

NHS Lincolnshire CCG update (23/09) – Lakeside Stamford Premises

1. The purpose of this note is to provide an update to the Lakeside Stamford Patient Participation Group, and other members of the public in Stamford and their representatives, in relation to the CCG's current position and responsibilities regarding GP premises in Stamford.

2. Lakeside Stamford has recently indicated to their patients their intention to move out of the St Mary's site and to consolidate their services at The Sheepmarket site in Stamford on 1st December 2020.

3. By way of background, the CCG was informed in December 2018 by Lakeside Stamford that they planned to exercise a break clause in the lease originally entered into by St Mary's Practice with the freehold owners of the St Mary's site. This was because at that time Lakeside Stamford was in discussions with the owners of the land at Stamford Hospital with a view to expanding the Sheepmarket surgery premises and transferring all services to that site. The CCG supported this intention.

4. The CCG, with input from NHS England regional specialist advisors, advised Lakeside Stamford at the time about the requirements that they would need to meet before the CCG could approve the funding for such a development. Following various CCG recommendations, contacts were made with third parties who could help and support the development.

5. North West Anglia Foundation Trust (NWAFT) owns the majority of the Stamford Hospital site and offered for sale a number of parcels of land in 2019. This decision by NWAFT to go to public auction was taken more than two years after NWAFT had been in discussion with Lakeside Stamford about selling a discreet parcel of land to them. Lakeside Stamford reviewed all of the resultant plots now offered for sale but did not bid for them due to either financial, planning, or archaeological constraints. The new lots did not equate with what had previously been discussed between the parties. Lakeside Stamford again approached the CCG in the summer of 2019 looking for support for a longer term solution, either on the hospital site or elsewhere in Stamford.

6. The CCG has worked with both South Kesteven District Council and Lakeside Stamford to find a longer term solution to the relocation of St Mary's and the growth in patient numbers that will be seen in the coming years. Notwithstanding best efforts on behalf all parties, no suitable solution has been immediately identifiable. Also, it was accepted that any solution would not be in place before the end of December 2020. As a result, NHS England and the CCG worked together with Lakeside Stamford in trying to negotiate a new St Mary's lease for at least the next three years to provide an opportunity for a new development to be progressed, with appropriate public and stakeholder consultation

7. In late July, Lakeside informed the CCG that negotiations with lawyers representing the St Mary's freeholders had stalled and, as a consequence, that they were going to present a number of options to their Partnership for final consideration, which they did. A number of very challenging financial and lease liability difficulties had been identified as part of the negotiations. These included liabilities relating to land slippage at St Mary's and a demand from the freeholders for an increase in rent. Lakeside Stamford requested NHS England to assume these liabilities as they are the ultimate payor of rent. NHS England could not agree to such landlord demands. Due to these significant difficulties, Lakeside Stamford subsequently wrote to the landlords of the St Mary's site stating that they were withdrawing from these lease negotiations and would be vacating in December 2020 in accordance with the notice given in 2018.

8. The proposal to consolidate services in Stamford on the Sheepmarket site and the closure of the St Mary's site requires the approval of the CCG and this would be exercised through the CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee, which at the time of writing has not been given. Since July, the CCG and our NHS England advisors have been working alongside Lakeside Stamford to ensure that they follow a number of processes which need to be completed prior to the CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee's formal consideration of this matter. A key activity is that Lakeside must undertake a robust engagement exercise with patients and local residents. The CCG has provided input to Lakeside's planned approach to the patient and public engagement exercise, in order to meet the relevant national guidance.

9. There is a process that needs to be followed and we would expect that as part of the application that Lakeside Stamford makes to the CCG Committee, that they set out how they are going to manage the needs of patients, including from both digital and face to face perspectives.

10. The CCG's Primary Care Committee, which is chaired by a CCG Non-Executive Director, along with other Non-Executives as Committee members, has also stated that it requires an Equality and Quality Impact Assessment to be undertaken as part of the formal proposal from Lakeside Stamford. It also will require details of the engagement with patients that has taken place, the concerns and issues that have been expressed and the mitigations and response to these concerns.

11. It will be for the Committee to review the application and evidence presented before it can determine its position in relation to the proposal from Lakeside Stamford.

12. Lakeside Stamford commenced the engagement process week commencing 14th September and have a range of engagement events planned and also have an online survey running. The engagement period ends on 25th October 2020. The CCG encourages Stamford patients to express their views through the Lakeside Stamford engagement exercise.

13. The NHS Lincolnshire CCG hopes that this note clarifies the current position, respective responsibilities and timescales involved. Any further information is available from Jacqui Bunce (jacqui.bunce@nhs.net) and Andy Rix (andy.rix@nhs.net).

23rd September 2020