

14th August 2023

To whom it may concern

As you know the Red House Group initially lodged an objection to the application of the proposed housing development, on the basis that the current surgery in Radlett has reached the limits of expansion, and we would struggle even further to provide the level of care the community deserves. When considered in combination with inflation and increasing energy costs, maintenance of the facility and the challenges of enticing and retaining medical practitioners, we felt no option but to lodge a formal objection.

The Red House Surgery has been functioning at full capacity for a number of years now. General Practice is seeing a rapid increase in workload which is a combination of an ageing and co-morbid population and an increasing amount of work moving from secondary to primary care. There has also been a government drive to put additional resource into General Practice by the provision of ring-fenced funding to employ Allied Healthcare Professionals (AHPs), such as physios, paramedics and clinical pharmacists. Along with the growth in local population, the increase in General Practice workload and the provision of room space for these AHPs, the Red House has reached capacity and needs to plan how it can expand in order to continue to provide care to our registered patients. The Red House Surgery has met with the council on a number of occasions over the last 7 years and, of the possible options discussed, there is no funding available with which to acquire suggested sites or indeed build or fit out a new medical facility.

We now understand that the planning application includes the provision of a purpose built medical facility that would greatly increase our energy efficiency, would retain a warranty with zero maintenance for 10 years, and more importantly, would provide significantly more floor space for GP, nurse and AHP treatment rooms, staff training rooms and even staff conveniences. The increased floor space means we can not only increase current provision but have room to expand and enhance current services and grow with the community. Importantly, the building is to be provided directly to the partners of the Red House Group with no service charge or other associated costs associated with the building. This would greatly improve our financial resilience and practice sustainability in Radlett.

We have had ongoing engagement with the applicant regarding the specification of the building, and the wording of the S106 making the provision a legal planning obligation.

The provision would mean:

1. A deliverable, legally binding, financially viable solution to meet current and future needs of Radlett and surrounding areas;
2. Secures long term GP surgery and treatment rooms in Radlett;
3. Includes a transition plan, where care can seamlessly transition from the current to fully functioning and snag tested purpose build facility;

4. Is in a viable location, walkable from the town centre and includes significantly more parking and a designated drop off area to service the entire community of Radlett and surrounding areas;
5. Includes far greater access and accessibility within the facility, where we are currently limited to the ground floor;
6. Includes specifications to better cater to an aging population, bariatric need, dementia and neurodiversity design;
7. Includes specifications that would greatly improve not only patient experience, but staff working conditions, including space, ventilation, heating and cooling;
8. Includes significantly more space for teaching and training staff, aiding us in enticing, training and retaining staff in a growing practice; and
9. Includes the ability to increase our IT and technology, future proofing the GP surgery and increasing the range and accessibility of health care.

The Red House Surgery feels that the provision by the developers of a purpose built facility in the form of a Unilateral Undertaking that would form the s106 is the only viable solution to significantly enhance healthcare in Radlett and meet the needs of the population, both current and future, as the Red House would have space to grow and adapt within our community. We would have reservations on a financial contribution to the ICB, as this would be an incremental contribution directly attributable to the demand from the proposed development, and typically not of magnitude and phasing sufficient to realise the enhanced health care we want to provide to the entire community of Radlett and its surrounds. The provision of land and building with no fee to us directly, would mean we could transition to a brand new purpose built facility with far greater capacity and opportunity to co-locate enhanced health care. This would remove the maintenance costs, reduce our overheads, aid our staff recruitment and retention plan, and greatly improves our financial security. Providing a new medical facility within the development will enable the Red House Surgery to meet the needs of the subsequent new patients as well as future proof the surgery as the community continues to grow and its health needs increase.

For this reason, we support this planning application and are excited about the positive impact the resultant new medical facility would have on the provision of healthcare to Radlett's current and future population.

Yours faithfully

Dr William Bagg, Dr Krish Gupte, Dr Bhavin Patel and Dr Violaine Carpenter

GP Partners of the Red House Group