

# PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE: 8

## Letter from Simon Laffin, Non-Executive Chairman



Welcome to the latest edition of Property Matters, in which we explore the positive strides being made by Assura within modern primary care property.

Following the vote to leave the EU we are approaching a time of great change, which also means great opportunity – something healthcare should be keen to embrace.

This edition of Property Matters explores the reality of providing a zero carbon & zero energy primary care premises building, such as our new development in West Gorton, Manchester. More details of this scheme can be found on page 2.

We were very proud to have been named 'Property Investor of the Year' at the 2016 HealthInvestor Awards. The accolade comes after a significant year of growth and the addition of 86 primary care premises to our portfolio since we announced our results in 2015.

Looking forward, we will continue to provide our partners, GPs and communities with the modernised healthcare facilities needed to help drive change within the sector.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Property Matters and hearing about our latest projects.

**Simon Laffin,**  
Non-Executive Chairman



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ZERO CARBON:

## ASSURA'S FIRST ZERO CARBON AND ZERO ENERGY PREMISES

As the leading developer in the healthcare sector Assura have been working to develop the concept of Zero Energy healthcare premises. Bringing together existing sustainable design practices and construction techniques the concept aims to deliver premises with negligible energy use, aiming to alleviate running costs for our tenants.

It is widely acknowledged that sustainable development must address climate change issues and reduce the amount of carbon produced in construction. The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive set a target of 2020 for all newly built premises to achieve nearly zero carbon status. Although the deadline is subject to fluctuation it is inevitable that such a target must be achieved in the medium term. As a responsible developer and founding member of the Social Stock Exchange Assura aims to be proactive in exceeding this target and in doing so provide added value to our tenants and shareholders.

We have brought together a team passionate about designing exemplar healthcare premises with a commitment to sustainability. The aim is to create bespoke premises that offer minimal running costs, flexibility to meet the changing demands of primary healthcare, and that offer users the ability to control and maintain environmental comfort within their building. The conceptual study analysed construction techniques and shortfalls in predicted/actual performance to develop a basic set of design principles that could be applied to new projects.

This has culminated in a design that is predicted to be zero carbon in use and work has recently started on site in West Gorton, Manchester with completion anticipated in July 2017. The GP surgery will form an integral part of a community hub providing GP, pharmacy and retail uses at the heart of the West Manchester regeneration area.

Julie Jefferson, practice manager at West Gorton Medical Centre, said: "It has been an important year for Manchester's health and community services, with 2016 expected to bring further transformative decisions for the city.

*"We are looking forward to improving the quality of facilities available in West Gorton, and to strengthening our existing relationships with other local care providers to establish a supportive professional care network."*

## SIZE MATTERS:

### REMAKE, REMODEL

With an ever increasing and ageing population, patient list sizes are inevitably becoming larger and space within surgeries can be at a premium even in premises that are in other aspects fit for purpose.

In such cases, attention can be turned to the existing buildings to improve, remodel or even extend with a view to maximising the use of the current space.

Extending existing buildings can be an effective option, but careful consideration is required. It is not uncommon that this impacts on the existing layout. For example, if the area of land to extend into is adjacent to a row of clinical rooms, then undoubtedly you have to gain access to the extended area via an existing consulting room. Subsequently, two new rooms need to be built to generate a net increase of one.

Invariably with the right professional team a solution can be found that is space efficient. For example; converting existing

consulting rooms into extended waiting areas to serve a new suite of clinical rooms. Ultimately, care and attention is required when extending premises and a professional team who can bring a wealth of experience from working with practices in similar situations can be invaluable, particularly in ensuring the surgery can continue to run with the minimum disruption whilst the works are underway. The benefits realised, in a fresh, spacious and coherent medical facility, are readily appreciated by patients and staff alike.

Where expansion possibilities are limited, a remodelling of the internal space may be an option. This may involve freeing up underutilised space by refurbishing non-clinical rooms to meet current infection control standards so they can be used for a range of clinical uses. With careful analysis of the existing space and through good design, more efficient working practices and better patient flow can be achieved.

**If you think your premises could benefit from an extension or remodelling, please call our development team on 01925 420660 to chat through your options.**



# LIFE AFTER LOSS:



## SUPPORT AND FRIENDSHIP

Assura has made a donation to Life After Loss, a charity founded in 2006 that provides support and information to those who have been through the death of a baby at any stage of pregnancy, or early in life, for any reason.

Life After Loss believe that by offering support and friendship to each other, parents whose lives have been devastated by the loss of a baby can begin to heal. An integral part of the healing process is carried out on their online forum that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Assura's donation will be used to help fund the much needed purchase of a fetal heart monitor for the charity's base at Warrington Hospital. A fetal heart monitor can be used to pick up the baby's heart when there is noticeably less frequent movement. This will in turn help to reduce the number of late term pregnancy losses.

Assura will continue to support this highly valued charity going forward into 2017.

[www.lifeafterloss.org.uk](http://www.lifeafterloss.org.uk)

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Assura  
The Brew House  
Greenalls Avenue  
Warrington  
WA4 6HL

