
Stevenage Local Plan Examination
Stage 2
Hearing Statement on behalf of the
East and North Herts NHS Trust

Matter 11 – Community Facilities

January 2017

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Matter 11 – Community Facilities

A. Introduction

- 1.1 The population of the borough of Stevenage is currently estimated to be around 86,000. The Local Plan sets a target of 7,600 homes to be developed within the plan period. The latest ONS 2014-based sub national population projections indicate the Borough's population will rise to 98,000 by the end of the Plan period. This represents an increase of 14%.
- 1.2 Initially in the preparation of the Local Plan, there were encouraging signs that SBC was giving careful consideration to the need to identify additional land for the future expansion of the Lister Hospital. The East and North Herts NHS Trust advised SBC officers in February 2013 that there was a requirement in the short term for up to 1.2ha of land to accommodate a satellite radiotherapy centre and additional car parking on land immediately to the north of the hospital (currently part of allocation ref. H01/11). The first consultation document, published in June 2013 (ref. LPD4), proposed an area of search of around 4ha covering the rugby ground, to accommodate these requirements.
- 1.3 The Statement of Consultation, published in June 2013 (LPD5), found overwhelming public support for safeguarding land to the north of the Lister Hospital for future expansions. There were no recorded objections.
- 1.4 The Trust is disappointed, therefore, that the publication draft version of the Plan (LPD1) has failed to identify sufficient land for the Lister Hospital to meet the future needs of the Borough's population. The rugby ground is now proposed to be allocated for housing instead of health care uses.
- 1.5 The absence of any area of search for new healthcare facilities to meet future growth contrasts sharply with the positive statements at paras 11.18 and 11.19 of the Plan, which recognise the strategic importance of the Lister Hospital to Stevenage.
- 1.6 **Appendix 1** of this Hearing Statement sets out the justification for the proposed new facilities in the short term. The remainder of this statement sets out the Trust's case for long-term requirements for facilities.

B. Long term space requirements to 2031

- 1.7 It is difficult for a Trust to provide any high degree of certainty about the likely requirements for the hospital in the mid and long term up to the end of the Plan period in 2031. Future requirements beyond the next 5 years will be based upon a whole range of matters at a variety of levels, including the combination of future strategic funding programme for the NHS at the national level, the implementation of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans and the business case for funding new facilities at the local level. Therefore, there is no funding in place for the following potential developments. However, this degree of uncertainty is unlikely to be different to any other hospital.

1. Bed capacity

- 1.8 It is possible to calculate the potential number of beds and the corresponding need for additional diagnostic facilities based upon current beds at the Lister Hospital and the projected demographic growth in Stevenage. Currently, there are 720 beds at the hospital with approximately 4,275 staff. A projected 14% increase in the population of the Borough would suggest that there would need to be an additional 100 beds by the end of the Plan period with a corresponding increase in staff numbers of 598 to 4,873. It is accepted that this is a simple extrapolation and does not take account of other factors such as changes in technology, clinical advances and new working practices which could suppress the need for this level of increase in beds and in staff. Future models of care are expected to shift more out patient and day procedure-based activity. However, the Lister Hospital currently provides services to around 500,000 people across Hertfordshire and parts of Bedfordshire, the majority of which lie outside Stevenage Borough. Therefore, any suppression in the need for beds would be countered by population growth outside Stevenage Borough. Additional bed based activity brings with it the need for additional support including theatres, diagnostic and facilities management (FM) services. The net increase in floorspace for the additional 100 beds is estimated to be in the order of 45 sqm per bed based on standard hospital planning norms, giving an increase of 4,500 sqm. On top of this, an additional 35 sqm per bed should be allowed for the additional support which gives a potential overall requirement of 3,500 sqm. This gives an approximate total of 8,000 sqm.

2. Repatriation of services

- 1.9 Owing to space constraints of the existing Lister site, the Trust has explored the potential for interim off site locations as part of the future site strategy for the Hospital. This includes Trust administration (3,000 sqm), pathology (2,500 sqm) and medical records (700 sqm). There is and remains a long term objective to repatriate some or all of these services back to the main Lister Hospital site for the long-term in order to improve and maintain overall operational efficiency.

