



# University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire

NHS Trust

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For the Attention of:  
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Dear Ms Edwards

## **Rugby Local Plan Examination (Matter 3, Issue 3a, Questions 1d and 1g)**

I write on behalf of University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust in connection with the examination into the Rugby Local Plan.

The University Hospital is located close to west of Rugby Borough's boundary within the Walsgrave area of Coventry. As the hospital forms part of one of the largest NHS Trusts in the country, its catchment serves the far wider conurbation, including Rugby Borough. It is important to emphasise that the decisions made on the Rugby Borough Local Plan are likely to have a significant impact on the future operation of the hospital.

### **University Hospital – Current Situation:**

The hospital has an increasing accessibility problem and the hope was that the Rugby Borough emerging plan would help alleviate this important issue. Despite having over 1,000 beds for inpatients, an average of 3,000 daily outpatient appointments and one of the largest A&E units in the region, the hospital is reliant on a single and only access road coming off Clifford Bridge Road, within the suburbs of Coventry. Over time we have invested in a significant internal road network, a number of internal car parks and a bus interchange covering 14 routes, however these facilities and the local road network often struggle to cope with the daily traffic requirements. Given the longer term Sustainable Transformation Programme strategy across the health economy, it is anticipated that the volume of activity at the University Hospital will only increase going forward.

The Accident and Emergency service relies heavily upon the local road network to get patients to the hospital safely. Blue light vehicles typically get caught in the congestion on surrounding roads which has severe implications for getting patients who are in urgent need of care to the hospital. This congestion causes delays getting staff to work and causes frustration and stress for patients. The hospital's car parks and internal road systems are heavily used and become congested throughout the day, from early morning until evening hours. This again affects emergency and routine access to the hospital and causes missed appointments.

A planning application will soon be submitted to Coventry City Council for a new staff car park. This will help to address some of the car parking and congestion problems within the hospital grounds. It will not, however, address the single point of entry issue that can become congested at peak times affecting blue light access to the site.



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**How the Local Plan Can Solve the Problem:**

In the 2015 Preferred Options version of the Plan, Rugby Borough stated they were going to progress a development known as Walsgrave Hill to the east of the A46. This development would in turn lead to significant improvements to the Walsgrave roundabout on the A45, which would allow the hospital to benefit from a new emergency access point directly from the dual carriageway. The hospital considers this infrastructure investment to be vital to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of hospital services.

I am aware that Coventry City Council has also made provision for a 900 homes within its Local Plan between the hospital and the proposed Walsgrave development. As part of that, there is an obligation to deliver the new emergency access referred to. There is also a requirement to work with Highways England to deliver a Grade Separated Junction to the A46. However this land has benefited from a housing allocation for many years but has never been developed. This strongly suggests that this allocation is not able to afford the road improvements and a larger development is needed to make the works affordable.

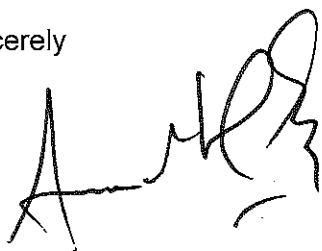
I have recently met with Roxhill Developments, who intend to bring forward the Walsgrave Hill Farm site comprehensively on the east (Rugby Borough) and west (Coventry City) of the A46. Roxhill has advised me that the Grade Separated Junction and blue light access will come forward promptly as part of that mixed use development. To make sure this happens, we need to ensure that the land to the east of the A46 is allocated within Rugby's Local Plan for employment and housing development.

**Conclusions:**

I am extremely concerned that Rugby Borough has removed Walsgrave Hill from the draft Local Plan as it does not appear that due consideration has been given in relation to the impact on the construction of the blue light access to the University Hospital site. The new road and car parking infrastructure are essential to the safe and efficient access to the hospital. A direct and fast blue light vehicle route between the A46 and the hospital needs to be prioritized as this will have a significant benefit in the ability to continue to provide safe and efficient patient care.

In order to ensure that the new infrastructure is delivered without delay, it is requested that the Local Plan be amended to allocate the land to the east of the A46 for housing and employment purposes and that the Planning Policy related to this allocation be worded to secure essential highway improvements to the A46, and between the A46 and the hospital. These comments relate specifically to Questions 1d and 1g, which asks about the development strategy and how the merits of allocating the Walsgrave Hill Farm site compared with other sites.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Andrew Hardy**  
**Chief Executive Officer**