health in England, including road traffic injuries, physical inactivity, the adverse effect of traffic on social cohesiveness and the impact of outdoor air and noise pollution'. It also highlights that 'there is clear evidence of the adverse effects of outdoor air pollution, especially for cardio-respiratory mortality and morbidity. It is estimated that each year in the UK, short-term air pollution is associated with 12,000 to 24,000 premature deaths.'

Furthermore, reducing the reliance and use of motorised transport has also been identified as a key factor in tackling obesity, which is a particular problem in Redditch (see health section below), and it has been suggested that emphasis needs to be given to overcoming the obesogenic norm and replacing it with active travel. Again this would be challenged by a transferral of services away from Redditch, whilst it could be maximised if health provision services remained at the Alexandra Hospital site. Significantly, these actions will also help to tackle climate change and sustainability. Furthermore, the report confirms that excessive car use to access acute hospital sites by staff, visitors and patients can often cause congestion which can act to 'significantly reduce accessibility by all modes (including emergency service vehicles)' and extend journey time. The report highlights that there are known congestion problems at the Worcester Royal Hospital site which affects bus and emergency service vehicle time and reliability of services.

Relocating services outside of Redditch in either Worcester or Birmingham will not only encourage the use of obesogenic modes of transport, but given their distances from Redditch, will actively prevent walking and cycling and thus contribute to the growing levels of obesity.

The Government's concept of enabling choice with regard to modes of transport would therefore be contravened by the loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital and the relocation to Worcester Royal Hospital or Birmingham Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Similarly, their goal to 'encourage sustainable local travel...by making public transport and cycling and walking more attractive and effective' would be completely undermined and even reversed in these circumstances. Redistributing services outside of Redditch and removing acute health services from the current site would increase travel distances by around 15 miles and deny any of the population of Redditch and Studley access to acute health services within 5 miles – the distance at which the Government recommends that many journeys could be alternatively made by walking or cycling. Redistribution of services outside of Redditch would not only discourage these methods of travel but would largely prohibit them and removing the opportunity for people to walk or cycle not only increases the carbon footprint and congestion, worsens air quality, and undermines the UK's climate change goals, but significantly also negates physical activity and contributes to poor health.

Indeed, as the Government's White Paper outlines: 'lack of physical activity and poor physical fitness can contribute to obesity, cardiovascular disease, strokes, diabetes and some cancers, as well as to poorer mental wellbeing...Cycling and walking offers an easy way for people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives. The importance of active travel is also emphasised in the Department of Health's Public Health White Paper (Department of Health, 2010).' The Public Health White Paper adds that active travel and physical activity need to become the norm in communities. Taking the opportunity away from patients in Redditch and Studley to access healthcare via active travel disadvantages them significantly and with an already substandard level of health in the district, in which obesity, heart disease and stroke – all of which physical activity and exercise is crucial in treatment – are amongst the key health priorities (see health section), would exacerbate current health problems. As the Government's White Paper outlines, 'obesity is one of the most significant health challenges facing our society, representing a significant risk factor for a number of chronic diseases including cardiovascular heart disease and Type 2 diabetes'. It is already a major issue for Redditch, in which obesity is significantly worse than the England average and other areas in the region. Relocating services outside of Redditch in either Worcester or Birmingham will not only encourage the use of obesogenic modes of transport, but given their distances from Redditch, will actively prevent walking and cycling and thus contribute to the growing levels of obesity. With health services located in Worcester and Birmingham, active travel for the population of Redditch and Studley would be unrealistic, whilst the retainment of the services at the Alexandra Hospital would enable active travel to be a realistic goal, making it more feasible and likely and making promotion of sustainable travel more viable.

Since May 2012, a three-year programme began in Redditch called 'Choose How You Move'. It focuses on enabling and promoting sustainable travel in the borough and informing and encouraging residents to opt for sustainable travel. The programme includes teams visiting all wards in the borough from 2012 to 2014 to offer travel advice; travel training for teens, young adults and vulnerable adults; a school sustainable travel intervention programme; a workplace sustainable travel intervention programme; improvements to walking and cycling routes; improvements to the

bus network; and passenger transport infrastructure enhancements. With a launch event which saw Redditch host the Halfords Tour Cycle Race, significant investment and time has gone into promoting, enabling and encouraging sustainable travel options for residents. However, the positive effects of the programme and the significant investment in improving travel in the borough will be undone by the transferral of acute health services outside of the borough which will challenge the idea of making walking/cycling and active travel the norm instead of the car. It will undermine the message and vision that the borough has sought to deliver via the 'Choose How You Move' campaign and present a disabling rather than an enabling situation for residents.

...across Redditch, Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester, Bidford, Salford and Tanworth in Arden some 13,108 households have no access to a car or van.

An additional problem of the reliance on the car to access health services at Worcester and Birmingham is the matter of car ownership. In Redditch, there are 7051 households without access to a car or van, representing a substantial 20.3% of the population. Of these households, 1595 (23%) have dependent children. In Bromsgrove, 4771 households (12.5%) do not have access to a car or van, 13% of which (605 households) have dependent children. In total across Redditch, Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester, Bidford, Salford and Tanworth in Arden some 13,108 households have no access to a car or van. Whilst in the district of Stratford-Upon-Avon, a further 6,622 households are without access to a car or van. These households are likely therefore to be reliant on public transport: train, bus or taxi, which as has already been outlined substantially above, offers poor, inconvenient and limited options to Worcester and Birmingham, and significantly inferior services to those available for travel to the Alexandra Hospital. This will introduce a further level of inequality with regard to the access to acute health services, with those who have access to a car or van having greater choice, but significantly improved accessibility to these services over those who do not have access. That a proportion of those without access to the car, are also amongst the most socially and economically vulnerable, including the elderly and mobility impaired, for whom public transport can be even more of a problem, disadvantages these groups further. For those without a car, the Alexandra Hospital remains significantly more viable and accessible than Worcester or Birmingham.

