

Agenda Item 8

		THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LINCOLNSHIRE	
Boston Borough Council	East Lindsey District Council	City of Lincoln Council	Lincolnshire County Council
North Kesteven District Council	South Holland District Council	South Kesteven District Council	West Lindsey District Council

Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham
Executive Director - Resources

Report to	Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire
Date:	14 October 2020
Subject:	Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford – Proposal to Close St Mary's Medical Centre

Summary:

Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford is undertaking an engagement exercise on its proposal to permanently close one of its two premises in Stamford from 1 December 2020. The engagement exercise closes on 25 October 2020.

The final decision on the proposal rests with Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Primary Care Commissioning Committee, whose next meeting (open to the public) is on 11 November 2020.

Actions Requested:

To make arrangements to respond to the engagement exercise by Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford on its proposal to permanently close its premises at St Mary's Medical Centre with effect from 1 December 2020, with all face-to-face consultations taking place at the Sheepmarket Surgery.

1. Background

Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford - Patients and Buildings

Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford has 31,781 registered patients (as of 1 September 2020) and is the largest GP practice in Lincolnshire. It operates from two premises: the Sheepmarket Surgery in Ryhall Road (the same site as Stamford and Rutland Hospital); and St Mary's Medical Centre, in Wharf Road.

Temporary Arrangements for Covid-19 Pandemic

St Mary's Medical Centre has been closed to patients since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, with all face-to-face appointments taking place at the Sheepmarket Surgery. St Mary's Medical Centre has been used by staff for telephone and digital consultations which do not require a clinical room.

Documents Issued by Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford

As part of its engagement exercise, Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford has issued the following documents, which are attached to this report: -

- (1) Letter to Patients (16 September 2020) – Appendix A.
- (2) Q&A Regarding St Mary's Medical Centre Closure – Appendix B.
- (3) Communication / Engagement Timeline for St Mary's Medical Centre Closure – Appendix C.

Role of Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

In conjunction with NHS England / Improvement, Lincolnshire CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC) makes decisions on the commissioning, procurement and management of primary medical services contracts, which include decisions on the closure of GP practices. The PCCC meets every two months, with its next scheduled meeting on 11 November 2020.

On 23 September 2020, Lincolnshire CCG issued an update on Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford. This document is attached at Appendix D.

2. Consultation

The purpose of this item is to invite the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire to make arrangements to respond to the engagement exercise on the proposal from Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford to close its St Mary's Medical Centre premises.

3. Conclusion

The Committee is invited to make arrangements to respond to the engagement exercise by Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford on its proposal to permanently close its premises at St Mary's Medical Centre with effect from 1 December 2020, with all face-to-face consultations taking place at the Sheepmarket Surgery.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Letter to Patients (16 September 2020)
Appendix B	Q&A Regarding St Mary's Medical Centre Closure
Appendix C	Communication / Engagement Timeline for St Mary's Medical Centre Closure

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix D	Lincolnshire CCG Update on Lakeside Healthcare at Stamford (23 September 2020)

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Simon Evans, Health Scrutiny Officer,
who can be contacted on 07717 868930 or
by e-mail at Simon.Evans@lincolnshire.gov.uk



Wednesday 16th September 2020

Dear Household / Patient

We are writing to inform you that we will be permanently closing St Mary's Medical Centre in December 2020.

Our lease comes to an end on 17th December and we have taken the decision to not renew this lease and to consolidate all primary care service delivery in Stamford at our Sheepmarket Surgery. All St Mary's Medical Centre patients will be transferred to Sheepmarket Surgery with effect from 1st December.

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, St Mary's Medical Centre has not been used for face-to-face patient appointments, with all of these taking place at Sheepmarket Surgery. So, this move is essentially confirmation that we will not be re-opening the St Mary's Medical Centre to patients.

St Mary's Medical Centre has, however, been used by Lakeside Stamford staff for telephone and digital consultations which do not require a clinical room. In line with nationally recommended new ways of working, we intend to make greater use of digital consultations and will ensure, going forward, there are sufficient face-to-face appointments for patients at Sheepmarket Surgery, based on their needs.

We realise that there will be some questions around this announcement, and we are genuinely interested in receiving feedback from you, our patients, so we can make this move as seamless and stress-free as possible for everyone. Providing safe and effective care for our patients has always been Lakeside Healthcare's priority and it will continue to be our priority throughout this change and beyond.

