

**22 June 2020**

Mr Simon Smith  
Planning Officer  
Wiltshire Council  
Monkton Park  
Chippenham  
SN15 1ER



Dear Mr Smith

**RE: Planning Application Reference 20/01057/FUL  
Proposed new replacement NHS medical centre in Calne for Patford House  
Surgery**

As you may already be aware, BSW Clinical Commissioning Group is the NHS organisation responsible for planning and commissioning primary health and care services for the people of Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire.

The CCG is clinically led and our membership includes all 94 GP practices in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire area, formed in April 2020 this year from the merger of separate, more local CCGs. Calne was previously part of Wiltshire CCG and this has been merged into the BSW successor NHS organisation. Our member GP practices are assisted by the CCG's team of health care professionals and patient representatives to plan and deliver health and care services for the benefit of all registered patients.

As part of this CCG support, all GPs nationally have their rent reimbursed, as per the 'Premises Cost Directions' statutory instrument and government legislation and it is also the CCG's statutory responsibility to prioritise budgets and funding for new build premises developments, such as the one referred to in the above planning application. Under these powers I can confirm that the proposed new build development replacing Patford House surgery has been prioritised and fully approved by the CCG for recurrent revenue funding. This funding stream has been independently verified by the Valuation Office Agency as 'value for money' and is duly affordable to the NHS, in part due to a nominal site value attributed to the project.

Due to these prior funding approvals and allocations made by the CCG, we therefore expect that Assura, the GPs' development partners, will be able commence construction as soon as reasonably practicable after/if a suitable planning consent is granted. It is important that the new facility is delivered as soon as possible to ensure local health outcomes and patient services are retained (and improved) locally.

Patford House was approved for new premises by the CCG following an exhaustive and comprehensive business case application process. The current, outdated premises have been independently assessed as not being fit for long term continued use as a GP surgery. The case of need is documented within section 6 of the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application, which summarises the extensive and essential benefits of the proposed development. Despite the acknowledged need for new and improved primary healthcare facilities in the town, unfortunately Calne Town Council failed, through the Neighbourhood plan, to identify, allocate and protect a suitable site to meet the identified need, which could have facilitated a location within the settlement limits. The consequence is that the only suitable alternative is now the application site.

The practice serves 9,000 patients and is part of a partnership serving a combined list of 16,800+ when assessed alongside Beversbrook Medical Centre and Sutton Benger Surgery which are also run by the same group of GPs. The GPs are also part of the local Primary Care Network of GPs in Calne that collaborate on primary care initiatives locally, in accordance with NHS guidance and best practice within primary care.

Due to the inherent issues within Patford House and Covid-19, the surgery is not currently open for patients and there is genuine risk of permanent closure, which will place further stress on the delivery and resilience of NHS primary care services locally. The lack of suitability of Patford House in the longer term is one of the key reasons why the CCG has allocated (much sought after and rarely available) funding for replacement premises. The new build will be transformative for primary care services locally and also would be expected to form a key part of a future pandemic response, improving resilience and providing further options for the NHS when looking at future service strategies.

We hope that the CCG's assertion of full support (as already referenced and set out in the GPs' planning application) and the NHS prioritisation of funding for this much-needed replacement medical centre is taken on board and acknowledged when you assess the merits of the planning application. The community health benefits of the new build are not to be underestimated and should weigh heavily in favour of the planning application when assessed on a standalone basis. This is a scheme that the NHS sees as an essential part of the local health infrastructure and will benefit future service delivery plans that mean the health of patients locally will be immeasurably improved.

In the light of recent events, refusal of planning application (coupled with a lack of alternative sites affordable to the NHS, suitable and available) would almost certainly have critical consequences for the provision of primary healthcare in Calne and therefore the health and well-being of the local community. Therefore, the scheme is not only a benefit, but critical to future primary healthcare delivery in the town.

As you will hopefully appreciate, increased CCG premises funding is, at any time, something which is only provided in cases of clear demonstrable need – especially when we are having to work within restricted budgets and other central funding

limitations. The ongoing Covid-19 situation and current closure of Patford to patients, further highlights the need for a positive decision to take matters forward and boost health outcomes locally for the many thousands of patients in Calne and surrounding areas that will be served by GPs and clinical staff operating from the new proposed replacement premises.

I do hope that this balance and need is understood and duly noted and relayed within the report and decision you are currently considering.

Yours sincerely



**Jo Cullen**  
**Director of Primary Care**  
**Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG**