

10th December 2014

Mr Simon Cairns
Planning Projects Manager
Colchester Borough Council
Rowan House
33 Sheepen Road
Colchester
Essex, CO3 3WG

ESSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL – DRAFT PLANNING BRIEF

Dear Simon,

We write with regard to the draft Planning Brief for Essex County Hospital scheduled for consideration by Colchester Borough Council's Local Plan Committee next week (16 December 2014).

As you are aware, Essex County Hospital is surplus to NHS requirements and Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust is currently seeking to dispose the property. In April 2014 the Trust announced the planned closure of the site with all remaining services and departments to be transferred. The transfer of services has already commenced and it is anticipated this will be completed by March 2016. Such a decision has been widely anticipated for some time with services and departments at Essex County gradually being relocated to the more modern General Hospital since its opening in 1984. The Trust has instructed Colliers International to act as agents on our behalf and bring the property to market. It is currently being marketed and we anticipate that a sale will be agreed no later than the end of March 2015. All proceeds raised from the sale of the site will then be reinvested into the General Hospital to further increase and modernise the services currently offered.

This being the case, whilst we are aware of the draft brief, we do not wish to offer any detailed comments on its content at this time. The Trust has already commissioned an extensive amount of work to explore the opportunities and constraints associated with the site from both Colliers International and Purcell UK. This planning, development and architectural work has considered the planning policy, site and heritage context. We note that this indicates the site to have a higher potential capacity than that suggested in the draft Planning Brief and we are of the opinion that the evidence presented to-date justifies this position.

Whilst the eventual use of the site will be determined by the site's purchaser, in coordination with the Borough Council, we look forward to working proactively together wherever possible to assist in this process at an appropriate point in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Crockett BSc MRICS
Associate Director - Estates & Capital Projects
Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust