



Connected Together
First for Community Engagement



Rutland Community Hub
Lands' End Way
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6RB

Right Honourable Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Date: 1st October 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

PUBLIC CONCERNS ABOUT LACK OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN RECONFIGURATION OF ICU BEDS IN LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

The Board of Healthwatch Rutland has been closely following the developments in the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) plans to reconfigure level 3 Intensive Care Unit beds and associated services away from Leicester General Hospital. The context of this plan is set out in a Full Business Case ⁽¹⁾ that proposes a Level 3 ICU reorganisation from three sites to two 'Super ICU' units at Leicester Royal Infirmary and Glenfield Hospitals.

Healthwatch Rutland understands from UHL that building works to further the ICU reconfiguration are planned to start in October, aligned with proposed the funding being also available "in October" and that UHL are concerned about possible delay and consequential increased costs to the overall programme which may result from public consultation. However, we note that this matter was originally raised in 2015 when the Trust first went to the individual Health Scrutiny Committees in Leicester and Leicestershire, and indeed that Rutland Scrutiny Committee was not approached until April 2018. So, given the period of over 3 years in which this project has been developing, "speed would not appear to have been of the essence", to date. A Joint LLR Scrutiny Meeting to consider the matter (as required by law) was not actually convened until 28th September 2018.

(1) <http://www.library.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/pubscheme/Documents/How%20we%20make%20decisions/Board%20Papers/2018%20-%20Thursday%205%20July%202018/paper%20G.pdf>

Following immense public concern that their views had not been sought or heard on this matter, in a paper presented to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee on Friday 28th September, UHL stated ⁽²⁾ that ‘any attempt to undertake a public consultation now would be viewed as pointless because it is apparent that the decisions of both the CCGs and the Trust have been made and both the local authorities and public are fully aware of that fact’. This implies a conviction, which we consider erroneous, that public consultation is neither necessary nor a legal requirement in such a significant change to health services.

However, following representations from both sides of the debate, the Joint LLR Scrutiny Committee on 28th September 2018 voted to recommend;

- a) a pause in the plans to take top level ICU beds out of Leicester General Hospital and,
- b) a full public consultation on the plans to reconfigure the Leicester Hospitals ICUs.

Healthwatch Rutland welcomes the Joint LLR Scrutiny Committee’s recommendations.

We are optimistic that the pause will allow the Clinical Commissioning Groups the opportunity to rebuild patient trust in the local NHS, and urge them to come to the public with a focussed and effective consultation programme on the proposed changes.

We seek your support in this and ask that you encourage UHL and the CCGs to take forward the Joint LLR Scrutiny Committee’s recommendations for a pause in deployment plans and a full public consultation.

We also hope that when due process is completed the funding for the final solution should be ready for an immediate start to the building construction required to implement the eventual plan, such that the delays since the inception of this project in 2015 are not continued.

My Board thanks you in anticipation for your attention to this matter, and the assistance which you and your team can give to the people of Rutland, our CCGs and UHL in the continuing provision and delivery of great services from the local NHS.

We have copied this letter to the interested and engaged parties in this debate, and thank them for their continued attention to, and vigilance and contribution in, this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Professor William Pope
Chair, Healthwatch Rutland

(2) <http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/documents/b23712/Additional%20information.%20Consolidation%20of%20Level%203%20ICU%20Care%20and%20Dependent%20Services%20Friday%2028-Sep-20.pdf?T=9>

Copies to:

Right Honourable Alan Duncan, MP

John Adler, Chief Executive, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Dr Richard Palin, Chair ELRCCG Governing Body