



Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health & Social Care
House of Commons
London SW1A 1AA

27 May 2021

Via email to: mb-sofs@dhsc.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing on behalf of Rushmoor Borough Council, Hart District Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council. As with our unitary colleagues in Berkshire we have all been active partners in the development of the Frimley Integrated Care System (ICS) and have contributed to the ICS becoming one of the more successful ICSs in the country. Importantly this has brought significant health and care benefits for all our residents.

The Frimley ICS is one of only eight that is not directly co-terminus with its constituent local authorities. This has not got in the way of its success. We also understand that National Health England have consistently supported the continuation of Frimley as a standalone system, not least because it has been so effective. That understanding was further reinforced by the decision earlier this year to support the creation of a Frimley CCG that is co-terminus with the current Frimley ICS boundaries. That is a position Rushmoor, Hart and Surrey Heath strongly support as we strongly believe that we are working effectively within the new arrangements both in Covid response and recovery. This is further evidenced by the desire for the whole of Hart District (not just part as currently) to be moved into the boundaries of the Frimley ICS area.

We are therefore extremely concerned that the future of the Frimley ICS is now being reviewed in order to achieve co-terminosity for a Surrey based ICS with Surrey County Council. A decision to do this would clearly make a Frimley ICS unviable as a standalone system and would lead to further knock on changes to ICS boundaries. We believe such a decision would undermine many of the effective population health outcomes we have all been working for with partners for many years, create real disruption to services across a much wider geographical area and we know is not supported by the majority of our local GPs and clinicians.

We are very disappointed that as district councils we have not been considered significant consultees in discussions on the future of health in our areas. As requested by our Berkshire colleagues we would therefore also ask you to share the detailed evidence and analysis of the benefits of changing the local ICS geography and the criteria which will be used in making a final decision. We would also wish to see evidence of why the Surrey boundary co-terminosity is considered critical in terms of resident health outcomes when the Frimley system health and referral pathways make sense to practitioners, providers and residents and deliver excellent outcomes. The existence of historic county boundaries should not drive service delivery decisions unless there is clear evidence to suggest service or outcomes would be significantly improved.

Finally, we would question the timing of any changes given everything that our combined workforces need to be focussing on and would suggest that structural change and the disruption it causes is inappropriate now and for the foreseeable future.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signatures of David Clifford and David Neighbour. The signature of David Clifford is on the left, and the signature of David Neighbour is on the right, separated by a small dot.

David Clifford
Leader of Rushmoor
Borough Council

David Neighbour
Leader of Hart
District Council

Handwritten signature of Alan McClafferty.

Alan McClafferty
Leader of Surrey Heath
Borough Council