We have undertaken a comprehensive capacity and demand assessment and have already begun enhancing our telephone and digital services at Sheepmarket Surgery to cope with any increases in call volumes following the move. The expected growth of the Stamford population has also been accounted for in our plans.

Lakeside Healthcare Stamford, Ryhall Road, Stamford, Lincs, PE9 1YA – 01780 437017
www.lakesidehealthcarestamford.co.uk

Dr M Richardson – Chair Prof. R Harris – Chief Executive
For a full list of partners please refer to our website
VAT Reg No. 878646066

To support our patients during this period of transition, we have published a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document on our website, which we hope will answer some of your immediate questions: www.lakesidehealthcarestamford.co.uk.

However, should you have any further questions, please feel free to send an email to lakesidestamford@lshg.co.uk or telephone us on 01780 761448* (direct dial) and we will come back to you with an answer. We will also be holding a series of patient and public engagement events you can be part of - the details of these will be published over the new few weeks.

We have also put together a Patient Survey, which you can also download from our website or you can complete by accessing the following weblink: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/stmarysclosure> .

This survey is open until the 25th October and we will use the feedback given to shape and improve the service we offer to our patients.

If you would like a hard copy of the FAQs or the survey, please contact us by email or telephone as above.

Further to this letter, we will also be posting regular updates on our website. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

GP Partners @ Lakeside Healthcare Stamford

**The phone line will be open Monday-Thursday 9.30am -5pm, although there is an answerphone service operating outside of these hours to enable callers to leave a message.*

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Q&A regarding St Mary's Medical Centre Closure

Q. Is it the intention to concentrate all primary care service delivery at the Sheepmarket surgery when St Mary's is closed?

A. Yes, we will consolidate all primary care service delivery in Stamford from the Sheepmarket Surgery. Providing safe and effective care for our patients is always Lakeside Healthcare's priority. In line with the direction of travel set out by NHSE, we have sought to improve patient access by embracing the opportunities presented by technology. This has been accelerated by the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant need to help staff and patients stay safe by keeping face-to-face appointments to those which are clinically required.

Q. What dialogue has been conducted with Lincolnshire CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) about the closure of the St Mary's Surgery?

A. Starting this week, we are rolling out a comprehensive communication and engagement plan with an external communications agency that will incorporate a wide range of communication methods and opportunities for patients and the public to provide feedback. The engagement exercise will run from w/c 14th September and close in late October. This document and the accompanying letter are all part of this. We have been working closely with the CCG since 2018 regarding St Mary's and they are fully aware of our plans to close it.

Q. How can you demonstrate that the decision to close St Mary's is in the best interests of patients and that the quality of care won't suffer?

A. There is currently no feasible option to extend the lease on St Mary's and no viable alternative option to provide the primary service elsewhere within Stamford. Since the onset of COVID-19, St Mary's has not been used for face-to-face patient appointments but rather for telephone and/or digital consultations which do not require a clinical room. We have undertaken a comprehensive capacity and demand assessment which includes nationally recommended new ways of working, for example digital, that will ensure adequate face-to-face appointments are available for patients based on their needs.

Q. Do you know what the majority of patients feel about the new ways of working and if they would be satisfied if this became the ‘new normal’ when the lockdown is lifted?

A. Patient feedback is collected and reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of our routine governance processes. The patient and public engagement exercise and Patient Survey in particular will ensure additional feedback is also integrated into our future service model. After the closure of St Mary’s, working with the Patient Participation Group (PPG), we will commit additional resources to seeking and assessing patient feedback and, where appropriate, make further improvements to our service model as we move forward.

Q. What assumptions are you making about the future mix of appointment formats? What degree of face-to-face consultations are you planning for the future?

A. The capacity and demand analysis we have undertaken includes various scenarios regarding activity levels and type. For example, face-to-face versus telephony/digital. The analysis includes pre-pandemic activity data as we are not assuming the current level of telephone/digital consultation will remain as it has over the last few months. GP Partners have been engaged in our analysis and have ensured sufficient face-to-face capacity is available.

Q. How will the Sheepmarket Surgery be able to cope with the level of requests for appointments?

A. We are actively working with our telephony supplier to improve capacity and evaluating our current digital service offering and looking at how it can be enhanced further. The need for us to consolidate services into Sheepmarket further focusses this work and this patient feedback will be taken into account when addressing these concerns.

Q. How is a reduced surgery service going to cope with a growing population due to the planned expansion of housing in Stamford?

