

Thursday, 18 May 2023

Lochaber Update



Welcome to our latest update on progress towards the replacement of Fort William's Belford Hospital.

This has been a busy month as we kick off the relationship with our Principle Supply Chain Partner (PSCP), Balfour Beatty, and work to finalise the briefing information that will inform the design.

We've had a number of meetings with the PSCP and design team, answering questions about the project so far, agreeing the administrative detail of contracts and meeting schedules, and working out the detailed programme of activities needed to develop a design. We're also busy reviewing the technical briefing package, both internally and alongside the PSCP team, to clarify and ensure that it fully reflects the standards we want to achieve.

In mid-April, we held an internal Crosscheck Workshop to start to finalise the future service model. This was a full-day event, the purpose of which was to allow each departmental lead from the Belford to present their vision for the future of their service to the rest of the local team and to senior managers, in order to identify areas that needed further discussion and clarification.

The workshop was well attended and it was great to see the culmination of so many hours of work in developing these future visions over the past few months. We heard about proposals to introduce obstetric ultrasound locally, to increase capacity for renal dialysis, chemotherapy and infusions, and to accommodate a visiting MRI scanner which would mean the facilities will be in place to accommodate more visiting units in future. Staff also described new ways of working which will be possible in the new facility, for example by establishing a dedicated day case unit to prevent late cancellation of procedures due to the inpatient ward needing the day-case beds.

As intended, the workshop identified questions over some aspects of the service model and we recognise this has led to concerns among staff and within the community.

It's important to highlight that the departmental service models have been developed based on the preferred service models, Options 3 & 4, as described in the approved Initial Agreement, and NHS Highland remain committed to delivering to these. Any deviation from this would need to be very clearly justified, and at this point we don't anticipate any significant change.

Helpful discussions are ongoing with staff teams to answer the questions raised in the workshop and clarify the outstanding details of the proposed service model detail. This will then be agreed by the Project Board on the 23rd May and we will be pleased to present the detail at a public event to be held at the Nevis Centre on the 6th June. The event will run from 1pm to 6pm and will be a drop in format with opportunities for attendees to speak to our teams, ask questions and give us your views.

We will continue to keep you updated on the progress of this project through these columns, and you can also view updates on our new and improved project website which you can find by searching for 'Lochaber Redesign' on the NHS Highland homepage.

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As ever, we welcome any comments or suggestions you might have: you can contact us via the NHS Highland Feedback team nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot or 01463 705997, or on our project email address on nhsh.nhshighlandstatesprojects@nhs.scot