

## Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely Granted Outline Planning Permission by East Cambs District Council Planning Committee



I am absolutely delighted that earlier this week, East Cambs District Council's Planning Committee granted outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely. This is a long awaited and hard fought for milestone in this project which the residents of East Cambridgeshire need and deserve.

I want to thank Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust for the incredibly comprehensive planning application and consultation process – delivered in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I take my hat off to them for what they did and how they did it.

Here is the speech that I made to the Planning Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, with some minor later additions!

Cambridgeshire has recently been granted Integrated Care System status. This is incredibly important to the future of our health and care system as we work to support an ageing and growing population where people are living longer with more complex and multiple needs. I have been a passionate advocate for localising health and social care services. This started with the Cambridgeshire County Council Neighbourhood Cares pilots in Soham and St Ives where we localised adult social care so that it was embedded within the community it served. A hyper-prevention model, where highly qualified social workers pro-actively reached out to people in the community on the edge of vulnerability. It set alight and co-ordinated volunteer and community support and it delivered some of the best social care outcomes you will ever see. I am proud of what it achieved and I am proud that the principles and learning from it are being taken forward through the Happy at Home project between Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambs District Council – I do hope that this will still be the case under the new arrangements at the County Council.

But this needs to go further – we need to fully integrate health and social care, which will work at its best if it is locally understood, locally based and locally run. Our local Primary Care Network is full of people who get this and are passionate about it and up for it.

The NHS in Cambridgeshire is a complex beast though, full of different structures, Governance and interests; bureaucracy gets in the way of a lot of good stuff! Of course, the only interests that matter are those of our residents.

To fully realise the benefits of integrated working, high quality, comprehensive services *have* to be available locally. Buildings are important places, to galvanise people and act as hubs. As a former member of the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Programme (STP) Board I have been working for a long time to promote the redevelopment of the Princess of Wales

Hospital into a modern health centre, a place where more services can be delivered, avoiding the need for people to travel to Addenbrookes, Hinchingsbrooke and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The vision for our new Hospital for East Cambs is for a modern hub - all existing services retained, comprehensive GP and pharmacy services, new diagnostic services, additional day surgeries and a new full Local Urgent Care Service with all that that means - standard opening times with on-site back up diagnostics.

Beyond these immediate commitments from the NHS, I strongly believe that this new building will pull new services towards it by the very fact of its existence. The hub must also be utilised to support the wider interests of the wellbeing of our community.

The plans by the County Council for a Care Suites building will further add to the benefits of the site as a whole. A modern alternative to a care home, Care Suites offer your own front door with all the care needed flexibly available on site, and with new facilities serving the development but available to the whole community, such as a shop and a hairdresser. The Care Suite building is also planned to host the re-provided Welney Rehabilitation Ward, built to the same modern standards as the other Care Suites.

When the District Council purchased the old MoD housing site next door to the Hospital, we always said we would be a good neighbour to the Hospital to help facilitate its redevelopment; indeed, this was one of the key motivations for the purchase. I am grateful to Palace Green Homes, the property arm of East Cambs Trading Company, (the District Council's trading arm), for its co-operation with the NHS on a land swap arrangement to help facilitate the Hospital redevelopment and fulfil the promises we made.

Whilst this is a very important milestone, there is much work yet to do, to secure the full funding needed for this £45m project. The District Council is looking forward to receiving an application from the NHS for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding where we hope to make a contribution towards the cost.

This long-awaited proposal gives us an opportunity to redevelop the site, to remove the ugly and disused buildings and replace them with a state-of-the-art health facility that will be a significant benefit to our growing population.

East Cambridgeshire residents need and deserve this facility and I pledge to continue to do all I can to see this to fruition.

**Cllr Anna Bailey**  
**Leader of East Cambs District Council**