3. New service developments

- 1.10 The Trust has seen a number of new developments over the years including an urgent care centre, operating theatre capacity and maternity facilities. However, the Trust anticipate that there will be a need in the next ten years for additional paediatric services at the hospital as well as a need to replace the existing main theatres. An additional contingency allowance of 5,000 sqm has been allowed for this element.
- 1.11 In summary, 19,200 sqm of floorspace is estimated to be required up to 2031, excluding the short term requirement of a satellite cancer unit and additional car parking. This estimate is subject to future charge and is not currently funded. However, it sets the context for meeting strategic medical needs arising from population growth in Stevenage up to 2031.

Provision for Accommodating Additional Facilities

- 1.12 Policy HC3 of the published Local Plan identifies the Lister Hospital within a wider Health Campus, divided into two distinct areas, connected by a pinchpoint, which extends to include existing specialist care homes and private mental healthcare facilities to the north. The Trust owns all the land in the southern block and the triangular car park, known as the Airport Car Park. Para 11.20 states that “Policy HC3 safeguards the existing hospital site. This will allow the Lister Hospital to operate successfully throughout the plan period to 2031.” However, this claim is not justified in the supporting text. Instead, para 11.22 states “There is a small parcel of undeveloped land within this campus, adjacent to the A602. Development here will be restricted to healthcare related uses, which complement the existing facilities.” The proposals map does not identify the small parcel in question. There is no recognition in the supporting text that the topography of the health campus varies with the land to the north of the Airport Car Park approximately 15m above the lower lying land to the north. The land is remote from the main hospital site and is connected through a very narrow pinch point

at the entrance to the staff car park. These factors restrict any possible future use of this land in connection with the hospital and the provision of healthcare services.

- 1.13 Within the Lister Hospital site, an area on the eastern side of the Hospital site provides dedicated staff residences and is leased to Origin Housing Association. These facilities support the recruitment and retention of new staff within the Hospital, as well as providing ancillary offices and training facilities. The housing stock is dated and the Trust and Origin are exploring options for redeveloping the site to provide a mix of new residential accommodation for private sector, social rented and key workers. Whilst the density of accommodation can be increased, the continuing demand for ancillary accommodation for staff means that redevelopment is unlikely to result in any surplus land for healthcare purposes.
- 1.14 The proposed small parcel of land within the Health Campus to accommodate all future expansion requirements of the Hospital is not justified and does not appear to be based upon any sound evidence base.
- 1.15 The Rugby Club to the north of the Lister Hospital remains the only real viable option for the Hospital to accommodate both its short and long term requirements. It lies immediately adjacent to the current site, is on the same topography as the current hospital site and is of sufficient size to accommodate the future requirements of the hospital. The Trust is aware that the owner of the Rugby Club ground does not wish to make the land available to the Trust, even on terms comparable with the value of the land were to be developed for residential use. The Trust is aware that there is a pressing need for deliverable housing sites within the Borough and would welcome the opportunity to discuss how the future requirements for the Trust can be accommodated within the Plan period.

D. SBLP Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.16 The SBLP Sustainability Appraisal as amended (LP3) acknowledges at Para 1.45 that the option to safeguard land at the Lister Hospital performs best in terms of long-term health-care for Stevenage. The Trust welcomes the clear statement that if land is not identified for expansion this could severely limit the future success of the facility.
- 1.17 This is backed up by the sustainability appraisal of Issue 23 and the proposal to safeguard land north of the hospital for future expansion.

- 1.18 However, this contrasts with the publication draft version of the Local Plan 2011-31 (LP1) which presumes that Policy HC3: The Health Campus will provide for the continued growth of the hospital. The Trust does not have sufficient confidence that the policy will enhance human health and wellbeing and ensure that the hospital will continue to meet the needs of the growing population, as the Council claim in LP3.

E. Assessment of the Soundness of the Stevenage Borough Plan

(a) Positively Prepared

In respect of medical facilities the Plan as published can only be said to be positively prepared in part as it does not seek to meet the future needs of the Lister Hospital that have been identified by the Trust. The Hospital is the largest employer in the Borough and serves a population of more than 500,000. The Trust do not consider that Policy HC3 will provide sufficient or suitable land to meet the projected increase in the population of Stevenage.

(b) Justified

The strategy of a defined health campus to safeguard the Lister Hospital and provide future growth does not take sufficient account of the nature and topography of the identified site nor the short-term requirements which the Trust has identified. The Council has been aware of these proposed facilities since 2013 and the area of search to the north of the hospital was an appropriate strategy, based on proportionate evidence. There is a reasonable alternative to Policy HC3, namely the provision for expansion on part of the rugby ground.

F. Proposed Change to make the Plan Sound

- 1.19 The Trust is fully aware that the landowner of the Rugby Ground does not wish to sell the land to the Trust even at the commercial market level for residential land. However, the Trust considers that the Inspector could amend the allocation of Site H01/11 to allow for part of the site to come forward for healthcare use, and enable the residential and healthcare uses to be phased to ensure both are delivered within the first part of the Plan period. The Trust would welcome the opportunity to explore this option further at Stage 3 when Matter 16 is discussed.

Appendix 1 – Short Term Development Requirements

- 1 The Trust advised the Council in February 2013 that the short term development requirements comprise a satellite radiotherapy centre and additional car parking. Although four years has now passed, the short term requirements remain the same as in 2013.

Satellite radiotherapy centre

- 2 The Mount Vernon Cancer Services Development Project undertaken by West Hertfordshire and East and North Hertfordshire PCTs concluded that Mount Vernon Hospital should remain the site of the Cancer Centre and recommended that a satellite unit be developed in north Hertfordshire / south Bedfordshire to meet the capacity projections for radiotherapy and improved access for patients. The Lister Hospital has been identified as the preferred site for a satellite radiotherapy centre. Whilst the detailed modelling has yet to be undertaken, the unit is likely to include two Linear Accelerators (LinAcs) and outpatient services with the radiotherapy planning function remaining at the centre. For the purpose of this report we have sized the unit of the basis that it will be a stand alone ambulatory unit comprising: -

- Entrance facilities
- 2 LinAcs
- 6 outpatients rooms
- Administration and support functions

- 3 This is consistent with models elsewhere and on that basis we estimate an overall space requirement of 2,400sqm Gross Internal Area (GIA) based on the latest NHS design guidance. Depending on configuration this would give a land requirement of 1-1.5 acres (0.4 – 0.6ha).

Car Parking

- 4 The original planning application for the Our Changing Hospitals (OCH) development included an assessment of the total amount of parking necessary to support the developments on the Lister site. The new multi-storey car park has delivered the majority of the additional spaces and there is currently an adequate supply of parking. The Trust estimates an additional 250 spaces is required. This is slightly lower than the originally assessed 400 spaces; the new estimate is based on more current data and we

will continue to monitor changes in demand. There are a number of solutions to meet this demand:

- Manage demand through alternative forms of travel. The Trust has successfully introduced a number of travel initiatives as part of its sustainability programme but it is unlikely new measures would reduce demand by the required amount.
- Operate a park and ride scheme. This is really only practicable for staff but experience of a similar scheme operated during the construction of the multi-storey car park demonstrated it was very unpopular and was rejected by many staff. This led to parking problems on site and in surrounding areas to the hospital.
- Construct a deck car park. The obvious location for this would be the staff car park to the north west of the site. There are certain technical construction issues with this site but it is anticipated circa 250 spaces could be created with a single story deck.
- Acquire land and construct the required additional spaces as surface parking. It is estimated a land area of approximately 1.5 acres would be required to create an efficiently laid out 250 space car park.

Land Requirements

- 5 The Lister Hospital site is highly developed and therefore additional land will be required to support the short term developments set out above.
- 6 It can be seen that approximately 2.5 – 3 acres would be required but if the two schemes were developed in parallel, and efficiently laid out with existing facilities, it is considered this could be reduced to a minimum of 2 acres (0.8ha).

Potential locations

- 7 Expansion of clinical services will need to be on land adjacent to the current site. The hospital is effectively landlocked to the east and south by existing roads and to the west by other developments.
- 8 The only relatively undeveloped site immediately adjacent to the main hospital is the Stevenage Rugby Club to the north which is approximately 10 acres (4ha).

- 9 An alternative strategy would be to redevelop part of the staff residences site that is the subject of a long term lease to the Origin Housing Association. Under the terms of the lease this would require the residential accommodation to be re-provided elsewhere in close vicinity to the hospital site. There is no obvious location that would meet the needs of such a re-provision and it would be disproportionately expensive.

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