



10<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Mrs Victoria Taylor  
Business Improvement and Performance Officer  
Business Improvement & Performance Team  
Uttlesford District Council  
London Road  
Saffron Walden  
Essex CB11 4ER

Dear Mrs Taylor,

I do hope this letter finds you well. Thank you for your information request on behalf of the Uttlesford Scrutiny Committee. In addressing the questions from the members, please see my following answers;

**1. Assurances that the ambulance station closures will not adversely affect the Uttlesford District.**

The locations of sites where ambulances and rapid response vehicles (RRVS) are deployed from (including ambulance stations, response posts and deployment points) are planned using a significant amount of intelligence and data analysis. In terms of addressing the Uttlesford District, we look to provide cover in areas of higher demand which allows us the best response to patients with the vehicles we have available. There are no current plans for the closure of ambulance stations and we continue to review the optimal positions for the resources we have.

**2. Where will Paramedics be dispatched from?**

Staff on both Ambulances and RRVs are dispatched from a variety of locations throughout the region. Like all ambulance services, we also operate a system of coordinated movements of resources that are not currently assigned to incidents in order to provide the best spread of responding cover. The primary operating bases around the Uttlesford District are located in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Bishops Stortford which are complimented by the addition of the Trust's new Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) centre in Great Notley to the South-West of your district. I would be more than happy to arrange a visit for the Committee Members to the Trust's new HART base if they would find this interesting.

**3. Will there be full motor way cover?**

Ambulance services do not routinely provide specific resources to motorways due to the relatively infrequency of incidents on them and the positive road networks into them. Resources are based on the total activity across the area. Planned resources are based at the North (Saffron Walden) and South (Bishops Stortford) of the Uttlesford section of M11 and significant motorway incidents are often assisted with the use of the Trust's HART or Air Ambulance partners.

**4. What are the adverse weather measures/precautions especially as Uttlesford is rural?**

Adverse weather planning remains a high priority for all of the emergency services. To that end, the East of England Ambulance Service had a programme of temporarily acquiring around forty 4x4 vehicles that were spread around the region and deployed dynamically as the adverse weather impacted. Whilst it remained a challenging period, the advanced planning from our Emergency Resilience department proved very successful. In preparation for adverse weather, the health sector as a whole undergoes actions for seasonal variances; the local emergency hospitals, GP practices and primary care providers all engage collectively to handle these challenges. Looking forward the Trust has leased on long-term agreements a number of 4x4 vehicles to assist with adverse weather.

**5. Response times within the district, what are they and how are they monitored?**

NHS West Essex is the clinical commissioning group that covers the Uttlesford District. For the 2012/23 fiscal year the following response times were achieved:

	R1R2 8min% (A8)	R1R2 19min% (A19)
Total	74.35%	95.37%

The Trust recognises that it needs to improve its service to patients. As such, it will be publishing its turnaround plan in April which will detail the actions it is going to take to improve its services. This will build on actions already put in place such as the recruitment of more front line staff, a renewed focus on patient handover delays at hospital, better staff engagement and involvement and better managing sickness absence. The Trust would be very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this plan with the committee once it is published.

**6. Is the Fire Service starting to support the ambulance service?**

The Ambulance service and Fire Brigade have a long tradition of supporting each other in the management of incidents. In other areas of the country, the Fire Brigade do support their local ambulance services in certain circumstances by making ‘first responses’ to calls if the local ambulances are committed on other emergencies. At present we haven’t considered this type of model in Essex.

I know my predecessors have enjoyed coming to meet the committee in the past and I hope that my answers will provide them some reassurance that the East of England Ambulance Service and its staff and leaders remain committed to the care of all of our residents.

Kind regards,



**Darren Meads**

*General Manager - South & West Essex*  
East of England Ambulance Service, NHS Trust