

11 August 2016

Ref: BW/108

Thurrock HOSC

Attn: Cllr Victoria Holloway

Via email to: [vholloway@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:vholloway@thurrock.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Holloway

### **Proposed merger between NEP and SEPT**

We are writing to continue to keep you up to date on progress with the proposed future merger between our Trusts. We are being very open about the proposals. A report is submitted to our public Board meetings every month providing a general overview. We publish a regular briefing for our staff and involve them in the planning for the proposed new organisation. We are communicating and engaging directly with our Foundation Trust Members and have established a service user and carer reference group to assist us with key aspects of the planning. Their first meeting is later this month.

No decisions have been made yet. We remain very keen to keep you updated with progress so that you can advise if any proposals may require further consideration. We are due to attend Essex County Council HOSC in September 2016 to discuss the proposed merger and we would be delighted to offer the same opportunity to your HOSC. If you would like us to attend a meeting to update your members directly, please do contact us.

In the meantime, we thought it may be helpful to you to have a brief recap of information we have provided to you previously and an update on our latest progress:

In September 2015 both Trusts agreed to explore a potential merger in line with the closer collaboration principles supported by the national NHS Five Year Forward View, the regional Essex Mental Health review, and the Essex Success regime. Based on the outcomes from exploratory workshops with our clinicians and managers, in December 2015 both Boards agreed to move to actively pursuing a proposed merger. In January 2016, we submitted an Outline Business Case (OBC) for merger to Monitor (now called NHS Improvement), the regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts. Monitor's review of the OBC did not identify any problems that would stop proposals progressing to the next stage, so now staff from both Trusts are working together on development of a Full Business Case (FBC) to go to both Trust Boards in November 2016.

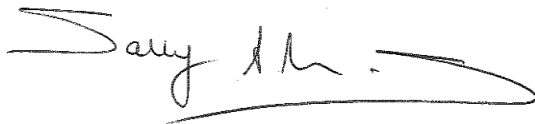
The FBC will demonstrate the anticipated benefits of the proposed merger – in particular, the benefits to patients and service users. We anticipate that these would include a better ability to recruit and retain key clinicians; better access to more specialist expertise; fewer out-of-area placements and so on. NHS Improvement will review the agreed Full Business Case from December 2016 and will give it a rating.

The final decision to merge rests with both Trusts' Councils of Governors. It is anticipated that this decision would be taken in February/ March 2017. Subject to the outcome of this approvals process, the aim would be for a completely new NHS Foundation Trust to be authorised and operational from April 2017.

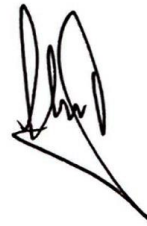
Both Trusts are committed firmly to acting only in the best interests of our patients and this will be the deciding factor in discussions and in decision-making. Additionally, the merger process involves rigorous due diligence to ensure that proposals are appropriate to meet the needs of patients, staff and both organisations. In the meantime, it remains "business as usual" for both Trusts for the foreseeable future. Any proposed changes to services after a merger would be subject to appropriate consultation with those affected.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



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**Cc: Local Authority and CCG Commissioners**