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John Brassil TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 37188/19

“To ask the Minister for Health the position regarding the provision of a primary care centre in Rathmore, Co. Kerry; his plans to prioritise the provision of this service as a permanent location for general practitioner services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Brassil,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

As outlined in a number of policy documents (most recently the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy) it is Government policy to transfer activity currently taking place in the acute setting to a more appropriate setting in Primary Care. The development of a primary care centre infrastructure to support such a transfer of activity is essential. The HSE's commitment to the development of Primary Care Centres across the country is outlined in its Capital Development Plan. This plan primarily focuses on the development of primary care centres in areas with significant population numbers and aim to be a one stop shop providing a range of primary care team services such as GP's, Community Nursing, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech Therapists, Dieticians, Counsellors and in some cases dental and mental health services. They are primarily developed as public private partnership builds or as long term operational leases. All applications to progress any of these arrangements require the approval of the HSE's national property committee. The application process for such approval requires Cork Kerry Community Healthcare to identify the need for the development of such a facility in line with population health needs and the areas proximity to existing or planned primary care centres.

The stages involved in the development of a Primary Care Centre from inception to opening are as follows:

1. Expressions of interest sought
2. Applications assessed
3. Application to HSE Property Committee to approve
4. Letter of intent to proceed issued
5. Planning permission sought
6. Legal agreements finalised


7. Consultation with staff re layout
8. Build commences
9. Handover to HSE
10. Commissioning i.e. equipping, services, IT etc.
11. Phased opening

While the population accessing primary care services in the Rathmore area is significantly smaller than in other areas with an outreach GP service provided, management of Cork Kerry Community Healthcare made the decision to progress the development of a small primary care centre in Rathmore. This decision was taken in the context of the specific needs of the population, the poor HSE infrastructure in the area and the distance from planned larger primary care centres in Cork and Kerry. The HSE are currently discussing the required legal agreements for the development of this primary care centre at Rathmore with the developer and, once concluded, the project can progress to the next stage.

The development of all primary care centres is subject to GP commitment to provide a level of service from the centre and completion of the build to HSE specification

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa O' Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

