

**Chief Executive's Office**

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Our Ref: AA

12<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Councillor Dan Jeffery,  
Chair of the Health Overview & Scrutiny  
Panel,  
Southampton City Council,  
Civic Centre, Southampton.  
SO14 7LY

Dear Councillor Jeffery,

**re: Report of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel: Public and sustainable transport provision to Southampton General Hospital - Mini review**

Thank you for sharing the above report with the Trust and for the opportunity to contribute during the process of the review. We welcome this opportunity to better understand the issues experienced by the public when accessing the SGH site by public transport and are committed to work in partnership with relevant organisations to make improvements where we are able.

We would wish to acknowledge the considerable work undertaken in recent years to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Close co-operation between the partner organisations, specifically the University of Southampton, Southampton City Council, the bus providers and University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust has achieved improvements we can now build on. Staff of the Trust, patients and visitors have benefited from this partnership approach and we are particularly grateful for the resources that the City Council has been able to provide, including ongoing advice from its Workplace Travel Team and funding as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

We also acknowledge that further work is needed if we are to continue delivering improvements for the benefit of those we serve. The recommendations outlined in the report propose a more structured manner in which to progress the joint working between the partner organisations in the future. In our view maximum benefit would be achieved if these actions were delivered in a coordinated manner and the City Council would be best placed to take responsibility for this coordination.

While our core focus is on providing patient care, we recognise that we have a further duty of care to patients who need to access to our services using public transport. We see continued partnership working as the key to improving this access for the future but are also committed to making the changes we are able to implement by ourselves as quickly as possible.

Our detailed response to the recommendations in the report is below and we look forward to the improvements that will be delivered as a result of these actions in the coming months.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

**Alastair Matthews**  
**Interim Chief Executive.**

cc Alison Ayres, Director of Communications and Public Engagement

## UHS response to recommendations

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>UHS response</b>
1	<p>Ensure that staff, visitors and patients are aware of the public and sustainable transport routes to and from the general hospital.</p> <p>a) UHS to review, improve and provide evidence of the information provided to staff, visitors and patients in relation to travel to the hospital – including in patient appointment letters and the website;</p> <p>b) SCC to develop leaflets to publicise sustainable transport options to the general hospital from various parts of the city for distribution at relevant places including the hospital, GP surgeries, libraries, community facilities and the information provided on the 'My Journey' website.</p>	<p>UHS will work with SCC to review and improve the information available to those accessing the SGH site with consideration given to the points below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* We would suggest the recommended actions a and b would be better completed in a coordinated manner to ensure the content of all communications regarding public transport to SGH is complimentary</li> <li>* The content and method of communication should be informed by the data and information collated by undertaking a survey of patients and visitors as indicated by recommendation 10.</li> <li>* The bus companies have a critical role in publicising sustainable transport options and should be identified as one of the lead organisations in delivering this action.</li> </ul>
2	<p>To establish a representative passenger group for public transport in Southampton including service providers (buses and trains), transport users and councillors. The group should meet at least twice a year with scope for extra meetings if required and minutes available publicly.</p>	<p>UHS can send a representative to attend this group.</p>
3	<p>That UHS ensure there is early engagement with public transport providers, allowing time to consult with the passenger group mentioned in recommendation 2 where possible, over services changes that are likely to affect staff and patient travel – including the proposed extension of working hours at the hospital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* UHS will ensure this is the case and will work via the passenger group once it has been established by the Council.</li> </ul>
5	<p>SCC to work with bus companies, Network Rail and Red Funnel to improve signposting to bus services to the hospital from central station and Town Quay linking into the legible cities and legible bus networks.</p>	<p>UHS would welcome any improvements partner organisations are able to deliver, but suggest such improvements should be informed by data and information collated by undertaking the survey of patients and visitors as indicated by recommendation 10.</p>
6	<p>SCC and UHS to work together to improve signposting to bus stops and cycle routes in and around the hospital including consideration of a potential cycle route through the cemetery. If this is not deemed appropriate, the Panel would urge the Council and partners to consider alternative routes which are physically segregated from motor vehicles as much as possible.</p>	<p>UHS would welcome the opportunity to work with SCC to deliver these improvements.</p>
7	<p>SCC to work with the UHS to improve bus stop information around the general hospital site to ensure time tables and real-time information are available both in the hospital and at bus stops.</p>	<p>UHS will work with SCC on this priority and will use the survey and passenger groups as reference points for the work.</p>
8	<p>SCC to prioritise improvements to street lighting</p>	<p>UHS would welcome these improvements.</p>

