

There is clearly widespread concern regarding the decision to allow Virgin Healthcare to take over Community Care Services in Bath and North East Somerset.

With £500 million of public money set to be entrusted to a largely commercial organisation, we need to ensure that the best value for taxpayers' money is at the core of this decision. A substantial number of the public feel there are many unanswered questions and wonder if the Cabinet have thoroughly considered their objections and concerns regarding this contract?

The previous consultation appears to have been very limited, and with widespread opposition to our local health services being handed to a private company- it is crucial that the concerns of people across B&NES are heard and taken seriously.

It is unknown how Virgin would co-ordinate with other providers to provide a 'seamless' service. For example how will Sirona feature? Which services will Sirona retain and which will go to Virgin Healthcare?

How would Virgin coordinate with other providers, particularly in relation to elderly residents at risk of residential care if community support doesn't enable them to live independently? It is also unknown whether there has been any risk assessment of the impact on Council budgets regarding the possible increased need for residential care.

And how will Virgin manage increasing patient demand within the constraints of the contract's budget?

All these serious questions need answering before the Council gambles with Community Care Services.

I ask the Cabinet to please provide the public with answers, and consider the potential impacts before finalising this contract with Virgin Healthcare.