

**Press release**

**10.09.07**

### **Developments for Better Healthcare Closer to Home**

The Better Healthcare Closer to Home programme has released its latest update report to stakeholders, to inform them of progress made since June. Work has continued on the proposals for the location of the General Hospital, the local care centres and Epsom hospital.

There are three main areas of progress:

#### **1. General Hospital**

We have received a report demonstrating that a totally new built hospital on either the Sutton or St Helier sites now looks to be unaffordable under the NHS capital regime. The margin of unaffordability is such that there is no prospect of bridging the gap.

We have also looked at a mixed new build and refurbishment option at St Helier, moving most bed and outpatient facilities into a new building replacing Fergusson House, and upgrading the main building. The cost of this option would be less than new build, and while there is still an affordability gap, it is much less than other options we have looked at.

We are not commissioning further work on the new build options for the general hospital and we are concentrating on coming up with the right solution for improving St Helier hospital. This would need to be phased and have a number of elements: a short term investment of £1.45m to upgrade women and children's services; the development of a local care centre on the site (which would include outpatient services and a re-designed A&E department); and a new ward block within the affordability envelope we have established, subject to confirmation of its feasibility.

#### **2. Epsom Hospital**

Surrey Primary Care Trust has confirmed its intention to go to public consultation on its *Fit for the Future* programme in late September, subject to South East Coast Strategic Health Authority's quality assurance. As a result of the *Fit for the Future* acute commissioning intentions, Surrey PCT will not be formally consulting, at this point, on any changes at Epsom hospital.

At its recent board meeting, Surrey PCT took the decision to join the forthcoming London-wide consultation on Professor Sir Ara Darzi's report *Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action* which is expected to begin this November. The board took that decision to ensure that the views of Surrey residents, in particular those around the Epsom area, are heard in regard to London's healthcare services.

In parallel with the work being taken forward on *A Framework for Action* Surrey PCT, Sutton and Merton PCT and Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust have agreed to work together to develop options for changes to maternity and paediatrics on both sites, in an open and transparent way with staff, patients and members of the public.

### **3. Local Care Hospitals**

The four local care centres proposed at St Helier, Nelson, Wilson and Wallington are being taken forward to business case stage.

We also want to explore the feasibility of developing new community and primary care services on the Sutton site, in conjunction with the Royal Marsden Hospital.

We do not believe that anything we are currently proposing will require formal consultation as it builds on earlier proposals that had already been subject to consultation, but we will discuss this further with the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC), and will be sending them a report in October.

Mark Easton, Better Healthcare Closer to Home Programme Director, commented:

“We are moving forward as quickly as we can on the elements of the Better Healthcare Programme that we can progress. This includes developing proposals for the general hospital and for the Local Care Centres.”

**--ENDS--**

**More information on Better Healthcare Closer to Home can be found at [www.betterhealthcare.org.uk](http://www.betterhealthcare.org.uk).**

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