

## **Belford Replacement: Progress Update**

This is the third update in our series which aims to keep you up to date with our progress towards the replacement for Belford Hospital. In this update, we'll explain the approvals process that NHS boards in Scotland must follow to obtain funding for a new facility.

Firstly though, we would like to say thank you to everyone who spoke to us at the Caol Gala earlier in June and for the support and thanks so many people expressed to our staff. The event was very useful and we will be out and about in the community for further discussions as we progress.

Common themes were encouragement to deliver more services locally and reducing unnecessary travel within Lochaber and to Inverness, which is what we have proposed in the Initial Agreement. There were questions about the proposed location, which is on the Blar Mòr site opposite the police station, and about where a helipad might be – it will not be on the roof however we continue to work with the Scottish Ambulance Service and Council colleagues to determine the best solution.

Back to the what we need to do so that we can build the new hospital. A business case is a document which sets out why a project is beneficial, and what is required to realise it. When an NHS board wants to request funding for an investment such as a new hospital, it must submit a business case to the Scottish Government's Capital Investment Group, following the process set out in the Scottish Capital Investment Manual (SCIM).

SCIM requires boards to submit their business case in four stages:

The first step is a Strategic Assessment. This is a single page document which summaries the need for change and is submitted for information only, not approval. For Lochaber, this document was prepared following a workshop held in the Nevis Centre in August 2018 which some readers will have attended.

The second step is to prepare an Initial Agreement – a much longer document which requires approval. As we explained back in May, this document focusses on services rather than facilities. It sets out the context for the project, the need for change or why the current situation is not tenable, it outlines the preferred future solution including indicative costs and timescales, and it describes the benefits expected to be realised from the project, for example less travelling for patients by delivering services closer to home, or a higher quality environment which will improve patient dignity. For Lochaber, the Initial Agreement was submitted in April 2022 and, as you may have read last week, we are delighted to now have approval to proceed to the next stage, which is to prepare an Outline Business Case (OBC) for submission to Scottish Government.

This requires development of the detailed service model, including accommodation and workforce requirements. At this point, we will appoint a design team to develop at least the Concept Design (RIBA Stage 2) although it's becoming more common to further develop the design at this point to RIBA Stage 3, which is broadly the level of detail required to submit a planning application as this gives greater certainty in terms of cost and risks. The OBC will also include detail of the capital costs (the funding

Scottish Government provides to construct a new facility) as well as the revenue costs (the costs NHS Highland must cover, for example staffing and maintenance).

The Full Business Case (FBC) is the final step before construction can start. The design is developed in detail and there should be very few 'unknown' risks remaining, so the FBC confirms that the service proposals contained in earlier stages are still valid and sets out the final expected cost and the process of monitoring and constructing a new facility.

The SCIM guidance is freely available online at <https://www.pcpd.scot.nhs.uk/Capital/scimpilot.htm> and includes more detailed guidance on the different information to be provided and formal reviews required at each stage.

If you'd like to get in touch with questions or comments, you can contact us via the NHS Highland Feedback team [Nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot](mailto:Nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot) or 01463 705997, or via our project email address on [nhsh.nhshighlandestatesprojects@nhs.scot](mailto:nhsh.nhshighlandestatesprojects@nhs.scot).

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July 2022