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Andrea Young CEO
North Bristol NHS Trust
Trust Headquarters, Southmead Hospital
Southmead Road
Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol, BS10 5NB

23rd January 2018

FRENCHAY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE CENTRE

Dear Andrea,

Thank you for your letter dated 19th January in which you explained the stance of the North Bristol NHS Trust with regard to the future of the Frenchay Hospital Site.

In response to your letter, we wanted to write to you in order to raise our serious concerns about the recent revelations surrounding the proposal by Redrow homes, allegedly encouraged by NBHT, to develop additional residential units on the land which has been reserved for a future Health and Social Care Centre on the Frenchay site.

Since the previous Labour Government took the decision to close the hospital at Frenchay, we have been supporting and engaging with the 3R's initiative which is being conducted by local Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG). As you will know, this project seeks to place recovery and rehabilitation care back in the community thereby helping to relieve the pressures on beds and services at Southmead Hospital.

A key and central plank to the CCG's strategy to improve local care involves the placement of the two Health and Social Care Centres, and extra care facilities, at both Thornbury and Frenchay, and we were under the understanding that North Bristol Trust were a proactive and willing partner in these plans.

It is however very concerning to us as local MPs to now be made aware that North Bristol Trust has been initiating discussion with housing developers to promote alternative use for the site at Frenchay, especially at this crucial time when the CCG is currently undergoing a process to find a partner to build the planned Health and Social Care Centre.



This announcement raises a number of serious concerns with regards to the transparency of the process by which the proposal came about. As such, we would be very grateful if you might be able to clarify a number of points:

- When did the Trust decide that this land was no longer needed?
- What contact has been made with the CCG to ensure that they know about these plans and that they agree they will have sufficient space for the services they would like to build on the site?
- When was an approach made to Redrow about a possible application?
- Why were local representatives and the public not informed at an earlier stage of this process given the findings of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel report in 2014?

With the considerable criticism of the Trust's handling of the issue from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel report in 2014, we assumed that future discussions regarding the site would be held in a far more transparent and inclusive manner. The report highlighted that:

"That residents of the area should feel exasperated by the years of delay, changes to the NHS organisation, pauses in developments and amendments to plans is entirely understandable. The overall process to date has shown a marked lack of empathy for patients and the public who have a right to expect better"

"Progress to date has suffered from a lack of trust from the public and it is important now that the NHS works hard to regain that trust.... A new approach to public engagement and involvement is required that demonstrates mutual co-operation and ensures that the public can have confidence in a quality service..."

"Patient and public engagement must be a core element in design and delivery of all elements of the rehabilitation model... The NHS should now take stock of its approach to public engagement and deliver a co-ordinated and strategic approach across all elements of the model of care so that it meets the needs of everyone across the area"

Our primary concerns issue from the fact that, given the high level of public interest in this issue and the history of the site, local representatives and the public, who have always sought engagement on this issue, should have been informed of the decision to consider selling a further parcel of the site to housing developers. Now that a planning application has been made we feel that this crucial step of maintaining dialogue with the local community has been unwisely overlooked by the Trust.

We would also argue that even if excess land happens to be available on the site, the additional community health services should be built and up and running first before any land is sold off for housing development. The potential risk of selling land to housing developers now could significantly harm the existing proposals for the site and therefore we would strongly urge the trust to defer any further discussions about selling any land on the site until the plans for the Health and Social Care Centre have been completed.



As a crucial part of maintaining public trust in how these plans are formulated, we strongly believe that these important decisions regarding the future of the site should not be made behind closed doors, they must be taken with the appropriate degree of public consultation and engagement with the local community. On this occasion we believe that this has not been the case.

Given the considerable concerns about these proposals that we have also been expressed by our constituents, we will also be raising this issue during our meeting with Stephen Barclay MP, Minister of State for the Department of Health and Social Care, who is responsible for community health services.

We look forward to your urgent consideration of these concerns and look forward to your response in due course.

Jack Lopresti MP
Member of Parliament for Filton and Bradley Stoke

Luke Hall MP
Member of Parliament for Thornbury and Yate

Chris Skidmore MP
Member of Parliament for Kingswood