...the removal of services from Redditch will leave what is already a vulnerable society, with the worst accessibility to health services in the region, and will introduce substantial inequalities with the populations of Redditch, Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester and neighbouring areas being significantly worse off than all other areas in Worcestershire.

Transferral of services from Redditch to Worcester or Birmingham will deny people the opportunity to make sustainable travel choices and reduce the range of genuinely sustainable transport modes available. Environmentally, fiscally, economically and socially, travel to Worcester or Birmingham provides significantly less sustainability than to the Alexandra site in Redditch. There is no transport incentive or advantage – traffic, cost, distance, speed, emissions, health – to relocating services away from Redditch and in fact there will be significant disadvantages. It would compromise the Government's vision for 'a transport system that is...greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities', as well as its aim to 'tackle carbon emissions...by encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices.' Significantly, the removal of services from Redditch, will leave what is already a vulnerable society, with the worst accessibility to health services in the region, and will introduce substantial inequalities with the populations of Redditch, Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester

and neighbouring areas being significantly worse off than all other areas in Worcestershire. The Alexandra Hospital ensures that people in Redditch and nearby have health provision that is not only comparable with the rest of the region but suitable and practical for those in north and east Worcestershire and west Warwickshire. As such, the duty registered within the NHS Act 'to reduce inequalities between the people of England with respect to the benefits that they can obtain from the health service' would be contravened. Further, transferral of services outside of Redditch will bring significant travel disadvantages that will not only counteract the need to travel, sustainable travel, active travel and carbon emissions and greenhouse gases but will increase traffic and congestion in and around Worcester Royal Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Birmingham making the hospital less accessible and emergency routes significantly more congested. As the previous discussion on population outlined, with numbers in the region set to increase substantially in coming years, the situation is only going to be exacerbated and travel conditions and accessibility worsened. Not only does Alexandra Hospital offer good public transport links and sustainable travel options, but it takes away the pressure and eases congestion at other acute hospital services. In terms of transport, and the resultant issues of traffic, sustainability and health, retention of services at Alexandra Hospital, Redditch, offers a significantly better option than transferral of services to Worcester or Birmingham.

Socioeconomic Climate

It has been established that deprivation and inequalities ... not only contribute to poorer health but also serve as barriers to health and wellbeing.

In terms of the socioeconomic climate Redditch struggles in many respects and falls below regional levels. Furthermore, it contains the largest areas of deprivation in the county and is ranked 131 out of 326 local authority areas in England for deprivation which takes into account factors such as income, education, skills, employment, housing, crime. It has been established that deprivation and inequalities in these areas not only contribute to poorer health but also serve as barriers to health and wellbeing.

Redditch suffers from poor educational attainment particularly post-16 and particularly at the highest levels. Indeed, in the ten indices measuring A-level qualifications, Redditch comes lowest in 9 of these and second lowest in the remaining one. In terms of the percentage of pupils achieving any A* grades at A-level are the lowest in the county at 1.7%, compared to the next lowest in Wyre Forest of 2.2%, and the county average of 6.1%. Redditch also fares worst for pupils achieving any grades A* to B at A-level with 37.3%, compared to the next lowest in Worcester of 40.3%, and the county average of 47.4%; pupils achieving 2 or more A*-B grades with 22.1% compared to the next lowest in Worcester of 26.6% and the county average of 30.9%; pupils achieving 2 or more A*-E grades with 80.2% compared to the second lowest of 87.4% in Worcester and the county average of 88.7%; pupils achieving 3 or more A* grades with 0% compared to the second lowest in Wyre Forest of 0.2 and a county average of 0.7%; pupils achieving 3 or more A*-B grades with 13.5% compared to the second lowest in Wyre Forest of 15.5% and the county average of 18.8%; pupils achieving 3 or more A*-E grades with 67% compared to the second lowest in Wyre Forest of 72% and the county average of 75.4%; as well as QCA points per pupil with 595.9 in Redditch compared to the second lowest of 630.8 in Wyre Forest and the county average of 668.0. In terms of achieving 2 or more A* grades Redditch comes second lowest with 1.2% only to Wyre Forest at 0.8%, with a county average

of 2.0%. Educational inequalities are thus shown to be rife in Redditch compared to the rest of the county. Redditch also ranks second lowest in the county in terms of the proportion of residents with no qualifications, with 25.1%, with only Wyre Forest worse with 27.8% and a county average of 23.0%. This accounts for some 16,996 people aged over 16 in Redditch who have no qualifications. Whilst in Bromsgrove there are an additional 16,413 people, in Alcester and Bidford 3,796 and in Studley and Henley 3,616, amassing some 40,821 people across these areas. Redditch also has the lowest proportion of residents with the highest level attainment of NVQ level 4 or 5 with 20.7%, compared to the second lowest in Wyre Forest 22.1% and the county average of 27.2%. The Marmot Review identified that inequalities in educational outcomes affect physical and mental health, as well as income, employment and quality of life, which all contribute to poorer health. Given the relative educational deprivation and inequalities in Redditch therefore acute health services need to be retained at the Alexandra Hospital site to ensure that these vulnerable groups are given the greatest chance of accessibility.

