

Press release

£200 million proposals for health care services to be considered by local NHS

A proposal to reshape local health services in Sutton and Merton at a cost of up to £200 million is to be discussed by Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust and Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust this month.

The first stage of the plan, which is the culmination of four years of discussion of **Better Healthcare Closer to Home**, will go to the PCT Board on 10 July and to Epsom and St Helier's Trust Board on 14 July.

More work has to be done on the precise configuration of services and the cost of running them, but the broad shape of the plans is now clear and it is expected that the proposals will be submitted to NHS London, the strategic health authority, in the autumn. If NHS London approve the plans local people could see a major investment in St Helier Hospital, plus four 'local care centres', two of them replacing local community hospitals, in phased developments between 2010 and 2017.

And 'intermediate care' services for people who don't need to go to hospital or who need rehabilitation after a hospital stay, would be expanded, with many people receiving care in their own homes.

The cost of building the new local care centres is estimated to be £40 million to £45 million, with intermediate care facilities estimated to cost £15 million to £20 million.

St Helier Hospital would remain the main hospital for the two boroughs, complete with its 24 hour A&E department and range of inpatient services. It would be substantially rebuilt to provide 21st century care for patients, including 50 per cent single rooms to give patients more privacy and help in the fight against healthcare acquired infections.

Many outpatient clinics would move to the new local care centres – at the Nelson Hospital, the Wilson Hospital, Shotfield Health Centre and at St Helier Hospital itself, where a range of outpatient, diagnostic and clinical services would be established, including an urgent care centre for non-emergency patients. The first phase of redevelopment at St Helier is likely to cost £140 million.

Services for women and children are not included in the business case as these services are currently being reviewed by the local NHS.

Chief Executive of the PCT Bill Gillespie said: "We have listened carefully to local people and they have made it clear they want more care provided closer to where they live. We believe these proposals provide that solution, that they are affordable and will give Sutton and Merton residents a network of care that will provide much better treatment close to where they live, whilst enhancing and developing the services of an excellent local hospital with a major capital investment.

"We have had extensive discussions with local people since we launched our original consultation document in 2004 and we believe it is now time to move forward to make the changes."

Samantha Jones, Chief Executive of Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "These plans will help us to further improve the services that we offer to local people, in particular making sure that they receive safe, high quality healthcare in a clean and welcoming environment that is easily accessible from their own homes."

Note for Editors: A copy of the summary of the proposals is attached. For further information ring Jonathan Street, Interim Director of Communications for the PCT, on 07769 722771, or Antony Tiernan, Director of Communications, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, on 020 8296 2406.

Ends

2 July 2008