

Modernisation of the Royal Sussex County Hospital

Statement by the Patient and Public Design Panel

There is a clear and undisputed need to modernize the Royal Sussex County Hospital. The main buildings, built almost 200 years ago, were in use before Florence Nightingale left for the Crimea.

There have been major advances in medicine and treatment methods in recent decades. The current hospital complex is unable to meet these demands without substantial sums of money being spent on buildings long past their anticipated lifespan. Clearly the most appropriate option is to redevelop the site to provide a modern and adaptable purpose built structure which meets the long-term needs of the most seriously ill and injured patients across the county and beyond whilst strengthening its role as a regional teaching hospital.

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust has been at pains to develop a modern medical facility which is environmentally efficient and enhances the area in which it is located. Early in the design process this Patient and Public Design Panel was created. The panel has a membership of some 35 people representing carers, patients and patient groups from Brighton and Hove and the wider county. It is a forum whose purpose is to inform and contribute towards the design and layout of the new hospital.

Members of the group have been encouraged and have been pleased to offer their own unique carer or patient perspective during the design process. As many members are local residents they have been able to express the views of their fellow citizens. In addition, members have assisted in reviewing plans, informed clinicians about issues raised, worked closely with the architects and the hospital redevelopment team, and reported back to other patients and patient groups as necessary.

A number of road shows and extensive consultations with local residents, businesses and the broader community of Brighton and Hove and across the wider Sussex patch have taken place.

The panel has taken a particular interest in ensuring that the new development allows people with disabilities to access the site in a way that is on a par with the access afforded to people without disabilities. We have been pleased to have seen that our views on automatic doors, accessible bathrooms and sound attenuation (to give but a few examples) have been taken forward. There is more work to do to ensure that the way finding across the whole site is addressed and we would be keen to be involved in this next stage.

Concerns have been also been raised by the panel about traffic and parking problems within the city and around the hospital as a result of the redevelopment. Clearly innovative parking and travel options will be needed to overcome these City and Sussex wide issues, and health impact assessments have been carried out in all areas that patients travel from to the Royal Sussex County Hospital. In spite of these concerns, the overwhelming response from members of the Patient and Public Design Panel has been very positive.

We believe this is because the new design is sympathetic to its surroundings, whilst delivering an enhanced patient and staff experience and state-of-the-art teaching, training and research facilities for our Medical School and local Universities. The new hospital development will create a leading medical facility for Sussex and the south east.

The Patient and Public Design Panel therefore fully endorse the redevelopment of the Royal Sussex County Hospital site and we urge the speedy approval of the Full Business Case.

Norman Webster
The Patient and Public Design Panel
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