

P-05-1018 Support for the current proposed plans to build a new Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff, in any future inquiry, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 05.09.20

Comments regarding the Petition: Support for the current proposed plans to build a New Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff, in any future enquiry.

I would like to comment that a supporter Facebook group in favour of the New VCC build in Whitchurch was set up less than two weeks ago and has had over 16600 supporters coming forward in this short time to voice their agreement in favour of this new build Cancer Centre in Whitchurch . This group is growing each day.

Whitchurch is Velindre's Home and has been for the past 63 years. The site proposed belongs to CAVHB and is not a public amenity.

The petition calling for the government to support the current proposed plans has gathered 10000 signatures to date in just a few days. It is worth noting that this petition was unable to run for the full 30 days but could only run for approximately ten days.

Nevertheless, in this short time there are almost treble the number of signatures compared to that from the campaigner's petition calling for an independent review which ran for at least thirty days ended up with far less signatures.

I think that speaks volumes in terms of support for the new VCC in Whitchurch. We all wish for the new VCC build in Whitchurch to progress quickly with no delay.

The Campaigners are calling for an independent inquiry into the choice of site for the proposed new VCC. If this petition is upheld this could delay the build. We know there is now an urgency for the new build as the existing footprint is too small for the number of patients requiring services. (Information obtained from the Mick Button Video produced by VCC) We also know that the access to the cancer centre does cause traffic disruption for Whitchurch and causes anxiety and stress for patients attending the cancer centre. (Feedback from our Facebook Group) The new VCC, which is a welsh government commitment, in Whitchurch developed on the new site would increase the footprint and significantly enhance the access for patients and staff and additionally improve the traffic for Whitchurch.

One of the major benefits of the new development would be to achieve an environment of embracing health and nature.

I would also like to point out that the Petition by the campaigners calling to Hold an independent inquiry into the choice of site states:

“£30M would be spent on roads alone to access the land“

This is not true. People have signed a petition containing false information.

The figure is 26.9M and covers the cost of improving the access with two bridges, highways, bringing utilities to the site and site preparation. This information has been given out via social media and in answers to questions by VCC.

The campaigners are also calling for the model to be scrutinised claiming that a standalone cancer centre is outdated. This information has been put into the public domain by a handful of clinicians. These clinicians are speaking in opposition to their own LHBs who agree with the new VCC plan.

They refer to a report from NHS England relating to the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre that highlights specific actions and recommendations regarding failings. That certain elements of that report have been cherry picked and are being used to challenge not only the new VCC build but also the existing services provided by the cancer centre. It is extremely worrying that some of these claims are being made on the VCC Facebook group, which would cause anxiety to current patients. I have noticed nurses commenting for people to be kind.

Having read the Mount Vernon report it was identified that the problems arose from staffing issues which in turn affected training and education, which in turn affected the quality of care which was highlighted in the inspection report where improvements were required. In respect of the VCC inspection report by Health Inspectorate Wales last year the services provided safe and effective care. The report found no issues with staffing levels and education and training at VCC.

In addition, they refer to the Beatson Cancer Centre and a report from 2015 which highlighted concerns regarding patient's safety. This hospital is on an acute site and issues occurred regarding the management of acutely unwell patients. Again, this is not aligned to VCC.

Both the Mount Vernon report and the Beatson report indicate management failings and are not about a standalone cancer centre. Again, their petition should not be upheld calling for an independent review of VCC. Velindre Cancer Centre has never had any such problems in the last 60 Years.

The Campaigners previous suggestions of building on a brownfield site or on Whitchurch hospital also contradicts their latest objection that the hospital model type is wrong and should be questioned as that also would have been a stand-alone centre should it have been built on one of these previous suggestions. However, all the suggestions point to the same thing – that the land should not be built on in the opinion of the campaigners.

Our petition calls on the government to support and back VCC plans and to swiftly assist them to build this much needed New Cancer Centre as soon as possible on the CAVHB land in Whitchurch.

Please take the time to look on our Supporters of the New Velindre Cancer Centre in Whitchurch Facebook group and you will see that the patients and their families all hold VCC and its incredibly special staff in the highest regard. The experience of VCC whether a happy or sad outcome all praise VCC. The personal touch that is described would not be found in a larger hospital. Another theme I have noted is that the patients and their families have a sense of " we are all in this together" whilst fighting this awful disease when entering Velindre. This would not be found in a larger hospital as suggested UHW which has deemed unfit for purpose in 2019.

Healing Architecture which has been thoroughly researched has found that there are significant health benefits to patients in terms of recovery times when in surroundings with trees etc. This environment would not only benefit the patients but their families as well. To take a breath and to take in the outdoor surroundings of a beautiful garden or the wind blowing through the trees I believe would make such a difference at such moments when the effects of the treatment and the psychological impact becomes challenging.

Such an environment would also be a benefit to staff who may need to take a moment with such an emotional job.

It would also allow members of the public including the campaigners to enjoy 60 % of this area in addition with the benefit of well-maintained surroundings at one with Nature.

The patients, some of the most vulnerable in some South East Wales are unable to choose their surroundings for Chemo or Radiotherapy so this would benefit them so much. Whereas non patients can choose one of the many areas available locally such as the Glamorganshire canal, Taff trail to name but a few to walk on to help with their emotional wellbeing or they even have the choice to drive somewhere else. Patients do not.

As there will be 60 % of the meadow remaining, we will all be able to co-exist whilst providing a Cancer Centre of Excellence - with the aim to be the greenest hospital in Britain.

Please consider and uphold our petition for the Majority of South East Wales.

1 in 3 of us will get cancer in our lifetime. Please assist VCC to move swiftly with their plans and help save multiple lives.