

17th March 2022

Dear Chair,

Petitions P-05-1001 Hold an independent inquiry into the choice of site for the proposed new Velindre Cancer Centre & P-05-1018 Support for the current proposed plans to build a new Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff, in any future inquiry

Thank you for your recent correspondence asking further questions related the aforementioned petitions. I have provided answers below for the Committee's consideration.

- 1. Could you provide further clarification about the status of the review conducted in 2017, including whether it considered the location of a new Velindre Cancer Centre and/or the clinical model behind a 'stand-alone' centre?**

The Committee notes your previous response that this was a 'Gateway Review' conducted as part of the business case process. In the document "Why not build a new Velindre Cancer Centre on another hospital site?", published by Velindre University NHS Trust, it is described as an "external review" with Dr Jane Barrett acting as the "clinical lead".

In response to our previous request for a copy you stated that you have concluded that the Review should not be published. We ask that you give further consideration to this request. In the event that

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you remain unwilling to provide a copy to the Committee, we would be grateful to receive a more detailed outline of the issues considered by the Review, including whether it expressly considered the issue of the location of a new Velindre Cancer Centre and any recommendations it made on this matter.

In January 2017, Dr Jane Barrett was a member of the team appointed by the Welsh Government to undertake a Gateway Review of the Transforming Cancer Services Programme. The gateway review is a standard part of the business case process required by the UK Treasury for all programmes of work and infrastructure projects. Its purpose was to provide assurance to the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) in terms of the progress of the programme. The clinical model and the supporting projects were therefore considered as part of the gateway review but it did not specifically consider the location of the new Velindre Cancer Centre.

Having considered your request to release the Gateway Report again, we have concluded that the reasons we provided for not releasing, in correspondence dated 20 November 2020 are unchanged.

2. In your response to the Committee dated 25 November 2020 you provided figures from the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) showing the number of patients transferred by them from Velindre Cancer Centre to local Care Providers. Can you provide a more detailed breakdown of the categorisation (i.e. Red, Amber and Green) given by WAST to the AS1 calls quoted for 2018, 2019 and 2020?

This is in the context of concerns received by Committee Members that the statement that “fewer than thirty patients a year on average need an

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**unplanned emergency transfer” may not be accurate or verifiable.
Therefore, the Committee would also be grateful to receive a breakdown
of how this figure was reached.**

The categorisation of incidents (Red, Amber and Green) by the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust is determined by a methodology used by ambulance services across the UK to prioritise the appropriate response.

The reference to 30 calls to which you refer was shared in response to a specific query from a member of the public. The Committee was provided with more detailed information to ensure it had a comprehensive understanding of the transfer from Velindre Cancer Centre. This data was provided by the WAST and in our original response to the Committee.

3. How regularly the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) has been required to attend the current Velindre Cancer Centre site over the past three years for the assessment and transfer of patients?

As noted in the Nuffield Trust report¹, EMRTS has recorded two attendances to Velindre Cancer Centre since its establishment in April 2015 and 2020.

4. Whether there is a specific agreement or memorandum of understanding between Velindre University NHS Trust and the EMRTS?

The (EMRTS) is a service provided by the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust (WAST) in support of their emergency response, provided by Emergency Ambulances, Rapid Response Vehicles, Medserve and the Basics services. It provides Consultant and

¹ [Advice on the proposed model for non-surgical tertiary cancer services in south east Wales](#)

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Critical Care Practitioner-delivered pre-hospital critical care across Wales. It was launched at the end of April 2015 and is a partnership between Wales Air Ambulance Charity, Welsh Government and NHS Wales.

The EMRTS service is an important component of the unscheduled care system across Wales. Velindre University NHS Trust and all NHS Wales organisations, have the ability to access the EMRTS service when required. Velindre Cancer Centre has clinical protocols in place to access the EMRTS service as and when required, as part of the unscheduled care system across Wales. This is an operational system-wide service and does not rely on organisational level Memorandums of Understanding.

5. The “Why not build a new Velindre Cancer Centre on another hospital site?” document states that “UHW is less than three miles away and can be reached within minutes”. Can you provide figures in support of this statement and, in particular, in relation to the time typically taken to complete the transfer of emergency (Red and Amber) patients from the current Velindre Cancer Centre to the University Hospital of Wales?

