

PE1591/BB

Petitioner submission of 30 May 2019

We understand that the Full Business Case for the redesign of health and social care was approved this month by the Scottish Government. While we welcome the prospect of a new hospital for Skye, Lochalsh and SW Ross, we remain of the view that on the basis of objective evidence presented to the Committee on multiple occasions that this redesign is and always has been deeply flawed.

However some of the consequences of the redesign for north Skye residents, which were being implemented prematurely, will be mitigated to a significant extent by implementation of Sir Lewis Ritchie's *Independent External View of Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross Out of Hours Services*, published in May 2018.

Sir Lewis' letter to the then NHS Highland board chairman after his 6 month review of implementation in December 2018 said that he "Noted some progress across a range of recommendations but (was) concerned that this was being lost due to a combination of poor communication and slow activity across too many recommendations."

Sir Lewis' one year review of progress in Portree on 28 May 2019 followed a visit by the Cabinet Secretary and NHS Scotland Director General the previous day and was much more positive. Community representatives have also met with the new NHS Highland Chief Executive and Interim Chairman. We now believe that the priority recommendations will be implemented during the coming weeks with the launch of a 24/7 Urgent Care Centre in Portree and re-opening of all 12 beds in Portree Hospital. We have been assured that implementation of the Ritchie report will take precedence over aspects of the redesign proposals in north Skye, and expect NHS Highland and partners to deliver on that, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Full Business Case

<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Meetings/BoardsMeetings/Pages/May2019.aspx>

We remain disappointed that the former Cabinet Secretary for Health & Sport and her officials refused to consider our evidence in any meaningful way, did not re-examine the Outline Business Case objectively or agree to independent scrutiny. We are however grateful to the Committee and clerks for their careful consideration of our petition on numerous occasions and the support of our MSPs who spoke for us: Kate Forbes, Rhoda Grant, Edward Mountain and Mary Scanlon.