



Dorothy Thornhill MBE – Elected Mayor of Watford

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Enquiries to

Phone no

Date

Dear Allotment tenant

Re: Farm Terrace Allotments – Watford Health Campus

I am writing to you about the possible impact of the Watford Health Campus Development on the Farm Terrace / Cardiff Road allotment site and how this may also affect you and your allotment.

As you may be aware, the Watford Health Campus is a unique partnership (involving the council, the Football Club and West Herts Hospital NHS Trust (WHHT)) whose vision is to regenerate a 26.4 hectare site in West Watford by consolidating existing investment plans into a major regeneration project. This will deliver improved health facilities, a more sustainable community, better transport links and enhanced leisure opportunities for the local community as well as the wider area. Currently, much of the land is poorly used, but through careful design, this can be transformed into a quality environment in which to live, work and play. When completed, the Health Campus will include:

- New hospital facilities to replace the existing Watford General Hospital. It is the current expectation that these facilities will be delivered in phases;
- New housing and neighbourhood centre;
- Retail and employment space; and
- Enhanced green infrastructure with improved access to the River Colne.

It is an extremely important project for Watford but, as you may have been aware, securing funding and creating a Campus masterplan that is deliverable has been extremely challenging. The plans developed in 2007 due to the current economic climate have had to be re-visited.

The council and WHHT are now at an important stage in the project development and have short-listed two potential developers to deliver this important project.

The developers have formally asked WBC to consider the option of utilising some, or all, of the Farm Terrace site for the Campus.

The developers have outlined that the Campus will greatly benefit from additional land near the hospital, which will improve design and the viability of the project. They are proposing that allotment space can be re-provided elsewhere in the borough with better facilities. Many of you will remember that this was raised as an issue several years ago and it has always been a possibility. We had hoped to avoid this but the economic viability of the scheme in a recession has opened this up again for debate.

The council is still in discussion with developers as to how the masterplan can be developed in the most cost effective and efficient way that will deliver maximum return for Watford and its residents.

The council will be reviewing progress to date on the Health Campus at its next Cabinet meeting on 18 June 2012 and how the masterplan may impact the Farm Terrace site. We are, however, asking the council to consider all the options, including the possibility of relocating some or all of the allotment land. The relevant Cabinet report is attached for your information.

If the Cabinet agree to the option being considered further, we would work with existing tenants and the wider allotment community in Watford in developing the proposals.

What I can promise you is that no decision has yet been made and we will work with tenants, the local Allotment Society, council officers and the National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Ltd to ensure an outcome that is, hopefully, acceptable to all. If the allotments are displaced, by law the council has to provide suitable allotment provision elsewhere for existing allotment tenants directly affected. There are also potential benefits for allotment users across the town through investment opportunities this regeneration project may bring to improve allotment sites overall.

We don't yet have all the answers, but we will keep you informed and involved throughout, what I am sure, will be a challenging time. The other issue is that the allotments will be impacted through the construction phase and access will be affected so this will need discussion with users as well.

This is a basic outline of where we are and we wanted to alert you to the current situation. The Campus and Council team will hold a formal meeting to plan the way forward once we have more to report if the options are to be developed further and we will keep in touch so that everyone is kept up-to-date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorothy Thornhill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Dorothy" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and the surname "Thornhill" is written below it, also in a cursive style.

Dorothy Thornhill MBE
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