With the highest level of unemployment in the county, it is vital that health services are economically viable and sustainable for the population of Redditch and outlying areas.

Redditch has the highest level of unemployment in the county at 4.6% compared to an average of 3.7%. This totals some 2,877 people, whilst an additional 2,070 (3.1%) in Bromsgrove takes the total to 4,947. In Redditch 26.1% of residents are economically inactive, totalling 16,303 people. In Bromsgrove, 28.2% are inactive, totalling 19,143 people. Whilst in Alcester and Bidford there are a further 4,476 economically inactive people and 4,332 in Studley and Henley. Unemployment and economic inactivity has been found to elevate health risks. Indeed, the marmot Review outlined that unemployed people have 'increased rates of limiting long-term illness, mental illness and cardiovascular disease' and added that 'the experience of unemployment has also been consistently associated with an increase in overall mortality, and in particular with suicide. The unemployed have much higher use of medication and much worse prognosis and recovery rates'. With the highest rates of unemployment in the county, it is likely that health problems in Redditch will be exacerbated and as such it is necessary to retain services at the Alexandra Hospital site in order not to disadvantage the population or to exacerbate existing inequalities further. It is also the case that unemployment brings financial problems. These can result in lower living standards as well as limiting opportunities for healthy lifestyles and practices that can exacerbate or create health problems. In addition, financial problems make it difficult to meet living costs. Moving services away from Redditch to Worcester in particular, or even to Birmingham will force people to incur either additional fuel costs or transport costs, whilst retaining the hospital at the Alexandra site will allow people not only to maintain costs but importantly offer the opportunity to save on costs by allowing patients to walk or cycle to the hospital rather than to drive, take the bus or a taxi. Furthermore, loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital, which is a major employer of local residents, will compound the issue of unemployment and associated problems. With the highest level of unemployment in the county, it is vital that health services are economically viable and sustainable for the population of Redditch and outlying areas.

Of those economically inactive in Redditch, 13% are retired, equating to 8,106 people. In Bromsgrove 16.3% are retired, equating to 11,031. In Alcester and Bidford, a further 2,834 are retired, whilst in Studley and Henley 2,855. In total some 24,826 people are retired in these areas. Again this community are amongst the most vulnerable financially and socially, as well as often

being of an age more susceptible to health risks. It is therefore likely that not only will they need to access acute health services but will need to do so in a way that is economically viable and sustainable. Maintaining services at the Alexandra Hospital site in Redditch is therefore crucial for this community and any transferral of services to Worcester or Birmingham would disadvantage them.

As levels of those who are economically inactive with a long-term illness or disability are amongst the highest in the region, services at Redditch should be prioritised.

Of those economically inactive in Redditch, 3.8% have a long-term illness or disability, accounting for 2,374. This percentage is the second highest in the region behind Wyre Forest and higher than the 3.3% average in the county. An additional 1,714 people in Bromsgrove, 397 in Alcester and Bidford and 313 in Studley and Henley have a long-term illness or disability, totalling 4,798 across these areas. Not only is this group financially disadvantaged but have the additional burden of physical or mental disability meaning that access that is financially viable but also easy and convenient is of a necessity. Given their health and financial constraints they already suffer inequalities in health and everything needs to be done to improve these inequalities. Removing services from the Alexandra Hospital would not only fail to improve inequalities for this vulnerable group but would conversely exacerbate them. As levels of those who are economically inactive with a long-term illness or disability are amongst the highest in the region, services at Redditch should be prioritised.

A transferral of services to Birmingham or Worcester would significantly disadvantage Redditch people economically and exacerbate their financial circumstances.

Although income levels are relatively consistent in Redditch and Bromsgrove as the rest of the county, the percentage of households earning less than 10,000 a year are higher at 13.8% than the county average of 13.4%. The relationship between low income and poor health is well established. It operates in several ways. People on low incomes refrain from purchasing goods and services that maintain or improve health or are forced to purchase cheaper goods and services that may increase health risks. Being on a low income also prevents people from participating in a social life and can leave them feeling they are less worthy or have a lower status in society than the better-off. The relationship can operate in both directions: low income can lead to poor health and ill health can result in a lower earning capacity. Similarly, the average house price in Redditch is the lowest in the county by over £11,000 and is nearly £50,000 less than the average in Worcestershire. Furthermore, Redditch has a higher proportion of households in the lower council tax bands, with only Wyre Forest (24.1%) higher for dwellings in Council Tax Band A. Yet at 21.3% Redditch still lies considerably higher than the Worcestershire average of 15.9%. Redditch also has the lowest proportion of households in Council Tax Band B at 33.1% compared to the county average of 24.8%. The percentage of households earning less than £10,000 a year is also higher than the county average of 13.4% at 13.8% in Redditch. Redditch also has the highest percentage of the population classified as 'hard-pressed' in the region at 23.4%, compared to Worcester at second highest with 20.4% and a county average of 16.1%, as well as those classified as 'moderate means' at 18.6% compared to Worcester at second highest with 10.9% and a county average of 9.4%. Meanwhile the percentage of wealthy achievers is the second lowest at 26% behind Worcester with 22.5% and significantly below the 38.7% county average. This all highlights the lower economic status of those in Redditch and their financial vulnerability again signalling the need to ensure access to health

services that is economically viable and sustainable. The population in Redditch is amongst the least well-placed in the county to take on additional costs. A transferral of services to Birmingham or Worcester would significantly disadvantage Redditch people economically and exacerbate their financial circumstances. Access to health services should be fair and equal and this is only ensured if services are maintained at the Alexandra site in Redditch.

