PRESS RELEASE

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St George’s decide not to proceed with merger process

St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust have informed us and our strategic authority, NHS London, that they cannot proceed with their bid to merge with St Helier and Sutton hospitals.

Throughout the process St George’s have been very positive about the strategic opportunity to merge and the benefits this could bring to patients.

However, due to the financial challenges facing hospitals in south west London and the inability to pre-empt the outcome of the Better Services Better Value review, which is looking at how NHS services are provided across south west London, they do not feel able to proceed at this time.

This is because the review, which will be open to public consultation, could have a significant impact on the financial income of all hospitals involved.

St George’s have however expressed a full commitment to working closely with St Helier and Sutton hospitals in the future.

Jan Sawkins is the Independent Chair of the special Board set up to help St Helier, Sutton and Epsom hospitals to achieve foundation trust status. She said: “Whilst we have always been aware that a bidder could withdraw during the process, at this stage in the transaction it is obviously very disappointing news.

“The Transaction Board has a meeting scheduled next week (7 February 2012) and we will use this to consider the options and agree a way forward. This may include re-opening tenders for St Helier and Sutton hospitals.”
Matthew Hopkins, Trust Chief Executive said: “This is disappointing news, but St George’s have been clear to us that their decision is not based on our staff, nor the quality of the services we provide at St Helier and Sutton hospitals.

“As you would expect, the Trust Board and those working on the transaction have been looking at other options in case this happened and we look forward to discussing these with the Transaction Board next week.

“Whilst we are making decisions about the long-term future of our hospitals, our priority will – as ever – continue to be ensuring our patients and local people receive the very best services.”

Asked what this means for Epsom Hospital, Jan added: “It is the current belief that, subject to Ashford and St Peter’s Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust being confirmed as the Preferred Partner for Epsom Hospital, the de-merger could continue whilst we make alternative arrangements for St Helier and Sutton.

“Whilst this would, of course, need further investigation and approval by the Transaction Board, the Trust Board and others, it is felt that this would be in the best interest of Epsom Hospital, its patients, staff and local people.

“However, I would emphasise that the priority remains to secure the future of Epsom, St Helier and Sutton hospitals.”

For more information about the work of the Trust visit our website: www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk. You can also follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/epsom_sthelier) or find us on Facebook (facebook.com/epsomst helier).

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Note for Editors

1. For more information, please contact Oliver Wilkinson, Communications Manager, in the Trust’s communications department on tel: 020 8296 2406 or email oliver.wilkinson@esth.nhs.uk. Out of hours, please call 07975 232 380.

2. Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust is a large acute trust serving South West London and Surrey. The Trust is made up of Epsom, St Helier and Sutton hospitals and provides around 700,000 patient contacts every year. The Trust is one of the largest employers locally, with around 5,000 staff.

3. The Trust offers an extensive range of services, including cancer, immunology, sexual health, women’s and dermatology services. St Helier Hospital is also home to the South West Thames Renal and Transplantation Unit and the Queen Mary’s Hospital for Children, whilst Epsom Hospital is home to the Elective Orthopaedic Centre (EOC). Both Epsom and St Helier hospitals have Accident & Emergency departments.

4. As teaching hospitals, the Trust plays a key role in the education and training of tomorrow’s doctors, nurses and other health professionals. We work in partnership with St George’s Hospital and St George’s Medical School in south London to deliver high quality education and research. Outside St George’s Hospital, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust supports the education of the greatest number of medical students than any other teaching hospital in south London.

5. The Trust’s website features a wealth of information for the public and patients, as well as journalists and the media. Designated sections include: latest news, the Trust’s strategy for the future, a full A-Z of all clinical services and our performance. Visit www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk for more information. You can also follow the Trust on Twitter: twitter.com/epsom_sthelier, and on Facebook: facebook.com/epsomsthelier.