HAROLD WOOD HOSPITAL SITE – THE FACTS

It has been brought to our attention that once again the RA councillor is stating that we did nothing about the development on the hospital site, in fact that we supported it. As usual this is totally untrue so here are some facts about what really happened.

- The land was owned by the NHS and sold to a private developer, Countryside; it was never ever owned by the Council or connected to the Council in any way.

- The cost was somewhere around £20+ million, it was suggested by the RA councillor that the Council buy it and turn it either into a country park or an old persons home. This would have raised the council tax of EVERY household in Havering by over 20+%

- The original application was for over a thousand properties with two tower blocks on Gubbins Lane forming a "gateway" to the site. Lesley and Pam worked with Countryside and planning officers to get the number of properties reduced and any high rise away from the frontage of Gubbins Lane, leaving what is now a very attractive entrance.

  The RA councillor organised a protest and got his picture in the paper!

- When this application was first applied for school numbers were falling rapidly in Havering and some primary, infant and junior schools were earmarked for closure. It was because of the predicted impact of the hospital site that the three schools in Harold Wood, Mead, Harold Court and Harold Wood, were left out of the programme of reduction. Pam and Lesley worked with officers from the Education dept who confirmed, at that time, that there would be adequate school places for all in Harold Wood.

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- Having only two doctors’ surgeries in Harold Wood was an issue with the development coming along so Pam and Lesley asked the NHS to come and visit Harold Wood as a possible site for one of the two polyclinics they were considering opening in the Borough. After several meetings the NHS agreed and the polyclinic was opened ensuring adequate medical facilities for Harold Wood.

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- There was never any point in trying to stop the development; it was a private transaction between the NHS and the developer. If planning permission had been refused, and there were not any valid reasons to do so, then it would more than likely been overturned on appeal. Particularly as the Mayor Boris Johnson was very keen on this as it helped to meet his housing targets for London. Therefore if the appeal had been won it would have been on the original application of 1000+ properties and the "gateway".

- We spoke against the density of dwellings at the Regulatory Services meeting.

- We felt we did the right thing in trying to get the best deal for Harold Wood, we may not have courted publicity as much as some but we did get a lot more done.