

Dear Councillor....

As a resident of Waltham Forest, I welcome plans for a new hospital at Whipps Cross, but I would like you to consider the serious concerns outlined below, as I am sure you agree we need a properly funded new hospital able to provide cradle to grave care, free at the point of use.

- 1) Barts Health have given assurances that existing Core Services will be provided at the new Whipps Cross Hospital. However, kidney patients believe the haemodialysis unit will not be provided as a whole unit. The current dialysis unit for kidney patients at Whipps is one of the largest satellite dialysis units in London serving more than 200 patients (third only to Royal London and Northwick Park hospitals). Renal patients who regularly use the unit understand a few dialysis beds will be retained for emergencies, but the unit will not remain. Many of the patients who attend 3 days weekly for dialysis are local, are socio-economically deprived and very frail with co-existing complex health conditions. Therefore, having easy to access service is essential. It is our understanding the patient group have not been formally consulted. In addition, it is believed the current eye department will continue in the new Whipps Cross hospital, but it will not retain all of its services and remain as an integrated department. Concerns exist that the excellent service currently at Whipps which has a very good model of co-ordinated care will be fragmented and will not remain on site.
- 2) To access emergency care, in the new Whipps Cross Hospital, people are encouraged to initially use GP services or dial 111 to be triaged by Barts Emergency Access Hub, for timed slots for face-to-face consultation. The waiting area at Whipps A&E will be made smaller. Less hospital-stay surgery and same day care is recommended, with patients receiving surgery in local specialist hubs. Even if Barts Health introduce methods of healthcare delivery to reduce demand for hospital beds, studies repeatedly show such initiatives do not deliver the expected reduction in demand for hospital beds. Waltham Forest Councils own statistics predict the local population will increase by 19%, from 277,100 residents in 2020 to 329,200 in 2050, but Barts Health have not provided any compelling evidence they will be able to meet the needs of a rising population with reduced bed numbers.
- 3) Barts Health NHS Trust have said proposals for the new hospital at Whipps Cross will follow an Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) model, with local government resources brought under the control of the NHS. Local authority representatives will sit on the board alongside social care providers and private companies. The Local Government Association, commented "ICS as currently proposed will be an NHS body with local government representation, not a partnership of equals across the whole system. Calling this body an integrated care system

is to us a mis-nomer because it is primarily an NHS body, integrating the local NHS, not the whole health, wellbeing and social care system". It is concerning that given the new Whipps Cross hospital, is to be a centre for frail elderly people, local authorities may be compelled by the ICSs to adhere to a reduced budget, with few powers over older people's care, with needs increasing whilst provision is cut back.

- 4) Whipps Cross hospital is currently running at between 98% and 99% bed occupancy, sometimes with no free beds, however, the new Whipps Cross hospital will have 51 fewer beds, and Barts Health have not come with any firm details about where the promised extra capacity for additional hospital beds will sit in the new hospital designs. The safe bed occupancy rate is accepted to be 85% and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) state "High levels of bed occupancy may affect patient's care." The National Audit Office suggest that "hospitals with bed occupancy over 85% can expect to have regular bed shortages, periodic bed crises and increased numbers of health-care acquired infections." Therefore, it is clear the proposed reduction in bed numbers could adversely impact on the health of the local community.
- 5) To date, there are no plans to include the Margaret Centre Specialist Palliative Care Unit in the new Whipps Cross hospital. For 34 years the Margaret Centre has provided outstanding care for people who are dying and support for those close to them. No comparable service exists in Waltham Forest and much of Redbridge. The Margaret Centre provides holistic care with a multi-disciplinary team working across the community and inpatient setting. Care is therefore seamless. If someone does need admission to the unit for end-of-life care, they are amongst staff who know them and the family, in surroundings that are more calm and homely than clinical, but with the highest clinical expertise.

The concerns listed above lead me to believe that the new Whipps Cross will no longer be a District General Hospital for our community. As a local councillor I think that you should be fighting against downgrading of Whipps Cross hospital. A 2016 health plan stated that - due to population growth - the boroughs covered by Barts Health would need an extra 240 beds by 2025, even with vastly improved community services. There are practical ways that you, and Waltham Forest Council could help persuade Barts Health to revisit their proposals including, if necessary, refusing outline planning permission. Your constituents deserve a hospital that is safe, sound and fit for purpose. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your proposals to ensure the new hospital will fulfil the community's healthcare needs, not just in the immediate future but to provide a legacy for superb care for the next hundred years.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns.