

## Fit 4 the Future

### Transforming our Communities

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Report for: Assurance

Report By: Janet Probert, Chief Officer, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG

Siobhan McArdle, Chief Executive, South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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#### 1. Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Scrutiny of Health Committee on the status of the Lambert Memorial Hospital in Thirsk, specifically to provide an overview of the forthcoming activities leading to a process of public consultation.

#### 2. Background

The Lambert Memorial Hospital is a community hospital with a 14-bed ward, which provides general rehabilitation, assessment of patients' present and future care needs, diagnostics, drug initiation and administration, pain control and palliative care.

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (STHFT) decided to temporarily close the hospital in September 2015 on safety grounds following concerns about the nurse staffing situation on the ward. Despite extensive efforts the trust has been unable to recruit the number of nurses required to enable a safe high quality service to be run for patients. The ward remains temporarily closed at this time.

#### 3. Key developments

##### 3.1 Public Meeting

On 22nd March 2016 a public meeting was held at which STHFT invited members of the public to hear about the rationale for the decision to temporarily close the ward, the efforts the trust had made to try to recruit staff for the ward, and ask questions. This was the first public meeting ahead of a formal public engagement and consultation process about the future of the ward.

The trust outlined the poor staffing position it had inherited when it took on responsibility for the ward in 2011, with some shifts having just one registered nurse rostered to care for 14 patients compared to the recommended minimum of two registered nurses for every shift.

It explained the investment it had made in trying to secure safe staffing levels and the difficulties it faced over a number of years in maintaining those levels through a combination of staff working extra shifts, rotating nurses from other services and seeking cover from bank and agency nurses.

The trust's decision to temporarily close the ward followed increasing concerns from the service about its ability to maintain minimum staffing levels and, as a result, an increasing risk to patient safety.

The meeting heard about the trust's efforts since the closure to recruit sufficient nursing staff to re-open the ward, including:

- a standard advert for all qualified nurses on the NHS Jobs website:
- separate Lambert adverts on the website
- advertising via the Job Centres
- promotion via social media
- attendance a recruitment fairs at Leeds and York universities
- leafleting Catterick Garrison to target the partners of service personnel

Lambert staff also encouraged friends and colleagues to apply for roles, and while these efforts did generate some interest the trust was unable to recruit enough qualified nurses to fill the vacancies on the ward.

NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group, (HRW CCG) also attended the meeting to present on the longer-term strategy for community services and provide attendees with details of forthcoming engagement events within the locality.

The meeting was well attended with over 150 members of public and local councillors in attendance.

### **3.2 Pre-consultation listening events**

A series of listening events have been arranged to take place throughout April and May ahead of a formal consultation process. The purpose of these events is to seek views and suggestions from the local community and to share the community transformation work proposals in more detail. To date the events have been well attended with a range of suggestions, options and concerns raised. It is expected that representatives from STHFT will also be present at forthcoming events. A summary of the engagement activity to date, with dates of forthcoming events can be found in appendix 1.

Following this period, HRW CCG will collate all the information received during the events and review all suggestions made by members of the public in preparation for entering into a formal public consultation.

### **3.3 Timescale for consultation process**

HRW CCG expects the formal consultation period to commence in May 2016 subject to the potential European referendum purdah period; this will last for 12 weeks. During this period HRW CCG will identify a range of options for consideration and provide members of the public with various means of submitting their views either electronically, in writing or in person during a number of dedicated drop-in events.

### **3.4 Interim Measures**

To accommodate the temporary closure of the ward in September 2015, six additional beds were opened in the Rutson ward at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton to accommodate patients who would have used The Lambert.

HRW CCG has recently commissioned a service at Sowerby House Care Home in Thirsk under a new scheme for patients needing palliative and end of life care. The care home will be closely supported by Thirsk GPs and community nurses. This new scheme has been developed to ensure that the excellent provision of palliative and end of life care continues during the temporary closure.

### **4. Conclusions**

The aim of this paper is to set out the current position in relation to the Lambert Memorial Hospital and to outline engagement activities being undertaken ahead of a formal consultation process. A summary of key activities is outlined in appendix 1.

On completion of the pre-consultation listening events, it is intended that both organisations will outline the response from the public and provide further detail in relation to the options being put forward as part of the formal consultation.

HRW CCG and STHFT recommend returning to the committee in June 2016 with more details relating to the consultation process with a view to agreeing the next steps.

Appendix 1

**Summary of Key Activities**

**1. Pre-consultation Listening Period**

March 2016 – May 2016

22 March 2016	Thirsk High School 6.00pm – 7.30pm	Formal Meeting Chaired by Councillor Gareth Dadds
30 March 2016	Golden Fleece Hotel, Thirsk 6.00pm – 7.30pm	Drop in session
31 March 2016	Thirsk and Sowerby Town Hall 10.00am – 12.00pm	Drop in session
4 April 2016	Thirsk Market Place 8.30am – 3.00pm	Drop in session
7 April 2016	Thirsk Auction Mart 8.30am – 12.00pm	Drop in session
12 April 2016	Osmotherley Village Hall 9.00am – 11.30am	Drop in session
12 April 2016	Thirsk Auction Mart 5.00pm – 6.30pm	Drop in session
13 April 2016	Northallerton Market 8.30am – 3.00pm	Drop in session
14 April 2016	Sandhutton & Breckenbrough Village Hall 6.00pm – 7.30pm	Drop in session
20 April 2016	East Thirsk Community Hall 6.00pm – 7.30pm	Drop in session
9 May 2016	Golden Lion Hotel, Northallerton 1.00pm – 2.30pm	Drop in session
10 May 2016	Friarage Hospital Hub 11.00am – 2.00pm	Drop in session

**2. Analysis of Listening Events and Options Appraisal**

May 2016 – June 2016

Review and analyse the suggestions and ideas gathered from the listening events and prepare options for formal consultation.

**3. Commencement of Formal Public Consultation**

July 2016 – September 2016

A number of events will be scheduled and an online survey will be launched for members of the public to respond to the formal consultation.