

Chairman's Note

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Trust Board paper D

Dear Colleagues

At our last Board meeting you were kind enough to respond to the questions posed in my report asking what other strategic risks should the Board be thinking about, were there any emerging risks or opportunities and if so what weighting or priority should be given to them. I could not do justice here to the diversity and breadth of comments but the distinction between planning for the next financial year as against a longer timescale and taking note of the national long term plan has to be a starting point. Investing in our workforce, ensuring a more integrated system approach, reappraising services, focusing on efficiency and productivity, adopting a strategic perspective towards risk and becoming more agile in decision making and outcomes were some of the many points identified during our discussion. Above all we should not lose sight of the fact that better outcomes for patients, their carers and families, and our local communities should result from these changes.

You may have noted some changes to the format of the Board agenda with agenda topics being grouped under the terms exploratory, navigator and for information. The last term is self-explanatory but the first two terms are designed to encourage some wide ranging discussion in the exploratory session and to signal that the navigation items are part of the assurance process we as a Board are responsible for. You will have noted that these concepts have been borrowed from the discussions we had with John Deffenbaugh and Sue Rubinstein at a recent thinking day session. This division will not of course restrict discussion to just those items listed in the exploratory section but it is designed to encourage contributions that assist the Board in thinking about the future and determining which areas should have focus and priority. I would also like to encourage Board members to look at the reports coming before them and critically evaluate them asking themselves the question - do they add value to the discussion?

I envisage that this approach adopted for Board meetings will flow through into its committees and the appropriate executive forums.

Our formal Board meeting last month was followed by an interesting and thought provoking session the following week at our thinking day by McKinsey consultants. With this in mind we are currently organising the March thinking day with the theme of how should the Board appreciate and engage with developments in relation to digital strategy, including the implications of the recent Topol report and our own programme for the next year. Future thinking days will also pick up some of the themes that colleagues have already highlighted.

Last week I attended and spoke at the first meeting of the UHL BAME staff network which was informative. I emphasised the Board's commitment to fairness and our other values, the business case for making the best use of all our staff, and the focus on changing organisational culture as well as developing talent pipelines if we were to be reflective at all levels in the organisation. This is a theme that has been recognised nationally with all our national regulators taking a particular interest in this issue. The visible leadership of the Chief Executive in chairing the Equality and Diversity Group and involvement of a NED (Ballu Patel) has been the subject of favourable comments to me.

Finally three points in relation to the Board and attendance at its meetings. NHSI have extended my term of appointment until September 30th 2020 which I feel allows me to ensure that the focus of culture, leadership and transformation as well as clarifying strategic priorities against the backdrop of a changing landscape will continue. At the last Remuneration Committee meeting, colleagues also felt that the appropriate Directors responsible for Estates and Facilities and for IT should attend Board meetings regularly because of the increasing importance of these themes in Board and Committee discussions.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Board meeting on March 7th 2019.

Regards,

Karamjit Singh
Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust