



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
ALEXANDER FLEMING HOUSE
ELEPHANT AND CASTLE LONDON SE1 6BY
TELEPHONE 01-407 5522 EXT

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

27 May 1981

Dear Mike

THE LOW ENERGY HOSPITAL

You ask what weight was given to levels of unemployment in areas where the low energy hospital might be built.

All things being equal we would obviously go for development in an area of high unemployment, but decisions on the building of new hospitals must take account of medical need and the relative priority afforded to the scheme. Each of the fourteen Regional Health Authorities, in association with its Area Health Authorities, is responsible for determining priorities for building schemes within its Region. The role of the Department, in general, is to satisfy itself on the need for any development scheme (and its content and cost) which exceeds £2 million in value.

The low energy hospital is a Departmental prototype and it has been necessary for us to consult the Regional Authorities on possible schemes which met the fairly tight technical criteria we required and which did not unduly distort agreed Regional capital allocations. After a full investigation we were left with only two possibilities and these are being considered.

While recognising the obvious advantages of building in an area of high unemployment we would be reluctant to force a scheme on an Authority which did not meet the requirements of the patients concerned or which was of a low service priority.

Yours ever

Mary McVerry

MARY MCVERRY
Private Secretary

FILE

VLB

Nax Health

BF 11-6-81

28 May 1981

We had a word on the telephone this morning about Mary McVerry's letter to me of 27 May.

As I said to you, I should be grateful for more background information about the Low Energy Hospital proposal. The first the Prime Minister had heard of this was in a discussion about a factory closure with Stephen Ross MP. Mr. Ross said that local officials had been optimistic that Newport, Isle of Wight, would be chosen as the site for the Low Energy Hospital, but that this now appeared to have gone wrong. He understood Sunderland might be in mind now.

The Prime Minister would be interested to know more about this project, if it is indeed one for central decision. She is in no way pressing for the Isle of Wight option, but would simply like to be aware of any impending major investment decision which is likely to be the source of some controversy whatever site is eventually chosen.

M A PATTISON

Mike Tully, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.

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The Press

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522
From the Minister for Health

Prime Minister

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

14 July 1981

M.P. 15/7/81

ms

Dear Mike,

You asked in your letter of 28 May to Mike Tully to be kept in touch with progress on our Low Energy Hospital project. As you know, for some time the United Kingdom has been one of the World's leaders in advanced hospital design and a joint Government and private sector consortium unveiled plans last year to build the first-ever low energy hospital. We think it possible to construct a hospital that would use less than half the energy of the best modern hospitals now in existence without in any way lessening the standards of care for patients.

Because of the importance of maintaining our lead in this field of technological development, Dr Vaughan has now decided that two low energy hospitals should be built in a continuing programme spread over several years. This will enable differing technologies to be tested, valuable comparisons to be made, and allow lessons to be learnt by experience as we proceed. One of the new hospitals will be in the North of England in the Sunderland area, on a site still to be determined. The other will be at Newport, Isle of Wight and building will start there in 1983. There were major presentational difficulties in proceeding only in the South of England and there are political as well as technical advantages in going for two projects.

Detailed design work is already under way and the cost of the hospitals will mainly be met by the health authorities concerned out of their normal allocations. DHSS are providing central design assistance and paying the design fees for the first of the two projects; the EEC are making a contribution towards the costs of the special technological features and monitoring that will be a necessary part of the demonstration.

I should stress that both the Newport and Sunderland Hospitals were due for development anyway so little "new" money is involved in the experiment. We now intend however that the two hospitals should be a showcase for British technology and design.

A public announcement about the two hospitals will be made very shortly and we are, of course, arranging suitable publicity.

Yours sincerely
Jeremy Knight

J E KNIGHT
Private Secretary

16 JUL 1981



FILE

VLB

15 June 1981

Thank you for your letter of 5 June,
about the low energy hospital.

B/P/
The Prime Minister was grateful to have
this information, and would like to be kept
informed as decisions are reached.

M A PATTISON *e*

Mrs. Mary McVerry,
Department of Health and Social Security.



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MB

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Stephen Ross mentioned to you
the plan for an experimental low
energy hospital.

Here is some more background
information about the project.
It seems that the Isle of Wight
is the front runner as the site.

MA

8 June 1981



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
ALEXANDER FLEMING HOUSE
ELEPHANT AND CASTLE LONDON SE1 6BY
TELEPHONE 01-407 5522 EXT

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

5 June 1981

Dear Mike

THE LOW ENERGY HOSPITAL

In your letter of 28 May you ask for more background information.

As you know the Government's policy is to encourage the maximum conservation of energy resources. Hospitals are major users of energy and we have been able to achieve savings in energy of the order of 20 per cent by various means of conservation. It was decided to investigate the possibility of further savings and consultants were commissioned to investigate the problem in depth. The results of the study were very promising, up to 50 per cent savings in energy could be made in new hospitals, and it was decided to go ahead to the next stage - the building of a prototype hospital which will incorporate the findings of the consultant team. We are calling this the Low Energy Hospital. Ministers have not yet made up their minds about the best site but it looks as though the Isle of Wight may well be the choice.

Dr Vaughan announced the project last October and you will see from the attached Press release that funds of about £³/₄ million are being made available by the EEC. We think that the project has commercial potential and recently shared a stand with the Department of Energy and the London Chamber of Commerce at the "Energy 81" exhibition at Essen to demonstrate the project as part of our Export drive and as a flag-waving demonstration of the UK lead in energy technology. UK manufacturers of engineering equipment were also represented.

I also attach a brochure which explains the technical aspects in rather more detail.

Yours ever

Mary McVerry

MARY McVERRY (MRS)
Private Secretary

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