

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 28 SEPTEMBER 2011

POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) Finances.

Members will be aware from press reports of the financial difficulties facing the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust.

As the main provider of acute medical services in Leicester and Leicestershire, these financial difficulties are a matter of concern for all.

The UHL Trust has now put in place a financial recovery plan. This plan was recently scrutinised by the Adults, Communities and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which has indicated that it will continue to monitor progress on the financial recovery plan as well as monitoring the impact that this may have on services provided to residents, particularly those in the County.

As Chairman of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board I have also been carefully monitoring the position. It is pleasing to note that the PCT Cluster and the two Clinical Commissioning Groups in the County are broadly supportive of the plans put in place by the UHL Trust. I am sure we all agree that it is crucial that both executive and scrutiny areas of the Council, and the commissioners of NHS services, undertake this monitoring role rigorously until there is proper assurance that the UHL Trust's financial recovery is assured.

Safe and Sustainable Review of Children's Congenital Heart Services in England.

Members will recall that this review was the subject of a notice of motion to the County Council meeting on 23 March 2011, where members agreed to make the strongest possible representations in favour of the option which retained the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre at the Glenfield Hospital (ie Option A).

The responses to the consultation have now been analysed by independent third party experts and a report has been published. The results show that Option A was the highest scoring option and the one most supported by patients and the public. However, I have some concerns regarding both the analysis of the consultation and the way that it has been presented, which appears to discount public opinion and draw attention to the fact that more organisation supported the option which retained the Southampton Centre (ie

Option B). The analysis, in my view, is flawed and it would appear that the ground rules set out at the start of the consultation process are being altered to favour Option B – retaining the Southampton Centre and not Glenfield. This is extremely concerning given that the Glenfield Unit scored the highest on the option analysis and received the most public support.

The Adults, Communities and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 26 September to consider the outcome of the consultation and raised similar concerns on this matter. The Committee has written to the Safe and Sustainable Team setting out these concerns and a copy is attached.

As Lead Member for Health I am extremely concerned about the impact that the loss of the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre could have on other services provided by the UHL Trust, such as paediatric intensive care which relies on heart surgery cases and the ECMO service, which relies on the children's cardiac consultants and specialist nurses. I will continue to monitor the situation and work to ensure that the world class facilities we have at Glenfield are retained.

E. F. White
Lead Member