



**Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroibríochtaí**

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16<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Deputy Catherine Connolly,  
Dáil Éireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2**

*PQ: 19544/24 - To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No, 162 of 28 February 2024, for an update on the development of the new elective hospital in Merlin Park; if the architect led design team has been appointed to-date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

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Dear Deputy Connolly,

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

Since Government approval-in-principle of Gate 1 in December 2022, the HSE has undertaken significant work on the demand and clinical models which involved a thorough review of all modelling assumptions in terms of defining the size and scope of the Elective Hospitals in Galway and Cork and finalising the Summary Design briefs (including Schedules of Accommodation) with these updated demand models. This was essential to ensure that the scale of these new Hospitals will be able to meet a very significant proportion of the elective surgical activity for the regions and beyond. Detailed workshops also took place with the local and regional teams to review demand and clinical models particularly in terms of the newly established Regional Health Areas.

The HSE is in the final stages of procurement for a number of key teams, including:

1. Architect Lead Design Team (to provide architectural, design and engineering services)
2. Project Control Team (to support the HSE to manage, control and administer the design/construction programme)

The request for tender submissions for the above teams for Phase I of both Galway and Cork Elective Hospitals commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024. At this time and subject to successful procurement and HSE approvals, the aim is to have the Architect Lead Design Team and Project Control Team in place by Q3, 2024.

This tender process follows the completion of a preliminary qualification stage where interested parties responded to a Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ). The relevant invitation to

express interest in the projects was published on E-tenders in October 2023 and, in order to encourage optimal responses to Stage 2 Tender, the closing date for SAQ submissions was extended to January 2024. This important step was taken in response to feedback from key stakeholders, ensuring an inclusive procurement process that supports competition from both indigenous and international design teams, recognised market capacity and facilitated optimal design and construction approaches to the development of the new hospitals.

A range of workstreams have been mobilised to support the completion of a detailed design brief which will be necessary to inform the Design Team upon their appointment and to prepare the deliverables required to meet Approval Gate 2 of the Infrastructure Guidelines. Once appointed, the Architect Led Design Team will be tasked with developing the design in accordance with this brief. They will also assist the HSE in developing other project documents which will feed into the Project Brief which is required by DPER for Approval Gate 2 of the Infrastructure Guidelines.

Timelines will be refined as the projects develop and evolve, and in particular, on appointment of the Architect Led Design Team further analysis will be undertaken in terms of timelines for the hospitals in Galway and Cork to become operational.

The HSE is also addressing waiting lists in the shorter term by expediting the development of Surgical Hubs at locations across the country including in Galway. Detailed design is underway for the Galway Surgical Hub and, subject to planning permission, the Hub is due to be completed in Quarter 3, 2025.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely



**Helen Kelly**  
**General Manager**  
**Acute Operations**