HOSPICE CARE CRISIS THREATENS NORTH WEST LONDON AS BRENT COUNCIL UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO SCRAP CONTROVERSIAL PLANS

Monday 18 March, 2019

Bed closures at two London NHS Hospices, Michael Sobell House and Pembridge have left St Luke's Hospice as the sole provider of specialist end of life care in North West London. This care is now seriously threatened by development plans proposed by Brent Council.

Brent Council are proposing a two-storey build for vulnerable people, just 5m away from a patient garden and 10m from patient bedrooms giving direct views into patient rooms. Heavy construction for a development of this magnitude would close in-patient services for a prolonged period pushing the region into a shortage of end of life care.

The proposals have caused an outcry from local residents with over 5,300 people signing a petition the Hospice has launched and many more bombarding councillors with letters, phone calls and emails.

Politicians and Commissioners have also spoken out against the plans.

Lord Dolar Popat, long standing Patron of the charity, and the Trade Envoy to Rwanda and Uganda, has called on the Council to rethink their plans

"There is indeed a housing crisis but I am confident in the ability of the council to solve these challenges without depriving our entire community of the specialist care provided by St Luke's Hospice. This care, given to patients and their families at such a critical time in their life, cannot be compromised in the name of housing development." – Lord Dolar Popat

Health care commissioners in Northwest London have contacted the council to express their concerns whilst the Members of Parliament for both Harrow East and Harrow West added their backing to the hospice:

"I trust Brent Council will make a decision which reflects the strength of feeling locally about this, which respects the principled objections put forward by the hospice, and [one] which respects the patients." – Bob Blackman MP

"St Luke's Hospice provides a precious service to the local community. It has my complete support and I object to this proposal." – Gareth Thomas MP

Local Councillor, Reg Colwill who visited the hospice this week said, *"I cannot imagine how anyone could possibly think this is a suitable site for major construction works. St Luke's Hospice provides a treasured service to our local community, providing expert care to those approaching the end of their life in an oasis of peace and tranquillity"*

St Luke's Hospice is a charity which has been providing specialist end of life care to people in Harrow and Brent for over 30 years. Last year it provided free end of life care for over 1,600 people in North West London.

The charity has depleting reserves and is now using vital energy and resources, intended for supporting end of life care, in opposing the proposals by Brent Council.

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