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All systems go! – Plans for new South Bristol Community Hospital agreed

NHS Bristol is today able to announce that the business case for the new state of the art community hospital to be built at Hengrove Park in Bristol has been approved by the Department of Health.

With the successful completion of this, the final stage in the approval process, the project can now proceed to contract signing and financial close, which is planned for February 2010. Construction of the hospital will commence within a few weeks of financial close.

With building work scheduled to take 24 months it is estimated that the first patients will begin to be treated in early 2012.

NHS Bristol chief executive Deborah Evans said: "I am delighted that the final approval for the hospital has now been granted. It has been a long process and it is exciting that we can now move forwards. It is clear that this hospital marks real progress in transforming the way we can provide health care to people, particularly in the south of Bristol."

The new hospital will provide people in south Bristol local access to a range of services including: diagnostic tests; walk-in care for minor illness and injury; booked appointments with hospital consultants and other specialists; an '8am to 8pm' GP service; a day surgical treatment centre and an integrated community rehabilitation service with inpatient beds.

The £54million hospital will be developed by Bristol Infracare LIFT, a public-private partnership established by NHS Bristol in 2004. The LIFT company, which has already provided four new health centres across Bristol, has assembled an experienced design and construction team led by Carillion and local architects AWW.

Mark Nebel, chief executive of Bristol Infracare LIFT said: "With this final hurdle cleared it is full speed ahead to pull together the various legal and commercial paperwork that will be required to seal the deal. We have already done the majority of this work in anticipation of this approval and we have been able to select the preferred bank for financing the project in the last few days."

A public consultation on the proposals was undertaken in 2004 and, throughout this process, local people signalled their strong support for a new facility to provide local services which will replace the outdated facilities at the 19th Century Bristol General Hospital.

Local MP Dawn Primarolo said: "This decision is great news. It means that the NHS in Bristol will finally deliver on its promise to provide people in south Bristol with the local hospital services for which they have campaigned for so long. Once contracts are signed

in the new year we can look forward to seeing the building work begin and the dream will finally become a reality.”

The development of a new health facility in South Bristol is part of a wider strategy to improve health services for people across Bristol and in neighbouring areas which includes the development of easy to access Walk-In centres in the centre and Knowle, five new dental surgeries throughout the city, new GP surgeries in Broadmead and more.