



EMSWORTHFORUM
EMSWORTH EMPOWERED

C/o The Emsworth Community Centre
North Street, Emsworth PO10 7DD
www.emsworthforum.com

Delivered by hand and email

Jim Strudwick, Chair of the Emsworth Surgery Patient Participation Group,
Emsworth Surgery,
6 North Street,
Emsworth

17 February 2016

Dear Jim

Re Development of the Emsworth Victoria Hospital Site

I thought I should write to you following the comments you made and the discussion we had about the development of the new surgery at the ERA AGM recently. As I said to you that evening, the Forum Health Group, which includes the ERA and Friends of Emsworth Community Health, are as keen as you are to see the new surgery built as soon as possible on the Emsworth Victoria Hospital site.

First of all, though, I need to explain to you the role that the Forum has in this. The Emsworth Forum is an approved Neighbourhood Forum under the Localism Act 2011. It is our task to bring together local residents, businesses and community organisations to create a Neighbourhood Plan for the future development of Emsworth. The Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory planning guidelines that landowners, developers and the Planning Authority have to take into account when deciding on planning applications. As I am sure you understand, the NHS, like any landowner will have to apply for planning permission to develop the new surgery. When we started our work in 2014 we thought that the development of the surgery site would have taken place prior to the approval of our Neighbourhood Plan. However, it is now likely that the development of this important site in the middle of Emsworth will coincide with the Neighbourhood Plan timescale and therefore falls within its scope.

As part of developing the Neighbourhood Plan, the Forum is required to conduct public consultations to understand and evidence the needs and aspirations of local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. As you know, we conducted a survey of residents in 2014 and held public meetings in the summer of 2015 to ask local people about their views and experiences of living and working in Emsworth and what they would like to see in the future. As part of this Dr Theo Schofield, who led the Forum's work on health, had discussions with you and the Surgery Doctors about the future of the surgery and the services it is to provide. I understand that the Doctors expressed the strong view that the surgery should be replaced 'like for like' as it is because the Doctors were concerned that funding earmarked for this purpose by the NHS would otherwise be lost.

In November 2015, through a government funded programme, Aecom (a large firm of urban planners) produced for the Forum a report looking at the spatial aspects of the area around North Street. NHS Property Services and the surgery were invited to help with Aecom's work but were



unable to attend the meeting and site visit arranged with stakeholders for this purpose. The Aecom report suggested options for how North Street and its environs could be improved. This included three options for the Hospital site: a surgery alone, a surgery with additional community space or a surgery with housing. In order to assist us with the development of the Forum's policies on this site and our engagement with the property owners (NHS Property Services) we conducted a survey of residents on these options. We had nearly 700 replies with 80% saying they would like to see community health services on the EVCH site as well as the surgery. In case you have not seen the report of the survey, I enclose it with this letter.

All of these Forum activities were and are intended to help develop an important site in the town and to ensure that we meet the needs and, as far as possible, the legitimate aspirations of the residents and others with a stake in the future of Emsworth. The EVCH is a public and community asset and patients and residents are entitled to express their views on the matter and be heard and represented by the statutory authorities and community leaders. The Forum is one of a number of vehicles for this – as is the Patient Participation Group. As a patient myself at the Surgery I am not aware that you have done any consultation with patients on the development of the new surgery but we would be keen to help you do that and work with you on it in the coming months.

With regard to the concerns you raised at the ERA AGM, firstly can I assure you that we are as determined as you are to see a new surgery built on the EVCH as soon as possible. Nothing the Forum has done to date has caused any delay in the progression of the scheme which has already taken many years to get to this early stage. The various NHS responsible bodies have regulated processes they must follow to deliver this scheme and we are committed to helping them and working with them to do so as speedily as possible. We would very much like to work together with you and the surgery on this.

Indeed, as part of our commitment to help deliver this project quickly, we have suggested to the CCG (and through them NHS Property services) that they, with the Forum's support, use a planning mechanism called a Neighbourhood Development Order to gain planning permission for the development of the new surgery. Our planning consultants (Aecom) advise us that this would save the developer (the NHS) time and money – which I am sure we would all welcome.

From our discussions with the CCG, the exact nature and shape of the health and social care services to be provided at the EVCH site has not yet been determined and they are in discussions with relevant partners and providers about this. This is to be welcomed and encouraged as our purpose is to make sure that the services delivered from this site meet the needs of the residents of Emsworth now and in the future. The new building therefore needs to be designed and built in such a way that the configuration of services can change to meet future needs and benefit from best practice in health care. I am sure you would agree that it is important to residents and patients that determining what services are delivered is done in a professional manner in the patients' and public interest. Again I hope you would also agree that the interests of the patient and the taxpayer must come first and above the commercial interests of potential tenants and service providers - including the present practice owners. The CCG and other statutory bodies are charged with the responsibility for determining this and we must all support them in that.



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Our public consultations to date have indicated that most people in Emsworth would prefer the full potential space of this site to be utilised by the NHS and its delivery partners - assuming the public funds are available for that purpose. We understand, however, that the estimated costs of the surgery development have risen significantly and that more funds are required than those already earmarked for this purpose. If, as it seems possible therefore, the NHS funds are not sufficient to maximise the potential use of this site we know (because we have members that have experience of this) that funds could be raised either charitably or privately to create additional health and social care uses for this site. This is a prime site in central Emsworth – a community with significant health needs. It would be a lost opportunity for Emsworth, we believe, and we hope you agree, if we did not consider how the full social value of this site can best be used for the benefit of our community. I should be clear, however, that we agree with you that the most urgent priority is to replace the current surgery facilities and that any other potential facilities could be constructed if necessary in a later phase at a later date.

I note the concern that you raise about the Doctors going elsewhere. This would indeed be very unfortunate and unwarranted. As I have stated above nothing the Forum has done or intends to do would cause any delay to this scheme. On the contrary we hope to help speed the process up. It would, of course, be for the Practice owners to decide where they wish to locate themselves. I understand they own their current building and could indeed therefore decide to acquire or rent another if they wished. Whilst, I cannot speak for the CCG or NHS Property services I think it is unlikely that the NHS would consider building a surgery anywhere else in our area when they already own a site that is covenanted for health use and fit for that purpose. Instead I hope that the Practice and you will work with us in partnership to develop the much needed new surgery on this site. I hope that what I have said is helpful and reassures you that our primary objective is the same as yours.

In order to avoid any further misunderstandings can I suggest that you meet very soon with David Thomas who has now taken over from Dr Schofield to lead the Emsworth Forum's work on health? David is a very experienced senior health economist and strategist in the NHS and international healthcare. You can contact him via agendathomas@aol.com or on 01243 379496.

You will see that I am also copying this letter to the Practice and the CCG for their information.

Kind regards

Stephanie Elsy, Chair, Emsworth Forum
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Cc

Members of the Emsworth Forum Health Group
The Emsworth Surgery
South East Hants CCG