**STATEMENT TO HEALTH IN DACORUM COMMITTEE, 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

**The plans to replace Hemel Hospital with a Health Campus appear to fall short of what is required.**

**The current design on a constrained site will result in a building that will, it seems from the information recently produced, only be big enough to accommodate the limited services planned for Hemel by the West Herts Trust.**

**Why are the Trust’s plans insufficient?**

**To give just one example, the Trust’s detailed figures for future patient numbers, presented to a Trust Board meeting last year, assume a small 6% rise in cases in the Hemel urgent care centre over the 17-year period 2019 to 2036, from 40,140 to 42,686, This underestimates the likely future demands of Dacorum’s growing and ageing population.**

**And the failure to provide enough urgent care will put further pressure on Watford’s A and E.**

**Meanwhile for Watford General over the same 17 years, the Trust plan substantial increases in emergency provision (32,000 more attendances, a 30% rise) and outpatient appointments and procedures (20,000 more of those, against a modest 4000 increase for Hemel).**

**This continuation of the Trust’s long-standing policy of levelling down means many more miserable, congested journeys to Watford General. And that will do nothing for the country’s net zero ambitions.**

**Instead, we deserve accessible local services.**

**As a Hemel resident I can see the need to regenerate the Market Square and surrounding area. I was actually involved in a group set up by the Council to consider how to improve the Square.**

**If the NHS is genuinely willing to consider properly the interests of patients in Dacorum, there is surely an opportunity to see whether some of the resources devoted to Watford General could be diverted instead to local provision for our borough.**

**If a wide range of health services could somehow be provided on the Market Square, that would be good, though there will be concerns about parking and access.**

**However, there are no healthcare benefits in spending millions on a new building when there is to be no substantial uplift in local provision.**

**We agree with the concept of integrating a range of health services. But one thing should be clear – we should seek to get the best range of hospital and other health services for Dacorum, then decide on which site would be best.**

**The current site of the Hemel Hospital contains some buildings which are in reasonable condition despite years of poor maintenance. Plans for work to the fairly new Verulam Building received outline planning approval last year.**

**The current site offers the option of space for ‘clean’ beds in the event of another pandemic. As far as I can see, that would not be available on the potential new site.**

**So Hemel Hospital should not be abandoned without proper consideration, and full consultation.**

**It is important that we don’t miss an opportunity to improve our health services for the future.**

**I urge the Council to enter into negotiations with the NHS to try to secure, for Hemel Hempstead, substantial increases in the range and volume of services beyond those planned by the Trust.**

**Thankyou.**

**Philip Aylett**