

## **Sandwell and Birmingham Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Sandwell and West Birmingham Solid Tumour Oncology and Specialised Gynaecology Cancer Surgery Services**

**Report submitted by: Catherine O'Connell, Director of Specialised Commissioning, Midlands and East**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

---

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update on commissioners' plans for the solid tumour oncology service for people living in Sandwell and West Birmingham, and on plans for the Pan-Birmingham Gynae Oncology Cancer Surgery Centre. It will be supplemented by a presentation at the meeting of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

#### **2. Solid Tumour Oncology (chemotherapy)**

NHS England Specialised Commissioners, in conjunction with Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG (SWBCCG), have been working with providers across Birmingham and the Black Country to ensure the sustainability of the solid tumour oncology service for the Sandwell and West Birmingham population.

##### ***2.1 Background***

As previously reported, following UHB giving notice in 2015 to SWBH to withdraw consultant input to the SWBH service, NHS England (NHSE) has been working with both trusts to find a way to continue to support Solid Tumour Oncology Services at Sandwell and City hospitals. Despite numerous attempts to facilitate an agreement to keep services at SWBH, including escalation to the Regional Directors of NHSE and NHS Improvement (NHSI), it was decided in September 2017 that a contingency plan was needed that temporarily relocated the service whilst a review was completed to consider the options for a safe and sustainable long term solution.

The outcome of the review was reported to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its August meeting. The clear preferred option being for a specialist provider to deliver Chemotherapy for solid tumours from the City and Sandwell Hospital sites.

## **2.2 Work underway**

The outcome of the review, and the strength of the preferred option, led commissioners to seek a specialist cancer provider to develop a model of care, in collaboration with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals, that ensured solid tumour oncology (chemotherapy) services would be provided from City and Sandwell Hospital sites. The Royal Wolverhampton Trust confirmed it would not be able to provide this service, and University Hospital Birmingham confirmed it would develop a model of care for this service.

The Chief Executives of University Hospital Birmingham, as the local specialist cancer centre, and Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals, which operates the City and Sandwell Hospital sites, supported by NHS Improvement, have committed to their organisations working together to develop the proposed new service. The two organisations are currently working together on the detail of the service to ensure it can be implemented smoothly and meets national standards.

## **3. Specialist Gynaecological Oncology Surgery Centre Service**

### **2.1 Background**

There are four specialised gynaecological oncology surgery cancer centres in the West Midlands – Stoke, Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. The Birmingham Centre is run by Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBH). SWBH served notice on ‘all Centre Gynaecological Cancer Surgery’ on the 29th of June, 2017 – a service commissioned jointly by NHS England and Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG. A review of centre activity undertaken in summer of 2017 indicated the requirement to re-provide approximately 400 surgery cases per year (circa 60/40% split between NHSE and the CCG respectively).

Originally the plan was to move the Centre by December 2017, with a further extension to the notice being agreed through to April 2018. However, due to the complex nature of this service, it became clear that arranging a single location for this centre would take more time. SWBH agreed to continue to provide the centre for a further two years (until the end of the 2019/20 financial year).

This additional time is enabling a more detailed piece of work to be done considering a wider range of options and give a level of security and stability to patients and staff in the meantime.

### **3.2 Progress to date**

The temporary nature of the current service provision has increased the risk of staff leaving, particularly that of non-surgical staff. The agreement that the service will remain at City Hospital in the medium term is designed to reduce that risk, and SWBH has committed to ensuring full staffing levels and is actively recruiting to vacancies. As a contingency plan, the Level 3 gynaecology Cancer Centre provided

by the Royal Wolverhampton Trust was approached to explore whether they had capacity to take some of the workload from SWBH (for example for those patients who lived closer to Wolverhampton), to help further reduce the risk to service continuity. Work is currently being undertaken by SWBH and RWT staff to developing patient pathways that will safely redistribute activity, if it becomes necessary.

In the meantime, a joint NHSE/CCG project group is overseeing the further development of options for the long-term re-provision of the service. This project aims to agree a preferred provider, in a manner that reflects NHSE's existing commitments and legal obligations, by the end of January 2019; as the current arrangement with SWBH is due to expire by March, 2020 and there is a working assumption that any new provider will require at least 12 months to mobilise and transition services safely.

### **3.3 Next Steps**

In order to manage this timescale, it will be necessary to engage with clinicians, stakeholders and patients/public in a structured manner. The proposal is to seek engagement on those models which can credibly meet the agreed criteria; i.e., accessible; compliant with service specifications, standards and waiting times; interface with clinically dependent services, funded within the tariff, developed with input of local patients. The project is currently in the process of engaging with stakeholders which is informing the development of a list of options, appraisal criteria and weighting. Further engagement will then take place once the final option/s has been identified.