A. There will be no reduction in service to Lakeside patients and the expected growth of the Stamford population has been incorporated into Lakeside Healthcare’s service plans.

Q. How can you provide assurance that the currently inadequate telephone system can support patient demand? This is particularly important given the telephone is increasingly essential in accessing the practice for appointments.

A. We are working with our telephony supplier to improve our telephone access and ensure sufficient capacity is in place at Sheepmarket Surgery to accommodate any increase in call volumes. As well as addressing hardware issues impacting on patients accessing the practice, we are also reviewing how we deploy our reception teams to maximise the number of staff available to take calls at times of high demand. We will also be encouraging the use of digital access – for both clinical and non-clinical needs – to the surgery as an additional means of access. Increased use of digital access will play a role in addressing the challenges patients experience in contacting the practice by telephone.

Q. What are your plans to upgrade the pharmacy service at Sheepmarket so you can cope with the increased demand when the St Mary's Surgery closes in December?

A. Lakeside has engaged external pharmacy consultants to review our current dispensing activities in the town and how we can deliver these services going forward. This review, which is currently underway, is very extensive. However, we need to be realistic in that there is only finite capacity (physical space) within the Sheepmarket building, so we need to be imaginative in how this important service is delivered.

Q. What assessment of the closure has been done for vulnerable and less mobile patients living to the west of Stamford and in the surrounding villages? And how will the increased demand for parking be handled given Sheepmarket's area is already full and the hospital's plans will not allow use of their parking area?

A. We have completed a full Equality Impact Assessment and the results will be accommodated within our final service model as well as our submission to the CCG. This will ensure the needs of vulnerable and less mobile patients are fully protected. We are also actively looking into the car parking situation at the moment and aim to have a solution in place by December.

Q. Will the closure of St Mary's yield a net financial benefit and, if so, will this be reinvested for the benefit of patients?

A. There is no financial benefit to Lakeside Healthcare as a result of closing St Mary's. The costs of closing St Mary's and making changes to Sheepmarket to enhance digital consultation capacity and accommodate a single back-office function will all be met by Lakeside Healthcare.

Q. How will all the St Mary's GPs and other clinical personnel operate from the smaller Sheepmarket premises?

A. The service model, which has been developed, ensures all clinical staff can work safely from Sheepmarket through improved room utilisation and the use of remote working where appropriate. We now offer a greater telephone and digital service in line with national guidelines which reduce the need for physical clinical space.



Communication / Engagement Timeline for St Mary's Medical Centre Closure

- **Monday 14th September** – Staff briefing
 - **Tuesday 15th September** – PPG briefing
 - **Wednesday 16th September** – Public announcement: communications sent to patients, local stakeholders and the media.
- Survey launched for patients at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/stmarysclosure>.
Postal copies will also be mailed out to patients.
- **Friday 18th September** – Communication of planned patient and external stakeholder engagement events
 - **w/c Monday 21st September** – A steady stream of social media posts will go out on Facebook to raise further awareness and direct to the various communications and encourage patients to fill in the online survey
 - **w/c Monday 5th October** – Weekly newsletters start to be released to the public and patients
 - **Monday 28th September to Friday 23rd October** - Patient and external stakeholder events held
 - **Sunday 25th October** – Survey deadline
 - **w/c Monday 26th October** – Full evaluation of patient and external stakeholder feedback and liaison with CCG
 - **Monday 2nd November** – Submission of Branch Closure Application to the CCG
 - **Wednesday 11th November** – CCG PC3 Committee meeting to approve Branch Closure Application
 - **Tuesday 1st December** – Vacate St Mary's Medical Centre

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 were minded to exercise a break clause in their lease with the freehold owners of the St Mary's site. At that time Lakeside Stamford were in discussions with various landowners regarding an alternative site in the town.
4. The CCG, with input from NHS England regional specialist advisors, advised Lakeside at the time about the requirements that they would need to meet before the CCG could approve the funding for such a development. 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. Lakeside Stamford reviewed all of the plots offered for sale but did not bid for them due to financial, planning, or archaeological constraints. They then 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 (SKDC) and NWAFT to find a longer term solution to the St Mary's relocation and the growth in patient numbers that will be seen in the coming years. These early outline proposals were shared with Lakeside Stamford who agreed to work with all parties on this longer term solution. As any such solution would not be in place before the end of December 2020, the CCG and SKDC have worked together to support Lakeside Stamford 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, which were not overcome. 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.

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.

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