

HUNTINGDON HEALTH AUTHORITY



District Headquarters  
Primrose Lane  
Huntingdon  
Cambs. PE18 6SE

Tel: 0480 450571 Ext:

Fax: 0480 451040

Our ref:

Your ref:

IN CONFIDENCE:

21st November, 1990.

*Dear John,*

I had mentioned to Olive the possibility of us both calling on you so that we could brief you on the latest developments which have a bearing on the prospects of Huntingdon continuing as a separate Authority or being merged with Cambridge.

Normally I should not have felt uneasy about asking you to find a moment to see us, as this is a matter of considerable importance to your constituents, but in a week like this when you are so deeply involved in Party affairs and have also had the pain and inconvenience of parting with your wisdom tooth a letter seemed to be a much better idea!

When I wrote to you on 19th September I said how pleased we were to have succeeded at last in getting the large and continuing growth of the District's population recognized by the probable allotment of extra funds from 1st April 1991 onwards. The figure of £4.7 million which I quoted then has been whittled down at Region by top-slicing and by providing cushions for the Authorities such as Cambridge, which should be losing rather than gaining. Nonetheless we still hope to receive the following amounts over and above our normal allocation:-

1991/92	+ £1.15 million
1992/93	+ £1.40 million
1993/94	+ £1.15 million

This will mean that from 1st April 1991 we shall be in a much better position to purchase the care and treatment which we have identified as being needed by the people of our District, and the hope is that waiting times will also be reduced. That is a happy and encouraging prospect for

Chairman: Air Vice Marshal R. Bullen CB GM MA FBIM  
District General Manager: Keith Heron MA AHSM

Director of Finance and Information: Mike R. Garner District Personnel Director: Peter Daniels MBIM  
District Nursing Officer: Maurice F. Fenn SRN RMN District Medical Officer: Colin R. Lattimore MB BS(Lond) MFCMI DA



all of us, particularly so after the slow-down in admissions which had to be imposed for the remainder of this financial year. If our earlier claims for additional funds to compensate for our rising population had not been rejected that slow-down could have been avoided - but that is water under the bridge.

What we have to beware of now are the tactics which are being employed and which might be employed to bring about a merger of the Huntingdon and Cambridge Authorities. In meetings with Colin Walker and the RGM, Alastair Liddell, we have been told that while it is not Regional policy to impose mergers on District Authorities, the Region would be likely to respond favourably to proposals from Districts. This is significant as Cambridge, through their District General Manager, have already made direct approaches to us, expressing a strong interest in bringing the two Authorities together. It has also been very clear to us that Region are not discouraging the various attempts which have been made to poach our key people. One of these, Peter Mankin, has been recruited to become Director of Purchasing at Cambridge just weeks after he, as General Manager of Hinchingsbrooke, took the first step on the long and complicated road towards Trust status. That loss, at this time, will put us in very considerable difficulties, while the several attempts which have been made to persuade some of our key people at District Headquarters to take jobs elsewhere have added to the general unease already caused by the persistent rumours of a pending merger. This unease is bound to be increased by the fact that four of our five non-executive directors have been appointed by Region for terms of only two years. The fact that my own appointment runs out in 1992 is also relevant,

Against this background of an uncertain future, we have not overlooked the possibility of Huntingdon taking-over Cambridge, rather than the other way round. This could mean that some of the people in the top positions - such as the Chairman and District General Manager - would be from Huntingdon. But that could be expected to be only a temporary safeguard. The appointments would change, and the weight of the Cambridge forces could once again shift the balance heavily in favour of Cambridge and Addenbrooke's and away from the purchasing of facilities for Huntingdon residents. I say "once again" because, as you well know,



that was certainly the situation before 1982. It would be even more likely and unfortunate now, when we have secured the much needed increase to our funding through the application of weighted capitation at a time when Cambridge might expect to receive considerably less than their previous allocations

After considering all the possibilities, the conclusion reached by Olive, Ken Spink, Keith Heron and myself is that we could not identify a single advantage which would be likely to persuade the people of the Huntingdon District that they would be better served by a merger of the Huntingdon and Cambridge Authorities; nor could they be confident that they would receive the full benefits of the NHS funding due to them if the assessment of need and deployment of resources were carried out by a merged Authority responsible for both Cambridge and Huntingdon interests.

Unfortunately we can see that the possible weakening of our position through staff losses and the lowering of morale, and through the window opened by the expiry of the terms of office of our non-executive members could create the circumstances which would put the separate Huntingdon Authority in danger. That is why I hope that you can help to dampen down rumours and to give positive encouragement to the view that it would be a retrograde step to cause Huntingdon to give up its separate identity. If that can be done and rumours subside both our hard working staff and our patients will benefit. You can be sure that we shall be doing all that we can to produce the right result.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Reggie*

Rt. Hon. John Major, Esq., M.P.,  
House of Commons,  
London SW1A 0AA