



The Rt Hon Sir MIKE PENNING MP

Member of Parliament for Hemel Hempstead
Constituency Office

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Please quote our reference in all correspondence: MP64797 / Allen

Ms Christine Allen
Chief Executive
West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust
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10 September 2020

FORMAL COMPLAINT

Dear Ms Allen

As Chief executive of West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust, you must have recently authorised comments on your website a Briefing Document entitled 'Bringing new hospital facilities to west Hertfordshire'. The publication of the document is an important part of the Trust's engagement about its plans for redevelopment and you are expecting respondents to the survey to read it before they complete the survey. It should therefore provide accurate information. It contains the following statement:

We commissioned a consortium of Royal Free Property Services Ltd, Montagu Evans and Currie and Brown to undertake a review of potential new or 'greenfield sites'.

This statement is inaccurate in two important ways.

Firstly, the original proposal on the Site Feasibility Study from RFLPS, on 4 May 2020, makes no mention of a consortium. The staffing of the project is explained like this:

The overall project lead at RFL PS will be Maggie Robinson Director of Property supported by Peter Martin (Development Lead) and Peter Morris (Property Lead) and Project Management support. The consultancy team will include development, valuation and town planning expertise provided through Montagu Evans, Paul Burley and Howard Williams (and team). Cost consultancy will be provided via Currie & Brown, David Keith (and team).

This made it clear that the study would primarily be the responsibility of senior RFLPS staff, supported by expertise and consultancy from the two other companies. The central role played by RFLPS in the assessment of the sites is confirmed in the Site Study report, which was 'Submitted by Maggie Robinson' and 'Authored by RFLPS and consultancy team'.

You therefore commissioned RFLPS, not a consortium as you claim in your briefing document. RFLPS led on the project throughout and were primarily responsible for the report's evaluation of the sites. Your statement is misleading because it inaccurately plays down the role of RFLPS and exaggerates the role of the two other companies in the assessment of site options.



I can only conclude that you have been trying to avoid questions about a potential perceived conflict of interest, caused by the close links between the Royal Free Trust and RFLPS and the growing clinical and non-clinical partnership between Royal Free and West Herts.

Secondly, you say that a review of 'potential new or 'greenfield' sites' was carried out by RFLPS. This gives the misleading impression that a full search for possible sites was undertaken; this was not the case. Your Trust selected the sites for review, all of them having been rejected in previous reviews. Your briefing document should have made clear the very limited scope of the Study and the fact that you selected the sites.

Your lack of openness has backfired, because questions must now be raised about the independence of the Study and, more widely, about the quality of your engagement with the public over the redevelopment. The people of West Herts deserve more facts, and less spin. Please correct the briefing document in these two respects to ensure the information provided is accurate.

Yours sincerely

Mike Penning

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CC Phil Townsend, Chairman - West Herts Hospitals Trust

David Evans, Managing Director – Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group