

The Lord Warner
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
the Department of Health
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0HA

23 August 2004

Dear Lord Warner

The future of ProCure 21

Further to last month's announcement of the abolition of NHS Estates, I am writing to express concern at the possible impact this may have on the future of ProCure 21.

Be is an independent construction industry reform group. Our members are 100 leading edge clients, contractors, consultants, specialists and manufacturers from right across the demand and supply chain working together to achieve change in the delivery of the built environment. We are committed to the vision of a thriving leading edge industry ***delivering built environment solutions through collaborative working.***

With this vision in mind, in our view ProCure 21 is the single most important construction framework initiative in the UK construction industry. It is the leading example of collaborative working - its core requirements include supply chain integration, early involvement, innovation, value - and its lessons are thus vital for the future reform of the industry. It is already delivering significant savings in the time taken to build a hospital, and we expect to see further benefits through lower capital costs and higher quality hospitals. But we believe the big prizes will come from the process allowing the Be vision to be delivered in the health sector, that is to provide healthcare environments where patients get better more quickly and staff recruitment and retention are improved. ProCure 21 is a good start in this respect, but much remains to be done, and in abolishing NHS Estates you risk the baby being thrown out with the bathwater.

The cost of establishing the ProCure 21 framework has been high. Not just for the NHS but for the industry too, both for those bidding for the role of Principal Supply Chain Partner but also at second-tier level where many tens of firms have endured detailed and hence costly selection processes. We trust that in your decisions over the future of the roles formerly undertaken by NHS Estates you will not risk losing the value of this investment.

We look forward to reassurance from you that this vital initiative will be safeguarded, and we would be very pleased to meet with you or officials to discuss our views. I am copying this letter to Nigel Griffiths, the Construction Minister.

Yours sincerely

Don Ward
Chief Executive

Copy to Nigel Griffiths, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry