

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Strategic Review: Update for Hillingdon External Services Select Committee Jessamy Kinghorn, Head of Partnerships and Engagement, NHS England 7th October 2021

1.0 Introduction

Members have previously received briefings on proposals to re-provide the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre on the Watford General Hospital site following an Independent Clinical Review into concerns about the clinical sustainability and infrastructure of services at its current location in Northwood.

Watford was identified as being the only site that met the clinical, travel and access criteria for the whole 2.4m population the cancer centre serves, (which extends from Ealing to Bedford, and from Aylesbury to Hertford). Approximately 14% of patients (around 1,700 a year) are from the Hillingdon area.

UCLH has been identified as the new provider of the cancer centre (subject to satisfactory completion of a due diligence process), following the recommendation of the Independent Review that the centre should be run by a specialist cancer hospital rather than a District General Hospital. The centre is currently run by East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust on the site owned by Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust).

In developing these plans, a substantial number of patient focus groups have been held to understand the impact of this change on patients, and ongoing patient and public working groups have been established to enable people to input into the plans as they develop.

The programme and the preferred option to re-provide the cancer centre in Watford, has gained widespread support from stakeholders, including the six main Integrated Care Systems referring patients to Mount Vernon. The extent to which alternatives of doing nothing, doing minimum or dispersing the service could address the complex clinical, estates, access and inequalities challenges the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre currently faces, is still being explored in detail.

There has also been interest from local MPs, including David Simmonds, MP for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, who has recently spent time at the site discussing the challenges and need for change with clinicians.

The main obstacle to the preferred option remains securing the capital funding required to build the new cancer centre.

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2.0 Current position

On Thursday 9th September UCLH submitted an expression of interest for the new Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to become one of eight new hospital schemes added to the Government's health infrastructure plan. This would give the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre access to New Hospitals Programme funding. The process for selecting the eight schemes is expected to last several months with a final decision announced in the Spring 2022. If the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre becomes one of the becomes eight new hospital schemes, public consultation on the proposals will then take place.

The developing Business Case for this preferred option suggests a funding requirement of £229.2m excluding VAT, £272m including VAT. For the Expression of Interest, the finances were required to be calculated differently, using specific price points and as such the bid has been valued at £260m which includes VAT but not inflation. The difference in figures is due to how they are calculated – the underlying cost of the proposal has not changed.

The Mount Vernon Cancer Centre catchment area contains some notable areas of high deprivation, diverse populations and low cancer survival rates. To understand more about these populations and the impact of a change to cancer services, a health equality impact assessment has been completed on the proposed option. Together with patient and public feedback, this has helped create proposals that play a significant contribution to the levelling up of disadvantaged areas.

In depth work has taken place in Luton, where cancer survival rates are lowest, with NHS, Local Authority, third sector and patient representatives working together to understand the reasons for poor cancer outcomes and the steps that need to be taken. This work is now being used to look at other areas of deprivation or poor outcomes within the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre area.

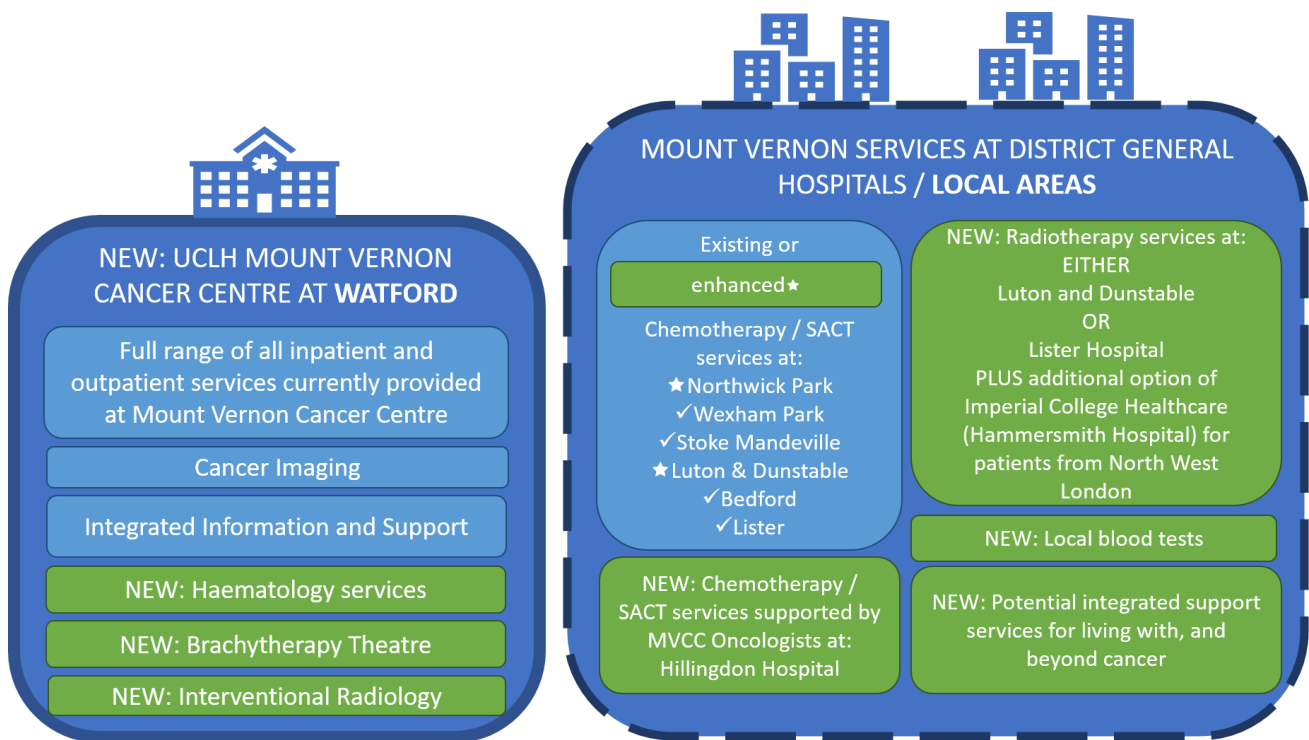
The programme team has been working with clinicians, patients and the public to develop proposals that are designed to meet the needs of the population, address inequalities, increase access, and improve outcomes, not simply design a new building. Under the proposals:

- The new Mount Vernon Cancer Centre at Watford would include all of the services currently provided at the cancer centre. Haematology services for Mount Vernon Cancer Centre patients (currently provided at UCLH), would also be provided in the new Cancer Centre at Watford, along with a Brachytherapy Theatre and Interventional Radiology service, services that cannot be provided at the current site.

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- Hillingdon Hospital would have a new Chemotherapy Unit (chemotherapy patients currently travel to Mount Vernon Cancer Centre at Northwood for treatment).
- Luton and Dunstable Hospital, or Lister Hospital would have a networked radiotherapy unit, reducing travelling times for daily treatment for the patients with the longest journeys, and there would be additional radiotherapy provision at Imperial College Healthcare for patients living in South Hillingdon and Ealing.
- New clinical protocols, IT systems and improved communication would enable patients to have blood tests and other minor tests and procedures required for their cancer treatment, carried out locally instead of at the main cancer centre as they do now.
- Improvements to Acute Oncology services in local hospitals to reduce the need for patients to attend the specialist cancer centre.



3.0 Next Steps

We expect to hear if we are on the long-list of additional new hospital schemes by Christmas and should hear next Spring (2022) whether we have been successful. In the meantime, we continue to develop the business case and work with patients and local people to develop the preferred option.

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