



15th September 2020

Dorset County Hospital's Planning Application at Committee Today

As the Member of Parliament, not just for Dorchester, but for the wider community across West Dorset, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of this proposed development. I, therefore, urge the Planning Committee to approve this planning application in order to enable the NHS to continue taking care of the many thousands of people in rural Dorset. Dorset County Hospital is not only used by my 100,000 constituents, but also those from further afield.

I understand that the officers are recommending this planning application for refusal. In the middle of a global pandemic, having just experienced the worst national health crisis in living memory, the local NHS needs our support more than ever.

It has been incredibly difficult for me and my colleagues to finally secure major Government investment into West Dorset. If this project is refused, the Council will, in effect, be pushing £62.5 million out of the county. As a former West Dorset District Councillor, myself, I find it difficult to reconcile that the Council could consider doing this.

As this application has been deferred on several occasions, there is an increasingly urgent need for development to begin. The Accident & Emergency Department at Dorset County Hospital was originally built for 22,000 attendances per year and is now seeing close to 50,000. There is an urgent need for expanded capacity.

Rural Dorset, like the whole country, is going through a period of recession. Aside from the healthcare benefits, the proposed construction will be a source of much needed employment for many in and around West Dorset, helping to stimulate the local economy.

We are fortunate to live in a democracy where democratically elected councillors have the final say on applications such as this. There have been, there are, and there will be residents in your wards whose lives depend on Dorset County Hospital; and Dorset County Hospital ultimately will depend on the works outlined within this application to meet the future needs of your residents. I cannot urge councillors enough to support this planning application from the Hospital.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Loder".

Chris Loder MP

Member of Parliament for West Dorset

Member of Parliament for West Dorset

chris.loder.mp@parliament.uk www.chrisloder.co.uk