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31st July 2018

Alan Mak MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Alan.mak.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Mr Mak,

Re: Proposed sale of the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital

Thank you for your letter of 27 July 2018 addressed to our Chief Executive Officer Elaine Hewitt on the future of Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital (EVCH). I am replying as the Director responsible for this matter.

Firstly, I am sorry that you did not hear directly from NHSPS on the property sale. We endeavour to ensure local partners are fully briefed on these matters and regret that did not happen on this occasion. My team will ensure you are informed as we progress this site.

You will be aware that the EVCH building was decommissioned in April 2013 and services were relocated by the former Havant Primary Care Trust to Oak Park and Havant Health Centre. NHSPS works very closely with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and we will only dispose of sites when the commissioners confirm that there are no current or future health commissioning requirements. The EVCH site was formally declared surplus to NHS requirements by Havant Clinical Commissioning Group, who plan and pay for local healthcare, in July 2018.

Part of our role is to obtain best value from the sale of surplus sites, all proceeds from the sale of surplus properties are wholly reinvested back into the NHS. In addition to seeking to maximise disposal value, we also have an obligation to minimise hold costs and to dispose of sites expeditiously once they are declared surplus.

Over the past number of months, we have worked with Havant Borough Council on potential planning options for the site. We have appointed Hellier Langston to market the site and they have reported a diverse range of interested parties, we are confident our marketing process will deliver best value for the NHS.

Prior to marketing, the property was listed on the Government's Register of Surplus Public Sector Land, allowing other public bodies the opportunity to acquire the site at market value. No expressions of interest were received.

As you note in your letter, NHSPS notified Havant Borough Council on the 27 July that it wished to trigger the moratorium period for the Asset of Community Value process. The moratorium period provides local community groups with the opportunity to express an interest and raise a bid for the property.

We have engaged with a number of community groups to explain the marketing process and how they can confirm their interest, their source of funding and any offer they may wish to make.

We will consider every bid on its merits, though we are under no obligation to accept any offer, other than that which ultimately represents the best value for money for taxpayers and the wider NHS in line with our remit.

I note your request that NHSPS stops its sales process, however as The Asset of Community Value nomination allows for a protective period of up to six months for a local community group to express an interest or make a bid, NHSPS is effectively prohibited from selling the property within that period.

In your subsequent email of 30 July 2018 you reference a locally-expressed view that the EVCH site was paid for by the local community/residents and later “donated” by them to the NHS and therefore they are entitled to have it returned to the local community now that it is no longer required for health services by the CCG.

The title deeds of the site shows that ownership of the hospital was transferred to the NHS without restriction in 1948 and to NHSPS in 2013. However, we will happily consider any documentary evidence in support of the local community’s claim.

The recent Government response to the Naylor Review explains that properties owned by NHSPS are national rather than local assets and that capital receipts from the sale of NHSPS properties are pooled at a national level and the investment directed to where it is most needed by patients.

I would be pleased to meet you to discuss the matter further. Should you wish to do so, my Executive Assistant Courtney Knox is available via [redacted] and will be able to schedule the meeting at our earliest mutually convenient time.

I thank you again for your interest in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



John Westwood
Director of Asset Management