

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL : 23 MARCH 2004

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Statement by Denise Saliagopoulos

The residents of my division are going to be badly affected by the Primary Care Trust's favoured option regarding the future of Ashford and St Peter's NHS Hospitals' trust. The clinical care and staff of St Peter's are of high quality but the location of most services, waiting times and transport facilities at St Peter's are just not acceptable to the people of Staines.

My experiences when talking to both staff and patients is that the trust will have difficulties accommodating the departments to be moved to St Peter's, if their prepared option is adopted.

Ashford Hospital started life in the 1840s as the Staines Union Workhouse. It served Ashford, Stanwell and Staines. On Saturday September 2nd 1939 the old isolation hospital ceased to exist and Ashford Hospital was created, known as Staines Emergency Hospital. In 1948 it changed its name to Ashford General Hospital. In 1972 a massive new development scheme was started and this increased the number of hospital beds to 800, then reduced to 216 in 2003!

At this present time, our Conservative MP, David Wilshire is fighting a campaign to save our hospital, which will soon have fewer beds than when it was Staines Union Workhouse!

What is proposed for the fate of Ashford is purely to accommodate Government cuts - £17 million is the figure that has caused this Government to take a broom to Ashford Hospital, which will increase suffering, possibly even death, to the people of my division.

I hope this Council will join with me to fight this battle. The only right and proper way forward is for this Council to formally object and ensure that the decision is quite properly referred to the Secretary of State.