

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Matt Boughton

**Borough Councillor for East
Peckham, West Peckham,
Mereworth and Wateringbury**

Leader of The Council

26 May 2023

Richard Hall
CEO
Trenport

Dear Richard

As you are aware the ongoing difficulties residents in villages on the east bank of the River Medway around Eccles, Burham, Peters Village and Wouldham face in accessing a GP is of deep concern to myself, local Councillors and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

I have been working alongside Tracey Crouch MP and recently we met with Paul Bentley, NHS Kent and Medway Chief Executive, to pursue our shared concerns further and establish how to expedite development of the medical centre at Peters Village, on land Trenport owns. We have heard back from Paul following his meeting with you last week, that followed his letter of 6 April 2023.

It is following this meeting that I am writing to you today, and placing this letter in the public domain. It was incredibly disappointing to read that Trenport made clear that development of the medical centre at Peters Village is dependent on planning permission being granted for the Bushey Wood development in Eccles.

When Peters Village was first developed, provision of a medical facility was key to its viability as a development option for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council at the time. Indeed the Council has continued to repeatedly offer support and assistance to Trenport, and various NHS organisations, to find a solution to this impasse. We maintain our longstanding belief that medical facilities ought to be developed in Peters Village, alongside the other facilities that have been delivered and that residents who moved into the development would expect.

Phoenix Medical Practice have also been working with Assura to progress options since they have been forced to close their patient list due to lack of available capacity at the current surgeries in Eccles and Burham. I would be interested to know what discussions have taken place with Assura to establish whether Trenport would be able to willing to develop the facility elsewhere on sites that it is able to do so in or around Peters Village?

May I take the opportunity to remind you that the determination of the application at Bushey Wood relates to the extended proposals for the medical centre should

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permission be granted, and not the principle of a medical centre being developed in that location. Indeed Trenport have submitted applications for various iterations of a medical centre at Peters Village over recent years and discussions and progress could have continued about this, in parallel with any separate conversation regarding extended provision at Bushey Wood in the eventuality development happened here.

During the many planning applications submitted by Trenport for schemes in Peters Village, and latterly at Bushey Wood, the Council has sought to work efficiently and effectively with Trenport. Where there are issues raised or escalated we have responded to them as quickly as we can. All applications submitted in these locations are complex, especially one the size of Bushey Wood. It is why the Council has sought to work through issues methodically and in detail, as it should.

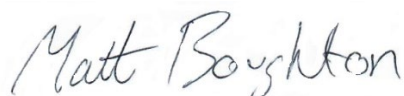
Ultimately Trenport has made the decision to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate for non-determination of the application at Bushey Wood. It is not a decision that we supported you taking, as I am firm in the belief that you have deliberately denied local representatives the opportunity to take the decision on whether to permit development or not. However, members of the Area 3 Planning Committee will shortly be meeting to determine what decision it would have taken in the event it was still the determining authority, and we will advise the Planning Inspectorate accordingly.

Finally, please can I reiterate the position of the Council on the principal matter of delivering a much needed and long overdue medical centre at Peters Village, as it is clear from your meeting with the NHS last week that this position has yet to be understood by Trenport.

We are firm in the belief that a medical centre must be delivered at Peters Village. The Council remains happy to commit officer time to supporting any discussions about planning and design aspects to facilitate this important infrastructure development, just as we have done for many years through the NHS as well. We will be proactive in our approach and support however we can. There is nothing stopping in principle discussions about delivering the medical centre in Peters Village – regardless of whether the Bushey Wood development happens or not.

I hope this is clear.

Best wishes



Matt Boughton
Borough Councillor, East Peckham, West Peckham, Mereworth and Wateringbury
Leader, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

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