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Jane Scott
Leader of the Council
Wiltshire County Council
Cabinet Office
County Hall
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

Date: 22 May 2008
Your Ref:

Dear Jane,

Wiltshire Air Ambulance

Further to your letter of 19 May 2008 regarding Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

I feel that the easiest way to answer your primary concerns is to enclose a copy of letter I am sending to any concerned resident of Wiltshire.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Lynch
Chief Executive

Enc

Copies: Brian Moore, Chief Constable, Wiltshire Police
Jeff James, Chief Executive, Wiltshire PCT
Cllr Roy While, Chairman, Wiltshire Health Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Andrew Gravells, Chairman, GWAS Joint Health Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Rod Bluh, leader of the Council, Swindon Borough Council



Chair: Tony FitzSimons
Chief Executive: Tim Lynch

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Dear

Wiltshire Air Ambulance

I am writing to thank you for your support for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and to reassure you of our commitment to continue the service. There has been a range of misleading coverage in local papers and on local television and I want to set the record straight.

The Wiltshire Air Ambulance is not under threat. The Great Western Ambulance Service remains committed to providing effective air ambulance cover to the people of Wiltshire and with it, the best clinical care possible.

Last week we announced a clinical review of the service we provide to each of the three charities, which run air ambulances across the Trust. This review will look at the level of clinical skills crews have, and what level of skills crews may need in the future. We are also looking at what clinical support is provided to other air ambulances across the country so we can find the best clinical model available to improve the service to the people of Wiltshire, not remove it. But if we find we cannot improve the clinical level of the service provided by Wiltshire Air Ambulance, we will not change any of the current arrangements. I am happy to write to you again, later in the year, with the results of the review.

There has also been confusion in the papers about the new air ambulance that will shortly start operation in Avon run by a separate charity, the Great Western Air Ambulance charity. This Filton-based air ambulance has been set up in response to an identified gap in air ambulance cover for the people of Avon. This is an addition to the air ambulance cover in Wiltshire NOT a replacement. It will of course, when required, fly into Wiltshire and Gloucestershire in support of the existing helicopter in that location.

I also want to assure you that Great Western Ambulance Service wants to continue it's relationship with Wiltshire Police. The contract for the air ambulance is in the process of being re-negotiated with the police and we are seeking a one year extension whilst we are undertaking our clinical review of the best ways of providing services to patients.

We are grateful to the people of Wiltshire for their support of Wiltshire Air Ambulance and for the funds they contribute to the Air Ambulance Appeal. It is a well-loved charity that has kept the Wiltshire Air Ambulance going for the last 15 years. We also support the charity and we only want to see the service get even better.

I hope this reassures you and clarifies our support for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Lynch
Chief Executive