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Date: Friday, 01 August 2014



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Mr Steve Shrubb  
Chief Executive  
West London Mental Health NHS Trust  
1 Armstrong Way  
Southall  
UB2 4SA

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Wokingham Borough Council  
P.O. Box 151  
Shute End, Wokingham  
Berkshire RG40 1WH  
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991

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Dear Mr Shrubb,

## **BROADMOOR HOSPITAL SIRENS**

At its meeting on 28 July 2014, the Wokingham Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee discussed the proposals of the West London Mental Health Trust to decommission and not replace some of the sirens in areas surrounding Broadmoor Hospital, including sirens located within the Wokingham Borough.

The Committee acknowledged the significant improvements in security made since the 1990's and the current redevelopment of the Broadmoor site which would further reduce the risk of an escape. However, the Committee had the following particular concerns:

- That it was disappointed on the information available to it, that principal local authorities did not appear to have been formally consulted about the proposals;
- That the school cascading system could not be effective in the event of schools being closed, (for instance in the case of the schools being closed through industrial action) and that relying on such a system would not be as quick in notifying residents of an escape as a simple audible signal;
- That despite the improvements in security on the Broadmoor site, it was the Committee's understanding that at least one past escape had occurred whilst a patient had been on a supervised visit away from the hospital site and therefore outside the scope of physical site security arrangements. In this scenario, it was the Committee's view that the sirens still represented the best way to quickly alert the maximum number of residents possible of an escape;
- The Committee was mindful of the Trust's obligation to spend public money wisely in considering whether to upgrade the sirens. However, it was the Committee's firm view that the £201,000 difference in cost between the replacement of all 13 sirens or £183,000 replacement of the 6 sirens closest to the hospital was a relatively small amount of money when balanced against

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the real need to maintain public confidence and risk of tragedy, (however small that risk might be). It also noted that the cost needed to be put in the wider context of the £252 million pound redevelopment of the hospital site.

The Committee would also like to fully endorse the similar and other concerns which it understands have already been expressed to the Trust regarding the proposal by the Bracknell Forest Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission, following its consideration of the proposals on 10 July 2014 and support its request that you reconsider the proposals.

Yours sincerely,

*T A Holton*

Councilor Tim Holton  
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Copies to:

Andy Couldrick, Chairman of the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Keith Baker, Leader of Wokingham Borough Council

John Hourihan, Director of Security, Broadmoor Hospital.

Councillor Ian Leake, Chairman Bracknell Forest Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission.