



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Health)

Date: 22 July 2008

Subject: Review of the National Blood Strategy

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Members of the Board with a range of information in relation to the proposed changes to the National Blood Strategy (NBS) and the implications for the City of Leeds.

1.2 In July 2007, following a meeting of Sheffield City Council's Health and Community Care Scrutiny and Policy Development Board, the Council received notification of that Board's resolutions (from a meeting on 25 June 2007), as follows:

That in light of the information made available, this Board:

- (a) Views with grave concern the proposals outlined by the National Blood Service to re-organise the Service in England and Wales without sufficient evidence of the need to re-organise the Service and particularly with regard to the impact of the re-organisation proposals in the City;*
- (b) Believes that these proposals could result in Manchester being the nearest Testing and Processing Site to the City and serving the whole of the North of England and Wales and the transfer of blood storage and distribution facilities in the City to Leeds, thereby putting at risk the availability of blood and blood products in the City, particularly in emergency situations;*
- (c) Views with disquiet the lack of clarity as to whether or not the Strategy was formulated in consultation with medical experts and laboratory managers from local hospitals and if the strategy has the support of these professionals;*
- (d) Notes with concern the fears expressed by the trade unions and others that the proposals would have a severe impact upon the ability of the Children's Hospital*

to continue its internationally renowned work on children's leukaemia, the training arrangements for Consultant Haematologists in the city, the immediate availability of specialist blood components and the carrying out of specialist research and development activities such as stem cell research, which are presently supplied by the Sheffield Centre;

- (e) Does not accept the premise put forward by the national Blood Service that the NSB Centre in Sheffield was 'not fit for purpose' when the Centre has recently undergone several major refurbishment projects and, in the opinion of managers, is now fit for purpose for at least another 10 years;*
- (f) Would wish to express its dissatisfaction at the apparent lack of accurate costings for the proposals including transportation costs thereby not giving the Board any opportunity to reach 'judgement' on the economic veracity of the proposals;*
- (g) Is of the view that the underlying philosophy behind the proposals is driven by economic consideration rather than service improvements particularly as no information regarding costings and deployment was made available to the Board;*
- (h) Is concerned that this matter was brought to the attention of the board in the first instance by the trade unions representing employees of the NBS in the City and not by the NBS and would urge the Secretary of State for Health to remind health bodies of their responsibility to engage in meaningful and comprehensive consultations with Local Authorities and other parties regarding proposals for service change and also to request in the strongest possible terms to examine closely the processes for disseminating information and engaging in consultation so as to ensure that substantial systemic improvements are made to prevent this situation arising again;*
- (i) Believes that at a time when all agencies are committed to taking positive steps to reduce the environmental impact of road travel there would be every possibility of an adverse environmental impact through increased transportation of blood products to the City together with the concomitant dangers of inaccessibility to the City in adverse weather conditions;*
- (j) Whilst recognising that it is not within its remit to become involved with or comment upon the possible adverse economic impact of the proposals upon the City's regeneration would nevertheless urge the Leader of the City Council, the cabinet member with responsibility for Economic Regeneration, Culture and Planning and the Chief Executive to pursue this aspect of the proposals with the utmost vigour;*
- (k) Requests that further proposals about the re-organisation be reported to the Board as a matter of urgency; and,*
- (l) Requests that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Sheffield Members of Parliament, the Secretary of State for Health, the Core Cities and the other South Yorkshire Authorities.*

1.3 As a result, this matter became a matter for consideration for the previous Board and included on its work programme. For a number of reasons, this was not considered during the previous municipal year.

1.4 In November 2006, the NBS was published, proposing the consolidation of the existing processing and testing centres into three major centres. It also proposed a reduction to the number of blood issue centres (where blood is stored and dispatched to hospitals). A review of the NBS was commissioned in July 2007 and undertaken between October and December 2007. The review sought to address concerns raised by key stakeholders about some aspects of the strategy published in November 2006. The revised strategy is attached to this report.

2.0 Report Issues

2.1 To help the Board consider the current proposals and the associated implications for Healthcare in Leeds, submission from the following organisations have been received and are appended to this report:

- NHAS Blood and Transport
- AMICUS (trade union)
- Leeds PCT

2.2 Representatives from these organisations will attend the meeting to address any questions identified by the Board.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 The Board is requested to consider the information provided in the attached report and determine what further action to take and/or any specific recommendations.