

From: [Michelle Bateman](#)
To: [Hyweldda Engagement \(Hywel Dda UHB - Hywel Dda Engagement Mailbox\)](#)
Subject: Big change NHS
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As a county councillor representing the Letterston ward in Pembrokeshire I would like to offer the following response to your Big Change consultation.

I was at County Hall for the launch of the consultation and my initial thought was disappointment at the lack of any real options for the people of Pembrokeshire. All options result in us losing our A&E department and the downgrading of our county hospital. It's my job to represent the constituents in my ward and it would have been remiss of me to voice my thoughts without spending time listening to the Hywel Dda case for change and the views of local residents.

I attended the stakeholder event in Whitland, the consultation event in Letterston and the question and answer session for us at County Hall. I have spoken to my 3 community councils, local parents and a wide range of people in my ward.

While this is a consultation focusing on transforming clinical services, I feel it should be part of a wider transformation programme that addresses the inefficiencies that are endemic across the whole of the NHS.

It's disappointing that digital transformation does not feature more as it's clear from our own digital transformation stream that it's a way of improving services whilst making financial savings.

I fully accept that the case for change is compelling, as a Council we know full well the implications of an ageing population here in Pembrokeshire, and the difficulties in reconciling budget pressures with service provision.

I fully support a community based model. As people live longer but with multiple chronic conditions it seems both cost effective and clinically beneficial to treat people in hubs close to their home. Any move away from treating conditions in isolation instead of a whole wellbeing approach is a positive move in my opinion.

However, in Pembrokeshire we have seen a steady decline in the sustainability of community health services, GP recruitment is an issue, NHS dental services and mental health services are lacking. I hear from residents that they have difficulties accessing GP services quickly enough and at times suitable to them. The community hubs in the proposals sound like a progressive way of delivering health care that meets the challenges we face, however the document completely fails to address the huge investment in buildings, staff, training and recruitment that is needed to make these models a success. Without this investment it's simply an idea that puts huge pressure on services that in many cases are already at breaking point. It also fails to address that fact that community services are interconnected with services provided by the volunteer, and private sector as well as local authority social services. These partners will be vital in making a community hub model work, but are out of the control of the health board.

The locations of the hubs leaves an unacceptable gap in provision in North Pembs.

Fishguard is the obvious location for a community hub and it's disappointing that it wasn't included in the original documents.

I agree that prevention needs to play a key role in health provision, however this is not an issue limited to Hywel Dda. Prevention strategies are a country wide issue and will require collaboration from many partners including central government, The Welsh assembly government, local authorities and the 3rd sector. I do not see this addressed in the document.

I attended one of your 'Big Conversation' events and whilst I agree with your interpretation that "people told us that they were prepared to consider travelling further if it meant they would get quicker access to specialist care and their treatment quicker" It is my view that this related to planned care, *not* urgent care.

The removal of A&E services from Withybush has been the biggest concern of all the residents I have spoken to. It is incomprehensible that seriously ill patients will be required to travel over an hour in some cases to get to an A&E department.

The recent NHS birthday celebrations made people reflect on what the NHS means to them, and conversations I had made it clear that it's about trust in a service that any of us may need, at any time. It's about those stories of life changing moments where your staff have saved lives. There is a real fear in Pembrokeshire about what these changes will mean for us, a fear that removing our A&E will cost lives. This is not about people being inconvenienced by a longer drive. I understand that a new hospital will bring some services closer, but this still leaves many people who will have to travel further for emergency care.

In the events I have been too when these fears are voiced I have heard that a new hospital will bring some of this urgent care closer, that a miu will mean many patients still have care close to home. However I have not heard anything that reassured me about a child with an asthma attack that isn't responding to medication at home, anyone who has a fit, a child with a febrile convulsion that could be meningitis, or someone having a stroke where time is crucial.

Recruitment and retention of staff is cited as being a major driver in the case for change, however the fact that years of uncertainty surrounding Withybush has impacted negatively on recruitment has been ignored by the health board.

A commitment to Withybush and investment in it would aid recruitment.

You have made reference in the consultation to the pockets of poverty and depravation in our county, yet have made no comment about the impact this has on peoples ability to travel further in an emergency. It will adversely affect those families on low incomes, and those without a support network.

For any consultation to be meaningful it relies on people having faith in the information they are given. It's fair to say that people in Pembrokeshire have no faith and no trust in the health board. The removal of consultant led maternity and scbu from Withybush has had a devastating impact on many families. I have spoken to many women who have been let down by the care they received at Glangwilli, women who's pregnancies are tainted by fears about the extra travel time in an emergency. I have heard people who after having one complicated pregnancy or delivery are now too scared to add to their family. Family planning decisions should not be influenced by fears over the standard of care available. We were told that services would not be removed until Glangwilli was fit for purpose, yet we are 4 years on and nothing has changed.

It is unreasonable to ask people to put their trust in a proposal that is not fully costed, does not have guaranteed funding, and without a site identified, written by a board that has let us down in the past.

I was asked by someone out of the county why pembrokeshire residents are so against a new state of the art hospital. I had to reply it's because no one believes a new hospital is deliverable given the track record of the health board and their budget position.

A removal of A&E services from Withybush, with an expectation that the same level of care can be provided at Glangwilli is unacceptable for the People of Pembrokeshire.

Kind regards
Michelle Bateman

Cllr Michelle Bateman
County Councillor for Letterston
Pembrokeshire County Council
Tel: 07878 857197
Email: cllr.michelle.bateman@pembrokeshire.gov.uk
Twitter : @27michb
Facebook : Councillor Michelle Bateman - Letterston
Instagram : cllr_michelle_bateman_

