



# Hampshire County Council

H1.2/pf/1659

25 November 2008

Councillor Ken Thornber CBE  
*Leader of the Council*

Mr Jim Easton  
Chief Executive  
South Central Strategic Health Authority  
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Dear Mr Easton

## **Proposals to add fluoride to drinking water in Southampton and south west Hampshire**

Please find enclosed a copy of Hampshire County Council's formal submission to the consultation that the SHA is conducting on this issue.

At full Council today members unanimously supported the recommendations from the Review Panel and agreed that this proposal should not be supported until there has been further research to identify clearly the impact of adding fluoride to drinking water. I would wish to stress the strength of the views held by members on this matter.

We are deeply concerned at the paucity of the evidence provided both for and against the proposal put forward by the SHA and are of the view that less coercive alternatives exist that would achieve the same goals for the children identified by Southampton City PCT.

You will note that we have raised a number of concerns about the technical and economic studies produced to support the cost effectiveness of the case. We do not believe that these are sufficiently robust or that there is evidence that the cost savings identified will be delivered.

I hope you will agree that we have put forward cogent arguments supporting our views and that these have been arrived at in a balanced and objective manner taking full account of the available evidence. Further we are suggesting a viable alternative option that has not previously been considered. This involves working with key stakeholders to understand better how we can collectively take action to improve oral health in the population. Sir Iain Chalmers member of the advisory panel for the York Review and Hugh Whittall from the Nuffield Council on Bioethics have already indicated an interest in supporting this approach.

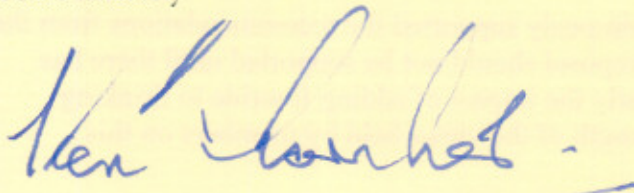
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We will be continuing to scrutinise the consultation process and the way in which the responses to the consultation are evaluated, as well as the way in which the ethical and scientific arguments are presented to the SHA Board. We were disappointed that many of the questions set out in the Review Panel's letter of 13 October 2008 were either unanswered or only partially addressed in the SHA's response. We remain of the view that there are a number of material inaccuracies and omissions in the consultation document, again as set out in the letter of 13 October 2008, which make it difficult for the public to come to an **informed** conclusion.

Although the role of the SHA in this matter is determined by national legislation, members consider that this decision should properly be taken more locally, a position reflecting the position set out by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. We will be writing to the Secretary of State to this effect and are clear that any decision to fluoridate the drinking water of people living in Hampshire will be vigorously opposed by the County Council.

I do hope that you will feel able to explore our proposed 'third option' in more detail and am certain that the Chairman of our Review Panel, Cllr McNair Scott, would be happy to meet with you to discuss how this work could be taken forward.

Yours sincerely



Ken Thornber  
Leader

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Cllr Anna McNair Scott, Chairman, Hampshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Water Fluoridation Review Panel Members  
Cllr Alec Samuels, Leader Southampton City Council  
Cllr Edwina Cooke, Southampton City Council  
Hugh Whittall, Director, Nuffield Council on Bioethics  
Sir Iain Chalmers, Editor, The James Lind Library  
Professor Trevor Sheldon, Health Services Research, University of York  
Cllr Cathie Frasier, Eastleigh Borough Council  
Cllr Anna Rostand, New Forest District Council  
Cllr Peter Boulton, Test Valley Borough Council  
Professor John Newton, Director of Public Health, South Central SHA  
Professor Jonathan Montgomery, Chairman, Hampshire PCT