Data on the number of annual patient transfers and the time taken was provided to us by the WAST and is set out in the Nuffield Trust report as below:

“WAST also provided data on response times for 2019 and these show that response times for red calls were all under two minutes. Response times for amber patients were significantly longer, with a median of 50 minutes, but 15% were of two hours or more. This reflects common practice in which ambulance services tend to regard patients already in hospital as being in a place of relative safety.”ⁱ

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process allowed for a broad range of views to be heard by interviewing a range of clinicians from Velindre and surrounding health services, patients and their representatives including hosting open access sessions for Velindre staff, reviewing papers from working groups, individual testimonies and letters from patients and staff. We are fully committed to working together to deliver excellent cancer treatment and care for patients across south east Wales in partnership with our staff, patients and healthcare colleagues."

The appropriateness of the engagement undertaken was also subject to an application for judicial review in 2021.

In the summer of 2021, there was application made for a Judicial Review of the Welsh Government's decision to approve the Outline Business Case of the new Velindre Cancer Centre. Velindre University NHS Trust were named as an Interested Party.

Three core arguments were made by the Claimant: compliance with environmental law process, compliance with Well-being Future Generations Act and the appropriateness of the engagement and process the Trust undertook to agree on the clinical model.

These arguments were determined in the High Court process, by Sir Ross Cranston as High Court Judge as "not arguable" therefore the application was refused. The Claimant then applied for a renewal of this decision and the refusal of the application was further confirmed by Honourable Mr Justice Eyre in the renewal High Court hearing in November.

Velindre University NHS Trust staff are encouraged to speak openly. Individuals are fully supported to report concerns and safety issues; are treated fairly, with empathy

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and consideration when raising concerns; and have their concerns listened to and addressed, when they have been involved in an incident or have raised a concern.

As further assurance, in the June 2021 Medical Engagement Survey for the Trust, the average of all ten of the scales were rated within the highest relative engagement compared to the external norms.

In addition, in September 2021 General Medical Council (GMC) National Training Survey results were shared by HEIW. HEIW wrote to congratulate the Trust for achieving such positive results. Numerous areas were identified as 'above outlier', which is a term used by the GMC to signify results that are significantly above average in particular domains, and thus denote areas of good practice. The report demonstrated that no patient safety or bullying concerns had been raised by Trainees in the 2021 survey.

Further to the responses to the specific questions asked by the committee, below, we also provide a summary of key project milestones since March 2021 which we hope will provide a useful update for the committee:

Key Project Milestones since March 2021

March 2021	Approval of the Outline Business Case for the new Velindre Cancer Centre The Minister for Health and Social Services approved the outline business case for the new Velindre Cancer Centre
April 2021	Pre-qualification evaluation work, prior to competitive dialogue, begins

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Summer 2021

Public Engagement initiatives

During Summer 2021, following the Senedd election and the easing of some COVID related restrictions, VUNHST launched a number of engagement initiatives to inform the development of the new cancer centre. These included meeting with representatives of from the local community, local residents and some virtual engagement opportunities that would allow for patients, staff and the wider public to influence the project. This also included two initiatives related to the development of updated reference designs – reference for the competition - for the new Velindre Cancer Centre.

In addition, and in partnership with Cardiff University and the TechnoHub, the **Velindre Minecraft Competition** was launched to encourage children and young people from primary and secondary schools across the south east Wales region to design their own version of the new Velindre Cancer Centre. The competition received 120 registrations, 35 worlds were submitted by teams and individuals, with 10 being shortlisted. The winners' announcement can be found [here](#) and their designs were considered as part of the competitive dialogue process.

Working with the Gower based social enterprise Down to Earth, we launched a **Digital Conversation** in June 2021 focused on how health and green spaces should work together to create an enhanced patient, staff and public

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	experience at the new cancer centre. The Digital Conversation delivered a bespoke interactive website for the updated design, a survey for patients, staff and the wider public and a mix of online and public engagement events in support. The survey found that enhancing biodiversity and the use of natural materials were key priorities for the respondents. More information can be found here
September 2021	Competitive Dialogue commences Following the evaluation of the pre-qualification questionnaire responses, the competition to deliver the new Velindre Cancer Centre began with two consortia, Future Health and Acorn, proceeding to the dialogue stage of the procurement. At this stage of the process, the two consortia work with Velindre University NHS Trust (VUNHST) to develop their proposals for the new centre further, including potential design offerings and the Community Benefits proposals that must add social value both during and after the build. You can read more here
Autumn 2021	Preparatory ground clearance works commence on the site for the new Velindre Cancer Centre. You can find further information here

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January 2022	Full business case for the enabling works for the new Velindre Cancer Centre approved by the Welsh Government
January 2022	Tree clearance works commence on site. You can read more here

Yours sincerely,

Prof Donna Mead, OBE
Chair, Velindre University NHS Trust

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