



5 Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Lord Markham CBE  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State*

*39 Victoria Street  
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Your Ref: DC27377 & DC27606

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Daisy Cooper MP

By email to: [daisy.cooper.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:daisy.cooper.mp@parliament.uk)

20 December 2022

Dear Daisy,

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 November and 3 December about West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

I recognise how important this matter is to you and I appreciate your concerns.

The 2021 spending review provided a total capital settlement of over £32billion across 2022/2023 to 2024/2025. Our recent autumn statement on 17 November has maintained our level of capital budgets and the Chancellor confirmed that the Government would continue the biggest programme of capital investment for 40 years. The Government has previously confirmed an initial £3.7billion for the first four years to support the delivery of 48 hospitals by 2030.

To date, West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has received approximately £51million from the national programme, which has been used for enabling works, such as the completed multi storey car park at Watford General Hospital. An additional £11.5million has been approved to support the reconfiguration of pathology on all three sites. However, the full individual funding allocations for schemes are only confirmed once the respective full business cases have been reviewed and agreed, including by HM Treasury.

The programme approach to delivery of the new hospitals involves different schemes being grouped into cohorts. This is based on an assessment of existing readiness to progress and the extent to which new hospitals can benefit from the advantages of delivery through a national programme.

The new hospital for West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is one of the cohort three or 'Pathfinder' schemes. The Pathfinder cohort is the first group of larger and more complex schemes within the programme that are being taken forward. I appreciate that these schemes have been a long time in development and that there has been some uncertainty over construction start timescales while we are developing the national programme approach. Please be assured that the national programme is currently working very closely with all the Pathfinder trusts on next steps, including anticipated timescales for the individual schemes. All schemes within the programme, including Watford General Hospital, are expected to be delivered by 2030.

I understand the work that is currently being undertaken to agree a route for delivery of the Pathfinder cohort and I recognise the wish to progress as quickly as possible. I appreciate that West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust prefers route 1, and the programme will deliberate this against the agreed criteria of deliverability and clinical and operational urgency to invest, and the opportunities each scheme has for standardisation. This will ensure that the new hospital programme maintains a balance between the opening and operation of hospitals without delays or cost increases, against the benefits that standardisation brings for the building, staff and patients.

Developing a hospital building programme at a national level provides opportunities to drive better standards, improve value for money and ensure faster delivery of the new hospital schemes. The intention of the national programme approach is to ensure end-to-end delivery timescales are reduced, so that the new facilities are still delivered quickly for the benefit of patients and staff. Each scheme will deliver brand new, state-of-the-art facilities to ensure world-class provision of healthcare for NHS patients and staff.

I hope this reply is helpful.

With my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Markham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**LORD MARKHAM CBE**