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## Redbridge councillors raise concerns about new Whipps Cross



By [Victoria Munro @vicky\\_afm](#) Local Democracy Reporter



Whipps Cross Hospital. Leytonstone. (14/1/2013) EL74569\_3.

### ***Fewer beds at new Whipps Cross 'may mean more needed at King George', councillor warns***

Reducing the number of beds at the new Whipps Cross Hospital could mean more are required at the nearby King George Hospital, a Redbridge councillor has warned.

Members of the council's health scrutiny committee met on November 5 to discuss plans to rebuild the hospital in Leytonstone, which are strongly supported by Waltham Forest Council.

A report released in September by Barts Health NHS Trust, which runs Whipps Cross Hospital, explained the new building [would have around 50 fewer beds](#), despite the growing population.

However, some Redbridge councillors were dubious of the trust's insistence it could reduce the number of beds by improving care in the community and speeding up treatment.

They feared it would put pressure on King George Hospital, which is run by Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals Trust.

**[Read more: \*More than 50 Covid deaths confirmed by east London hospitals last week\*](#)**

Cllr Neil Zammett (Lab, Goodmayes) said: "All this stuff about shifting care into the community, I do have my doubts. Primary care, in Redbridge in particular, is under huge stress.

"If there are 51 fewer beds at Whipps Cross, that probably means we are going to need 51 new beds at King George Hospital."

He added: "For some of us, who have been around a while, this is probably the fourth time we have looked at a potential redevelopment on the site."

Barts Health Trust's medical director Heather Noble responded that the design will be "flexible enough" to allow more beds to be added when necessary.

She insisted that the trust's projections for how many beds it will need are based on "planning", rather than "optimism", and that they have already reduced the number of occupied beds.

**[Read more: \*King George Hospital criticised for 'knee-jerk' decision to close services\*](#)**

She said: "We used to have a lot of patients in the hospital who did not need to be there. It used to be around 70 to 80 and now it's about 20.

"This is a sustainable change over the past five months that immediately has given us 30 to 50 beds in some places.

"We have also completely separated elective and emergency care, which has been an aspiration of ours for many, many years.

"This year we got an entirely separate wing and, though we have had bed pressures, we have managed to maintain that and bring through 50 patients a day."

The trust's redevelopment programme director Alastair Finney added: "It was never our plan to grow Whipps Cross larger and larger.

"It's about preserving the status quo in terms of catchment area but increasingly working together. We are not an island."