

Report to: East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Date of meeting: 30 June 2022

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Reconfiguration of Ophthalmology Services in East Sussex

Purpose: To consider the HOSC Review Board's report on NHS proposals to reconfigure ophthalmology services in East Sussex.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) agree the report and recommendations of the HOSC Review Board attached as Appendix 1; and
 - 2) agree to refer the report to NHS Sussex for consideration as part of its decision making process.
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1. Background

1.1. On 2nd December 2021 the HOSC considered a report by the East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in partnership with East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) on the proposals to reconfigure ESHT's ophthalmology services in East Sussex.

1.2. East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) provides ophthalmology services for the residents of East Sussex. This includes adult and paediatric ophthalmology services provided at three main centres, which are the Conquest Hospital in Hastings, the Eastbourne District General Hospital (EDGH), and Bexhill Hospital. Ophthalmology is a branch of medicine and surgery that provides diagnosis, treatment and prevention of conditions that affect the eye and visual system. Many eye conditions are age-related, making ophthalmology services more and more important as people get older.

1.3. East Sussex has amongst the highest numbers of over 65-year olds and over 85-year olds in the country, and this is expected to grow further. This means that increasing numbers of people are needing to use ophthalmology services. The changing needs of the population, the changing nature of ophthalmology care and the associated challenges in providing ophthalmology services has made the reconfiguration of ophthalmology services a key priority for the CCG (which is the responsible organisation for service reconfigurations) and ESHT.

1.4. The CCG and ESHT are proposing the following changes to ophthalmology services provided by ESHT:

- to consolidate ophthalmology services at two hospital sites, Eastbourne District General Hospital and Bexhill Hospital;
- create one stop clinics at both hospitals and a diagnostic eye hub at Bexhill Hospital; and
- move outpatient appointments currently provided at the Conquest Hospital to Bexhill Hospital.

1.5. A pre-consultation business case (PCBC) setting out specific proposals, was developed by the CCG in partnership with ESHT, to reconfigure the Trust's ophthalmology services. The CCG undertook a public consultation between 6th December 2021 and 11th March 2022 seeking views on the case for change, the proposed new clinical model for services and the proposals to locate services at Bexhill Hospital and EDGH.

2. Supporting information

2.1. Under health scrutiny legislation, NHS organisations are required to consult affected HOSCs about a proposed service change that would constitute a 'substantial development or variation' to services for the residents of the HOSC area. At the meeting held on 2nd December 2021 the Committee resolved that the proposals constituted a 'substantial development or variation to services' requiring formal consultation by the CCG with HOSC in accordance with health scrutiny legislation.

2.2. The HOSC established a Review Board to consider the evidence in relation to the proposed reconfiguration of ophthalmology services and prepare a report and any recommendations as the Committee's response to the consultation. The Board comprised Councillors Azad, Belsey, Brett, Robinson, and voluntary sector representative Geraldine Des Moulins. The Review Board elected Councillor Belsey as the Chair of the Review Board.

2.3. The Review Board considered a wide range of written and oral evidence from NHS and other witnesses and agreed a report and recommendations, which is included as **Appendix 1** to this report.

2.4. The HOSC is recommended to agree the Review Board report and submit it to NHS Sussex (the NHS organisation due to replace the CCG from 1st July 2022) for consideration as part of its decision making process, alongside its own Decision Making Business Case (DMBC). NHS Sussex will then report its decision to the HOSC on 22nd September 2022 and the Committee will consider whether the decision is in the best interest of health services locally.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The HOSC is recommended to agree the Review Board's report and agree to refer it to NHS Sussex for consideration as part of its decision making process.

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