

MEDIA RELEASE

“What are you going to do to stop this happening again?” asks MP

2 November 2009

Thame's MP, John Howell, has called on the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to say how it is going to engage better with the people of the town. The MP wants to make sure that there is no repetition of the way in which a decision was taken without consultation to reduce the hours of medical cover at Thame Community Hospital to 4 hours per week.

Speaking at a meeting in Thame Town Hall on 29 October to discuss the situation at the hospital, he branded the PCT's approach to the town as 'a *right royal mess*'. He said that the PCT would need to do better if relations between it and the town were to improve.

John Howell commented:

"I was very grateful and extremely pleased to see that the PCT was prepared to face the town over the issue of the hospital and I was delighted that it agreed to come back for another meeting when the review of the hospital contract is completed.

"But that's not enough. It will also have to demonstrate to us that things really have changed and that the current lack of engagement with local residents will not be allowed to happen again."

Following a tender for a new contract for the provision of medical cover for the town's hospital, Buckinghamshire PCT had awarded the contract to The Practice plc ending the previous contract with the town's GPs. As a result, the number of hours of medical cover provided at the hospital had been reduced to 4 per week.

After protest from local residents, the Buckinghamshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee forced the PCT to review the contract and its plans for the hospital.

The MP has been a high profile and public supporter of the attempts to get the contract reviewed and to see the provision of medical cover returned to the local GPs.

ENDS