Submitted for August 14th EADT - What are the local hospital plans to meet the delayed operations list?

Up to 14 million people could be on NHS waiting lists in England by next autumn, new analysis from the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) suggests. Currently, some five million are waiting for routine operations and procedures - many of whom are in pain. But the Institute for Fiscal Studies has warned there is also a huge hidden backlog of patients who are still yet to come forward for treatment. The government pointed to the £1bn it had given to the NHS this year to clear the backlog but this has hardly begun and more trained staff and resources would be needed while COVID continues to plague hospital accommodation and take up extra vaccination time and resources.There have been repeated warnings over the length of hospital waiting lists in England. A record number of patients are currently waiting for surgery - such as hip or knee replacements - with more than 385,000 patients waiting more than a year, compared to just 1,600 before the pandemic, despite many opting to pay for private treatment (often from the same surgeons) in order to regain their standard of mobility. Last month Health Secretary, Sajid Javid, said he had been shocked to learn that waiting lists could rise to 13 million patients. The IFS decided to crunch the numbers to see whether this was likely - it said Mr Javid's warning is "well within the realms of possibility". In order to stop numbers getting that high, the NHS needs to treat even more patients than it did before the pandemic, the IFS said. Explaining how it reached its conclusions, the IFS said that after Covid hit in March last year, seven million fewer people joined waiting lists than was normal. It is not yet known how many of these "missing patients" will come forward for treatment - but the IFS predicts that their return will increase waiting lists and put the NHS under more pressure. "Even if only two-thirds of the missing patients return then with capacity at 95% of pre-pandemic levels - much more than the NHS is currently managing - waiting lists could easily exceed 13 million (and keep growing)," said the IFS. “The number could even soar to 14 million by autumn 2022 - and continue to increase - if 80% of the missing patients return and the NHS operates at 90% of its capacity levels in 2019.Expanding capacity will be the only solution to cutting waiting lists in the future,”concludes the IFS. I finish by saying that it is obvious this means a massive new government investment in extra resources is needed immediately. It needs to be quite distinct from the manifesto promise of 40 new hospitals which, by the way, actually means replacing those such as in East Anglia, that are past their use by date with no mention of increased capacity and resources actually required for the burgeoning demand from senior citizens! If you are as concerned about this as I am, I feel MPs must be contacted on the matter  to  see if they know of NHS plans for your local hospital to manage this most urgent  double-whammy of demand in the foreseeable future!