

Statement to Health & Wellbeing Board
22nd September 2020

Thank you for inviting me to speak on behalf of WFSO NHS. Although we welcome Barts' commitment to our new hospital at Whipps Cross, we are increasingly alarmed by the bed numbers they are proposing. 51 fewer beds than we have currently, and 109 fewer than we'd need if there is no improvement to community services¹

As you know, a key report on which Barts is basing its proposals is the Waltham Forest Integrated Care Strategy 2019, produced by the private consultancy company Carnall Farrar.

Carnall Farrar uses proxy data and modelling to project how 'demand' on hospital beds can be reduced by improved models of care in the community. This summer the exam results fiasco has highlighted the limits of modelling; it is only as good as the data used.

But the Strategy contains no data – or evaluation – about current community health services.² Indeed a chart showing the staff needed in the new care models makes no mention of Occupational Therapists!!³ And despite this lack of data, and before any decision about the number of Multi-Disciplinary Teams in the borough, it makes claims for costs and savings⁴ which are repeated in a report that went to Cabinet on 5th December 2019.

A key assertion in the strategy is that Waltham Forest is too reactive – spending more on acute care than its peers⁵. This is a serious misrepresentation. It only spends more as a **proportion** of its budget; it actually spends **less on acute care** than the median spend of the peers it's compared with.⁶ Similarly we are compared with Rightcare peers in projecting improvements to keep people out

1Building A Brighter Future for Whipps Cross Sept 20 – Pg 6

2Waltham Forest Integrated Care Strategy Oct 2019 – Pg 127

3Waltham Forest Integrated Care Strategy Oct 2019 – Pg 124

4Ibid, p26

5Ibid p4

6Ibid, p43

of hospital, despite the median per capita spend on all health services of these peers being £1581, whereas Waltham Forest's is £1355.⁷

And lost on Pg 140, there's a note: "social care capacity doesn't seem to be sufficient and will need to be addressed".

In our opinion the Strategy is flawed, untested and extremely aspirational in its claims.

Yet the proposal to reduce bed numbers in our new hospital is contingent on its modelling.

We are mindful of the competing pressures on the Council. But it does have a responsibility to exercise due diligence, in questioning and challenging its partners to secure health services that are safe for us all.

Our healthcare staff work incredibly hard, both in the community and in hospital. But hard work and goodwill cannot provide a safety net for insufficient beds. Whipps Cross is already an overstretched hospital. If it specialises in the care of older people, with fewer beds, it will be even more overstretched, and unable to meet the needs of the rest of its population.

So will this Board publicly question and raise concerns about the risks associated with the current proposals for the new hospital?

Waltham Forest Save Our NHS September 2020

⁷Ibid, 43