<p>on Tremona Rd and Dale Rd Junction around bus stops, to ensure that passengers feel safer.</p>	
<p>1 SCC, UHSFT, Southampton University, Unison, S-LINKSLINK and Bus Companies to work together to explore options for undertaking a survey to establish how patients and visitors are currently travelling to and from the general hospital and the results are used to inform future service planning and improve reliability. The results should also be reported back to HOSP and fed into the key local health documents: the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Health and Well-being Strategy, the latter of which, following the Panel's recent review, now is agreed to contain transport as a consideration.</p>	<p>UHS would welcome the opportunity to work jointly with partner organisations in order to undertake such a survey.</p>
<p>1 Regardless of decisions taken by bus companies in relation to continuing, or otherwise, to run evening and weekend buses to the General Hospital, the Panel would like SCC to review the effects of the bus subsidy reductions 6 on access to the general hospital months after they come into effect. A report on the review should be provided to HOSP.</p>	<p>UHS would welcome such a review.</p>
<p>1 At a meeting in the 2013-14 municipal year, HOSP to consider the Patient Transport Service and other dedicated modes of patient transport in more detail in order to improve understanding of how the services are managed, publicised to patients and concerns with the current service. Commissioners and providers, including the voluntary sector, of the service to be invited. If recommendations are necessary to improve the service, they will be made at that meeting.</p>	<p>As a significant 'user' of the Patient Transport System, UHS would be happy to contribute to this discussion.</p>
<p>1 UHS to be asked to consider reviewing the zones used in relation to parking permits to consider areas where there are regular direct bus routes which fall outside of the inner zone but provides attractive transport to the hospital within 30 minutes. This should help improve the viability of bus services and encourage sustainable transport use ("getting people out of their cars").</p>	<p>UHS zones were designed with available bus routes in mind as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff living in zone 2 (based on a combined 15 min walk and 30 min bus journey) will be allocated a parking space if they work nights, shifts or travel off and on site several times per day.</li> </ul> <p>We acknowledge however that these zones were designed three years ago and are willing to consider revising the zones in light of current bus routes. This will need careful consideration and possible consultation with staff Prior to any changes being implemented.</p>
<p>1 Consideration is given to the development of a bus hub within the general hospital site and how SCC can work with the hospital to facilitate this.</p>	<p>UHS is actively considering the future development of the SGH site including the possible development of a bus hub. As plans are developed we will ensure that partners are kept up to date and are able to contribute. We would be happy to work with SCC on such a development.</p>

1 5 .	Encourage bus companies to work together to develop a cross company bus ticket for use within Southampton to enable easier travel from the City to the hospital. This should be priced competitively with existing operator day tickets – e.g. First day ticket rather than the Solent travelcard which covers a greater area and is therefore more expensive. Consideration also be given to how they can work better with train providers on this issue and the promotion of Plusbus add-on tickets.	UHS would be happy to work with bus companies to consider schemes to publicise such pricing schemes appropriately to patients and visitors.
1 6 .	UHS to share their forthcoming travel plan with SCC Transport Officers by April 2013 and ensure that the plan details clear lines of accountability for actions and is refreshed yearly and fully updated every three years. The final plan should also be shared with HOSP. SCC officers to support UHS to complete the implementation of the travel plan. UHS should ensure they share and learn from best practice on travel planning including working with Southampton University.	The approval of this Travel Plan within UHS is slightly delayed. We now expect to share the Travel Plan with SCC Transport Officers by July 2013, with final release by September 2013.