

Hertfordshire Health Scrutiny Committee Report for the Health in Dacorum Meeting of 12th June 2019

At its meeting on 15th May 2019, the Health Scrutiny Committee considered the West Herts. Hospital Trust (WHHT) estate redevelopment. The NHS has not decided on the preferred way forward yet. There will be a public meeting in June 2019 to discuss the emerging way forward, then the decision will be made in July 2019. The Committee took no view on the preferred option. It split into four groups which asked questions on the following qualitative aspects of the proposals:

- Safety and outcomes
- Patient and carer experience
- Workforce – satisfaction and sustainability
- Transformation and future flexibility

In the patient and carer experience group it was asked how a decision could be made which would avoid setting the towns of west Hertfordshire against each other. WHHT acknowledged that this was difficult.

The Committee was provided with responses to the recommendations made at the NHS Quality Scrutiny held in March 2019.

The Committee had noted that WHHT had too much focus on process rather than outcomes. The Committee recommended a culture change to one that focuses on patient experience rather than staff processes. It recommended that WHHT should put into place a clear action plan to improve its overall rating to “Good” by the time of the next Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection.

WHHT responded that it had an action plan to respond to all the CQC “must” and “should” recommendations in the 2018 inspection report. WHHT’s 2019 Quality Account is being finalised, setting out the key quality priorities for 2019/20. WHHT gives the assurance that it is committed to further developing and embedding a culture of Quality improvement and achieving a “Good” rating at the next CQC inspection.

The Committee had recommended that WHHT work with partners to ensure that simple tasks such as blood tests are carried out in primary care to provide a better, more accessible service for patients.

WHHT is finalising a joint service development and improvement plan with Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) to join up care provided by primary, community and secondary care clinicians.

The Committee recommended that WHHT’s focus is proportionately distributed between the Watford, St. Albans and Hemel Hempstead sites and maintained so that all patients receive an equal standard of care and focus.

WHHT recognises and supports this recommendation and recognises that there needs to be a more visible leadership focus at Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans hospitals. It has created a new management post to provide oversight and leadership at Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans. There is a Visible Leadership programme to ensure greater senior leadership presence at Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans.

C/Cllr Fiona Guest