Redditch has the lowest percentage of households owned outright in the county at 26.5%. This compares to a county average of 35.9%. With only 1.1%, the joint-lowest figure in the county, living rent-free, the remaining 72.4%, almost three quarters of households in the district are paying some level of mortgage or rent, which equates to some 25,136 households. In Bromsgrove, there are an additional 22,319 households, in Alcester and Bidford an additional 5,282 households and in Studley and Henley an additional 4,524 households, which equates to some 57,441 households across the district representing 63%. The majority of households in these areas thus have regular, significant financial contributions that they have to make and which account for a significant proportion of their disposable income. The additional costs of having to travel to either Worcester or Birmingham to access acute health services is therefore disadvantageous for a majority of the populations in these areas. Retaining services at the Alexandra Hospital site in Redditch places less financial strain on these groups.

In Redditch 10.4% of the population aged 16-64 claim out of work benefits, representing some 5,760 people, compared to the county average of 9.1%. In addition, there are 3,990 people claiming out of work benefits in Bromsgrove. In Redditch 1,685 people aged 16-64 claim job seekers allowance and 1,103 people in Bromsgrove. Of these, 445 people in Redditch and 350 in Bromsgrove are between 18 and 24. In terms of income support, 1,520 people in Redditch and 885 in Bromsgrove claim the benefit, whilst 1,365 people in Redditch and 945 in Bromsgrove claim incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance. Many of these people are economically vulnerable and would be significantly disadvantaged by the additional costs of travel to Worcester or Birmingham. Furthermore, a number of these, particularly those on incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance may require regular treatment and may struggle to access services if they were relocated outside of Redditch.

The Health Profile 2012 for Redditch highlights the rates of violent crime as being significantly worse than in England. Again this emphasises the need to retain acute health services in Redditch in order for fast and effective treatment.

Redditch has the second highest rate of crime in the county at 80.000 per 1,000 population only lower than Worcester at 90.000 per 1,000 population. The rate is significantly higher than the county average of 63.830 per 1,000 population. Whilst Redditch experienced 6,297 crimes in 2011/12, Bromsgrove experienced 4,945, totalling some 11,242. The Health Profile 2012 for Redditch highlights the rates of violent crime as being significantly worse than in England. Again this emphasises the need to retain acute health services in Redditch in order for fast and effective treatment.

There are around 3,300 children living in poverty in the district, with a further 1,600 children in Bromsgrove and 2,200 in Stratford-Upon-Avon, totalling some 7,100 children who are amongst the most vulnerable. Redditch has the only 4 SOAs in the county in the most deprived 10% nationally: E01032232 (Batchley), E01032252 (St. Thomas More First School Area), E01032278 (Winyates

housing estate area around Ipsley C.E. Middle School) and E01032245 (Church Hill - YMCA Surrounding Area). While the causes of deprivation are complex, it has an impact on public health and there is clear evidence for an association between deprivation and key public health indicators. Indeed, a more deprived community will have more healthy inequalities as a result of lower standards of living and diet. Indeed it has been identified that ‘there is a systematic pattern of declining health linked to declining socioeconomic status in England – this is the so-called “social gradient”. There are concentrations of both shorter life expectancy and greater disability and these tend to be, although are not exclusively, in some of the poorest areas of England. This means that people living in disadvantaged areas are more likely to bear a higher burden of ill health.’ Furthermore, as a result of financial shortages, there will be greater difficulty in accessing services both by private and public transport. It has already been established that those in the most deprived areas of Redditch can expect to live around 9 years less than those in the most affluent areas. Again this reiterates the issues outlined above in the transport section. Indeed, as Redditch has some of the most deprived areas not only in the county but nationally, these communities are the most vulnerable to a loss of health services and least capable of being able to access out of town services. These communities, and Redditch as a whole, already suffer significant health inequalities in comparison with the rest of Worcestershire and thus loss of services in Redditch will further disadvantage them. For these reasons, there is a greater need to safeguard services at Redditch than anywhere else in the county.

Removing services at the Alexandra site will make conditions less favourable in Redditch and unnecessarily increase inequalities in health in the region.

Several Governmental documents have outlined the need to reduce health inequalities. Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England identified that ‘people living in the poorest areas will, on average, die 7 years earlier than people living in richer areas and spend up to 17 more years living with poor health. They have higher rates of mental illness; of harm from alcohol, drugs and smoking; and of childhood emotional and behavioural problems.’ Further the Marmot Review: Fair Societies, Healthy Lives states that ‘inequalities are a matter of life and death, of health and sickness, of well-being and misery’. Access to acute health services is thus a priority in these communities. Whilst areas of Redditch are already amongst the most deprived regionally and nationally, the district already experiences inequalities, but the loss of services from the Alexandra Hospital will only exacerbate these inequalities. Indeed, as one of the indices of deprivation, loss of health services will contribute to the further deprivation of the district. The Marmot Review identifies that ‘health inequalities that could be...avoided are unfair’ and ‘reducing inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice’. Removing services at the Alexandra site will make conditions less favourable in Redditch and unnecessarily increase inequalities in health in the region.

...parts of Alcester and Studley are classified as the most deprived areas in the district of Stratford-Upon-Avon, with Alcester North being identified as the most deprived out of all 71 areas in the district...

