**Important update on the Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub**

As you will be aware from previous communications, the national Estates Team at NHS England issued a letter in January 2023 which instructed that the national Cavell Centre Programme, and its constituent six pilot programmes, should be paused pending approval of the national business case. This was discussed during the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting back in January.

At this point, the Programme Team for the Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub (the local name for the Cavell Centre Programme) took the decision to continue work on the site options appraisal, which was already underway, as we had contractual commitments with technical experts supporting the options appraisal work. We wanted to bring this phase of work to completion.

As you know, we have previously shared our intention to hold a multi-stakeholder workshop to identify a preferred site option and prioritised site list. This would be the final site appraisal stage and on completion would be a key milestone to progressing to formal consultation later in the year.

Since January, we have received no further communication of when the business case will be going forward for approval. We are also aware that even if the business case did go forwards, there are still no guarantees that the capital funding would be made available in the current economic climate.

Given that indications now point to the pause being medium to long term, NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin has reluctantly taken the decision to pause all further work and expenditure at this point. We will therefore not be holding the site options workshop that was originally planned and await further information from the national team. We will keep you updated on any further communication that is received.

It is important to clarify that this is a national directive for all six pilot programmes, and that the local projects as part of the Cavell Centre Programme cannot influence the decision.

Clearly, this is a hugely disappointing position given the significant amount of work that has been undertaken and the very clear case for change. NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and the Programme Team maintain its commitment to the project and to pursuing the right sustainable solution for General Practice in the South of Shrewsbury.

This does pose an extremely challenging situation to our practices if we are not able to access the £40-£60m national capital allocation for the programme. As has previously been shared, the case for changing how General Practice needs to be sustained over time has not altered.

At this point, there is no mechanism for securing this level of funding which means we now need to plan for an alternative future. As part of that, it is important to recognise that the uncertainty over the future of this development further emphasises the fragility of the status quo for the practices and their patients.

Our primary care estates strategy is currently under review, and we will need to consider the real prospect of not receiving this funding and addressing the current fragility of those respective practices. As a health and care system we will do all we can to avoid practice closures, but we will need to consider the consequences of practices that may no longer be able to continue to provide services, and as a result hand back their contract. Our considerations will need to include how this will affect patients, staff and neighbouring practices should patient lists be dispersed.

To inform this thinking, we are now in discussions with the six practices about next steps and revisiting each practice individually to explore what could be achieved to support them going forward. However, it is important to note that this will be to stabilise the practices as best we can. It is not about futureproofing or sustaining them in the way that the development of the hub approach would have allowed given the very limited amount of capital funding that is available to NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Understandably, you will have questions and views to share on this information. Therefore, we would like to invite you to a briefing session where we can have a full and frank discussion about this development and where we can feasibly focus our efforts going forwards. We will be in touch regarding a date and time for the briefing session in due course.

Thank you once again for your involvement so far.

Kind regards,

The Programme Team for the Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub