

PRESS RELEASE

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Sir Mike Penning gives a cautious welcome to local NHS Trust decision to prepare new proposals for future hospital provision

Sir Mike Penning, Member of Parliament for Hemel Hempstead, has given a cautious welcome to news that the West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust have agreed to prepare new proposals for the future of hospital services in the area.

The decision comes after NHS Improvement, the organisation that oversees NHS Trusts, rejected West Herts two proposals that both focussed on the redevelopment of the Victorian Watford hospital site.

Sir Mike recently wrote to the Chairs of the West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust and the Three Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group calling on them to include a “new build on a new site” option in their resubmission.

In their joint response, they have announced that they will proceed with new plans starting this month and will consult widely with local MPs, hospital campaign groups and residents.

Sir Mike said:

“There is still a long way to go, but it is about time they wake up and smell the coffee. It is not only common sense but proven to be the most cost-effective option. A new state-of-the-art hospital on a central site, with room for expansion, level and free car parking would provide for the communities of Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans for the next two generations if not more. It would also be ideally

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located to serve as a backup for any major incidents on the M1, M25, Luton or Heathrow airports and north west London.

“With a new – and level – site at the Crown Estate land between Leverstock Green and the M1 being earmarked for development, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

“I call on the Trust and CCG to do the right thing and support local residents on this. We should all - Trust, CCG, MPs, campaigners and residents – be working together on this to make it happen.

“I really believe we have a great opportunity here.”

<<ENDS>>

Notes for editor:

1. Further information can be obtained from Mike Penning MP at mike@penning4hemel.com, telephone 07949 251357.