In addition, parts of Alcester and Studley are classified as the most deprived areas in the district of Stratford-Upon-Avon, with Alcester North being identified as the most deprived out of all 71 areas in the district, whilst Alcester East was ranked fourth most deprived, Studley South eighth, Studley North 12th and Sambourne 21st and Studley West 29th. All of these areas currently largely rely on the

Alexandra Hospital site in Redditch to access health services and are located closest to the Hospital than any other parts of Warwickshire and further from other health services. Indeed as outlined in the White Paper Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England 'lower socioeconomic groups and those living in the more deprived areas experience the greatest environmental burdens.' Lying furthest from Worcester and Birmingham and without their own train services and infrequent bus services, these communities are likely to be even more vulnerable to a loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital. The transferral of services away from Redditch will undermine the main Governmental public health missions of helping people live longer, healthier lives and improving the health of the poorest, fastest.

The most vulnerable groups in society including the elderly and disabled are often amongst those who suffer the most economic inequalities. With a significant number of elderly in Redditch, Bromsgrove and surrounding areas, which is set to increase exponentially in coming years, as well as a high proportion of people living with long-term illness and disability (see health section below), it is crucial that the most economically viable and sustainable health services are provided to ensure that these groups are not further disadvantaged. In order to meet the governmental goal of improving the health of the poorest, fastest, acute health services must be retained at the Alexandra Hospital.

...residents are less financially secure and able to take on additional costs. At present, the Alexandra offers an economically viable and sustainable option for local residents with regard to access to health service provision...

Redditch already has a precarious socioeconomic climate, with amongst the lowest figures in the region for many indices of economic success. This means that residents are less financially secure and able to take on additional costs. At present, the Alexandra offers an economically viable and sustainable option for local residents with regard to access to health service provision and for many of those who are struggling or who may struggle economically in the future the Alexandra's location in Redditch means that residents can in fact access services without incurring any costs by walking or cycling. In contrast, any transferral of services outside of Redditch, be it at Worcester or Birmingham, will see residents not only incurring costs to access these services but additional costs to those at Redditch, whether in fuel, transport, parking, loss of earnings etc. Whilst people may be able to afford these costs, everyone will be economically disadvantaged by them and given the economic position of Redditch, its residents are amongst the least well-placed in the region to take on these costs.

Furthermore, there are a number of groups who are not only financially vulnerable but additionally physically or mentally vulnerable, including pensioners, the elderly and the disabled. These groups are likely to require acute health service provision yet be least economically or physically capable of accessing them. They already suffer inequalities that make health and service provision difficult and any transferral of services away from Redditch would compound their situation. The loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will also have a negative impact on local employment which will not only affect those individuals involved but will have a negative effect on Redditch's economic difficulties which will only exacerbate issues of inequality and deprivation. This in turn can impact negatively on health and well-being. An understanding of the particular economic climate of Redditch and the vulnerability and needs of its residents demands that the only economically viable and sustainable option for health service provision is that current service levels are maintained at the Alexandra site.

Anything else would not only severely disadvantage residents but would increase inequalities between Redditch and other districts in the region, challenging its future vitality and sustainability.

Health

...illnesses require good access to health provision and emergency provision and given that the levels in Redditch and Bromsgrove are higher than average this is even more crucial.

Health in Redditch is mixed and there are significant areas where it falls below national levels. Life expectancy in Redditch for men is nearly 2 years lower than in Bromsgrove. There is also more variation in life expectancy within Redditch than within Bromsgrove. It is evident therefore that Redditch has a need for significant health provision and that transferral of services to Worcester or Birmingham will fail to tackle existing inequalities in the district's health. In Redditch and Bromsgrove, the recorded prevalence of asthma, diabetes, hypertension and stroke are all higher than the national average. So too are outpatient first appointments for cancers and circulatory diseases. All of these illnesses require good access to health provision and emergency provision and given that the levels in Redditch and Bromsgrove are higher than average this is even more crucial. Transferring services outside of Redditch will again fail to meet the health needs and particular weaknesses in Redditch and Bromsgrove and will exacerbate inequalities. Redditch and Bromsgrove has a slightly higher rate of emergency admission to hospital than the PCT average, but is significantly higher in the case of circulatory disease. Given that there is a significant demand on emergency services in Redditch and Bromsgrove, more so than from other areas in the region, it is critical that acute health services remain at the Alexandra Hospital as the quickest, most convenient and safest location for dealing with emergencies from these two vulnerable regions. Again taking away services from regions that have a higher demand, particularly when those services are so crucial, will not only disadvantage the populations of Redditch and Bromsgrove but will lead to further, serious inequalities and disproportions across the county. Similarly with mortality rates for Bromsgrove and Redditch close to and slightly higher than the county average, health service provisions need to be maintained at the Alexandra site not removed.

...for those with a long term health problem or disability, the hospitals offer significant disadvantages and transferral of services away from Redditch undermines the needs of this vulnerable group.

There are 6,723 people who have long term health problems or disabilities that limit their daily lives a lot, and a further 7,643 whose problems limit their daily lives a little. In Bromsgrove there are 7,585 people who have a long term health problem or disability that limits their daily lives a lot and 8,863 whose daily lives are limited a little. Across the two districts this totals some 14,308 with significant daily long-term health problems or disabilities and 16,506 with long term health problems that partially affect their daily lives. Overall, there are some 30,814 people with long term health problems. These people are likely to require frequent access to health services, but more significantly good access to health services. Whilst the location of the Alexandra Hospital supports these 30,814 people from Bromsgrove and Redditch with good transport links and easy access, the same is not true of Worcester Royal Hospital or Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Although both hospitals can be accessed by those in Bromsgrove and Redditch, for those with a long term health problem or disability the hospitals offer significant disadvantages and transferral of services away from Redditch undermines the needs of this vulnerable group. It is possible that they may not be able to access

public transport and will have to use the car to access health services. If they did not have access to a car they would be faced with the longer journeys, waiting times and negotiating various routes via public transport to access Worcester and Birmingham as opposed to the relatively short and straightforward services to the Alexandra Hospital. Alternatively, if they accessed services at Worcester and Birmingham by car, they would not only have to suffer longer journey times, with the potential of delays and busy routes, which may be troublesome if they require extra care and attention, but it would cost them more in fuel than travel to Redditch. As they are likely to access services frequently these additional fuel costs would accumulate and would financially disadvantage them. They would also not be able to access services as quickly in an emergency. Again the loss of services at the Alexandra would hit this already vulnerable group considerably.

...they already suffer health inequalities and work should be done to reduce these as a matter of 'fairness and social justice'.

In addition to the 30,814 people in Bromsgrove and Redditch with a long term health problem, there are 8,505 people with a long term health problem or disability that limits them a lot and 11,829 that limits them a little in Stratford-Upon-Avon, of which a proportion would currently use the Alexandra Hospital and would need to access Worcester or Birmingham should there be a loss of services at the Redditch site. There are some 51,148 people across the three districts with significant health problems. For those within Stratford-Upon-Avon who currently access Alexandra Hospital, they would be even more geographically and financially disadvantaged by a transferral of services to Worcester or Birmingham. The Marmot Review highlights that these social groups are at risk of having a low income and relying on state benefits and therefore are not economically well-placed to take on the additional costs associated with travel to Worcester or Birmingham. Indeed they already suffer health inequalities and work should be done to reduce these as a matter of 'fairness and social justice'.

In Our Health and Wellbeing Today it is highlighted that people with disabilities experience unequal access to health services and inequalities in health. Particular barriers can be demonstrated for some specific groups, especially people with learning disabilities, who experience poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancy. However, transferring services out of Redditch to Worcester or Birmingham will in fact increase the health inequalities of this already vulnerable group. People with long term health problems and disabilities not only require good, accessible health provision, but should be prioritised. Their convenience, comfort and wellbeing is of paramount importance, even more so than those without long term health problems, and is central to their livelihoods and fulfilment. They already face significant struggles and traumas and everything should be done to maintain and improve their quality and equality of life. Indeed Healthy Lives, Health People: Transparency in outcomes identifies that 'there is evidence that disability impacts on the length and quality of life, and can adversely affect access to services' including the fact that 'access to services can be difficult for people with a physical, cognitive or sensory impairment'. The location of the Alexandra Hospital helps to achieve these aims by offering convenient health provision for those with long term health problems and disabilities in Redditch, Bromsgrove, Studley, Alcester, Bidford and inlying areas. A transferral of services away from Redditch to Worcester or Birmingham would seriously compromise their quality and equality of life and increase, rather than decrease, the differences between those with and without long term health problems.

Redditch has the highest predicted levels of future health problems amongst its population in the region by a considerable way.

There are 4,556 people in Redditch who class themselves as being in bad or very bad health, whilst only 32.1% of the population are considered to be healthy in comparison to 37.6% in Worcestershire. In Bromsgrove, 4,514 people class themselves as being in bad health or very bad health, whilst 32.8%, again lower than the Worcestershire average, are classed as healthy. Indeed, Redditch and Bromsgrove rank lowest in the county, with 42.5% in Worcester being classed as healthy, 42.2% in Wyre Forest, 37.5% in Malvern Hills and 37.5% in Wychavon. Again this highlights the increased need for, and demand on, health services for the populations of Redditch and Bromsgrove above those elsewhere in the region. Furthermore, Redditch has the highest predicted levels of future health problems amongst its population in the region by a considerable way. Indeed, 32.1% of the population are classified as having future problems in Redditch, whereas the second highest figure is 13% for Worcester.

Similarly, in terms of population classed as possible future concerns, Bromsgrove ranks highest with over half of its population (52.6%) classified. The second highest figure is 45.6% in Wychavon, whilst the county average is 40.4%. Again this suggests as outlined in the population discussion above that whilst current demand may be able to be met at Worcester or Birmingham future demand from Redditch and Bromsgrove will be considerable and that a continued service at the Alexandra Hospital is a significant force in not only serving Redditch, and Bromsgrove, but also in maintaining a balance across the county and at the wider sub-regional level. With more people estimated to have health problems in the future in Redditch than in any other region in the county, it is crucial that services are safeguarded at the Alexandra site. Indeed, it is vital to ensure that the population of Redditch receives not only appropriate and sufficient health provision, but also to ensure that the population of Redditch is not disadvantaged in comparison to other districts in the region and is given equal, fair and proportionate health service provisions. Given the significantly worse future health expectations in Redditch than any other district in the county, removal of services from Redditch and transferral to Worcester and Birmingham, with the associated inconveniences to the population of Redditch, will create significant inequalities for the population of Redditch compared to all other populations in the district.

...those who are economically and socially deprived and obese, active transport offers one of the easiest and most affordable solutions to treating and preventing obesity, therefore maintaining services in Redditch where this can be encouraged offers huge advantages over transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham.

