

Public must oppose hospital closures

THE Sunday Telegraph at the weekend highlighted the extent of the threat to clinical services at Chase Farm Hospital next year.

It is clear that the current proposed merger of Chase Farm and Barnet hospital clinical services, in part as a result of the European Working Time Directive introduced by Labour in 1997, which restricts working hours, has encouraged the hospital to look at closing wards and clinics.

It is completely irresponsible of the government not to have taken into account the effect of this legislation on public services and to have planned ahead so as to avoid probable closures.

In my recent discussions with

the chief executive of the hospital trust, he could not rule out that these closures may well happen, with an announcement of the specific details due to be made in the early part of next year.

It is totally unacceptable that, at a time when we are paying massive extra tax, the government implements legislation that cuts, rather than expands services.

It is not good enough to ask people to travel from east Enfield to Barnet for some hospital treatments and services, as is likely to happen, particularly when a completely inadequate public transport system prevails.

Finally it is quite ridiculous that, when we may finally have approval for PFI investment

building infrastructure, we may be axing services.

In addition to my discussions with hospital management, the Enfield Council scrutiny panel is taking evidence from interested parties on the future of the hospital.

I urge as many residents as possible to support the best possible service at Chase Farm Hospital, which has served the community so well.

Please register your support by writing to the council's scrutiny panel or directly to me, or alternatively e-mail nickdebois@enfieldnorth.org.

Nick de Bois
Westminster Affairs
Spokesman, Enfield North
Conservative Association