Amongst the other key health issues in Redditch is that of obesity, which is significantly worse than the national average. It is also a significant problem in Bromsgrove. Not only is obesity itself a health problem but leads to numerous associated health risks that require treatment, including diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Risks for other diseases, including angina, gall bladder disease, liver disease, ovarian cancer, osteoarthritis and stroke, are also raised. With an above-average incidence of obesity in Redditch and Bromsgrove therefore, it is important that services are secured at the Alexandra site to enable fast and effective treatment. Although diet is one element in tackling obesity, many governmental reports identify the importance of physical activity which is necessary regardless of diet, and one of the first and most inclusive stages in this involves walking, cycling and

active travel. Indeed, the paper Start Active, Stay Active, notes that 'the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be incorporated into everyday life. Examples include walking or cycling instead of travelling by car, bus or train'. The Government outline that they 'will take steps to make it easier for people to opt for "active travel", rather than relying on driving or public transport'. However, in 'Tackling Obesities' the author outlines that promotion of active transport will not succeed without tackling broader issues such as commuting distances and the distance to services such as health services. Moving acute health services from Redditch, which is in walking or cycling distance for many, and relocating them in Worcester and Birmingham which are outside active travel distances and more geared towards the private car will undermine active travel goals. Indeed, whilst it has been outlined that the job is to 'transform the environment so that it is less inhibiting of healthy lifestyles' and to provide opportunities for people 'to make healthier choices', transferring services from an accessible, local site in Redditch to a more remote site in Worcester or Birmingham takes away these opportunities. Although it may be argued that people can still walk and cycle even if they cannot do so to the hospital, one of the main interventions in obesity is the behavioural change brought about by intervening in an obesogenic environment, that is undoing the dominance on motorised transport. Crucial to this is effecting change in habits, for 'considerable psychological effort [is] needed to combat the temptation of an unhealthy lifestyle and...freedom of choice can sometimes, counter-intuitively, make it *more difficult* to resist temptation.' That is active transport must become the norm and as well as promoting these options, interventions must also encourage a shift in behaviour by making these actions habitual.

Therefore by relocating health services in Worcester or Birmingham at a distance which encourages obesogenic behaviours will not facilitate behavioural change. Whereas maintaining them in Redditch where active transport becomes a viable option will enable it to become the norm and will not compromise behavioural change. Challenging the obesogenic norm and enabling active transport including walking and cycling in Redditch will not only help to combat health and obesity in those already overweight, but will also help to prevent it in the general population. Further, it will help to improve health more generally by reducing the risk of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health problems and musculoskeletal conditions.

Moving services to Birmingham or Worcester whereby the obesogenic norm will be encouraged is unlikely to help the problem of obesity in Redditch or Bromsgrove and in fact potentially exacerbate it and other associated health problems by encouraging more people to use the car when accessing acute health services, thereby potentially increasing the costs to health service providers and placing further demands on services. The Government outlined that it is vital that action on obesity reduces health inequalities. However, relocating services outside of Redditch will increase inequalities. Further it has been established that obesity is linked to social and economic deprivation and whilst acute health services in Redditch allow these vulnerable communities to easily and sustainably access treatment, they will struggle to afford the additional transport costs to Birmingham or Worcester which will further exacerbate their inequalities. For those who are economically and socially deprived and obese, active transport offers one of the easiest and most affordable solutions to treating and preventing obesity, therefore maintaining services in Redditch where this can be encouraged offers huge advantages over transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham.

...as this demographic is likely to have issues over mobility, transport options and financial constraints, transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham with their associated costs and locations will severely disadvantage them...

In Our Health and Wellbeing Today it is outlined that 'in the future we are likely to have more people living in poorer health and this presents a significant challenge for health services and wider society'. Central to this is the fact of an ageing population and whilst this is a national phenomenon, as outlined in the population discussion above, it is set to be particularly pronounced in Redditch and Bromsgrove, with the population over 65 set to rise dramatically and the population over 90 set to treble. Many health conditions increase with age and people become increasingly frail and vulnerable. Incidences of age-related chronic conditions such as diabetes, dementia, arthritis etc are likely to increase substantially as are age-related incidences such as falls. Furthermore, functional disability rises with age: 20% of men and women aged 55–64 years report difficulty in at least one of six activities of daily living, such as moving about the house and getting dressed. These rates rise to 58% of men and 65% of women aged 85 years and over. With an increase in the older population and in life expectancy, as well as general increase in the population, demand on services will be even more acute. This will be particularly pronounced in Redditch and Bromsgrove where these vulnerable age groups are set to rise exponentially. Not only is it important therefore that services remain at the Alexandra site in Redditch to enable this growing demand to be met and to spread and relieve pressure on other acute health services in the Redditch, but specifically as this demographic is likely to have issues over mobility, transport options and financial constraints, transferring services to Worcester or Birmingham with their associated costs and locations will severely disadvantage them and lead to further inequalities. They are amongst the groups the most needing of acute health services but also least able of accessing services, it is therefore vital that accessibility is prioritised. Indeed in meeting the governmental target to design communities for active ageing and sustainability, acute health services need to be safeguarded at Redditch.

Taking services away from Redditch will undermine this sense of worth and make residents feel as if they are less important... A loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will thus significantly affect the morale and self-worth of local residents...

There is also a sense in which the Alexandra Hospital is not only a place of well-being and care but its very presence gives residents peace of mind. As a symbol it gives residents a sense of protection and safety. Furthermore it offers a sense that their health and well-being is taken seriously and that they as individuals are recognised and valued. Taking services away from Redditch will undermine this sense of worth and make residents feel as if they are less important. Indeed, compared to health service provision across the region, as has been outlined throughout this discussion loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will place Redditch, Bromsgrove and nearby areas in a largely inferior position to many of the other towns and districts in the region. Although other areas may not have their own acute health service provisions, many of them lie closer, and have better access, to such services than Redditch will, but significantly these areas have not had services taken away from them and so will not have the same sense of injustice and loss as will be experienced in Redditch. A loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital will thus significantly affect the morale and self-worth of local residents, which may lead to anger, antipathy and resentment that may present itself in manifest ways. Given the particular challenges in Redditch and in order to ensure its future vitality and viability, residents need to feel valued and protected and that their issues and concerns are

being met. Removing services from Redditch will undermine this and severely dent the confidence and respect of residents towards the authorities and will take away some pride and interest in the local community and not encourage people to engage and improve the area.

Whilst reaching services in Worcester and Birmingham is theoretically feasible, is it neither beneficial or adequate to the demands or needs of those in Redditch, Bromsgrove, Alcester, Studley, Bidford and inlying areas.

Health in Redditch and Bromsgrove is already a significant concern, showing poorer statistics in many crucial areas both regionally and nationally. Indeed, Redditch and Bromsgrove have significant demands on acute health services and these are likely to see significant rises in the coming years as the population of the districts rises and ages. Given the health status of the districts and the particular levels of deprivation in Redditch and Alcester, access to acute health services needs to be good, easy and convenient for the local populations. Whilst reaching services in Worcester and Birmingham is theoretically feasible, is it neither beneficial or adequate to the demands or needs of those in Redditch, Bromsgrove, Alcester, Studley, Bidford and inlying areas. Significantly, it would also contravene the aims and requirements to reduce health inequalities and would likely exacerbate not only existing health issues and inequalities but those in the future. It would leave Redditch with amongst the poorest health options and opportunities in the region, despite it being amongst the most needy and underprivileged. Poor health and wellbeing brings significant associated problems for individuals as well as local communities, as those in poorer health tend to be unhappier, play a less active role in society and are less able to contribute to communities and the economy. Furthermore, poor health in the districts is likely to place massive demands on Worcester and Birmingham immediately, whilst future projections highlight the likelihood that services will prove inadequate. Health in Redditch needs to be prioritised, especially with regard to its particular demography, and maintaining services at the Alexandra Hospital will be the most effective solution in improving health and health inequalities. Conversely, transferring services outside of Redditch will inhibit healthy behaviours and choices and raise levels of inequality particularly for those who are disabled or have a long term illness, who are poor or elderly.

Conclusion

The Government has outlined that when addressing health it is important to understand and respond to the particular needs of a society, acknowledging that different communities will have different circumstances and needs. This document has outlined the particular context that surrounds health service provision in Redditch and surrounding areas and placed its unique situation in the broader regional and national context to explain the significant challenges facing the area. In terms of population, transport, the socioeconomic context and health, it has clearly been established that Redditch has both significant demands on health service provision not only now but in the near future and that the best way to meet these not only in terms of local outcomes, but regional and national outcomes is for service provision to be maintained at the Alexandra Hospital site in Redditch. Transferral of services to either Worcester or Birmingham would seriously jeopardise not only Redditch's long term health and viability but would also place significant demands on services that have their own immediate and future challenges to meet. Furthermore, the net effect of any transferral of services would undermine the local, regional and national communities. Whilst Birmingham would provide a more feasible location for services outside of Redditch than Worcester, both options would exacerbate existing inequalities faced by the people of Redditch and would jeopardise their access to and experience of health provision and overall health.

Travel to Worcester compared with Birmingham costs more, takes longer and is less likely to occur. The Redditch area has socioeconomic ties with the conurbation and so people will vote with their feet to access health care at Birmingham in preference to Worcester, if services are lost at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch.

There are too many factors that militate against the populations of Redditch, Bromsgrove and inlying areas successfully accessing services at Worcester and Birmingham and as many of the factors are interrelated they could not easily or sufficiently be overcome. Although the relocation of services will affect all areas of society, the most vulnerable in the population are also likely to be those that are least equipped to respond to a relocation of health services and will inevitably suffer the most. It is these groups especially that should be protected and the focus for providing and safeguarding services and removal of services will only result in further disadvantaging them.

Redditch as a whole already suffers a number of health inequalities and the removal of services from the Alexandra Hospital would contravene the Government's duty to reduce health inequalities. Furthermore, it would undermine the Government's core values with regard to health of freedom, fairness and responsibility, by limiting the choices available to residents in the area and taking away the best choices and offering instead inferior choices. Rather than empowering individuals to make healthy choices and giving communities the tools to address their own, particular needs, as outlined in the Government white paper Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Health in England, taking service provision away from Redditch will disempower residents in Redditch and surrounding areas. The Government emphasises that individuals should feel that they are in the driving seat for all aspects of their and their family's health, wellbeing and care and that they are given an environment that supports them in making healthy choices and that makes these choices easier. Access to health service provision is central to this and removing services from the Alexandra Hospital therefore negates these values. Overall the transferral of services away from Redditch would completely oppose the difficult and challenging context of local need and fail the local

population, whilst undermining Governmental values and duties to health provision. Redditch would become amongst the most deprived area in the region in terms of health provision despite its particular circumstances demanding higher levels of provision than elsewhere. The success, health and sustainability of Redditch and surrounding areas both today and in the future depends on the safeguarding of services at the Alexandra Hospital.



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