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Media Release

The RUH plans for a greener future

The Royal United Hospitals (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust has taken its next step towards becoming a more sustainable and energy-efficient organisation, following the submission of a planning permission application to make major improvements to the heating system at its Combe Park site.

In 2024, the RUH received a £21.6-million government grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, which will be used to enable the hospital to reduce the carbon emissions over which it has direct control by 19% initially, and 25% by 2030.

The grant will be used to partially de-steam the site by replacing its ageing, inefficient boiler heating systems with more sustainable and energy-efficient equipment. This change will improve the air quality around the hospital for patients and visitors, staff and the local community.

The grant, which is run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix, will also fund other important improvements such as installing, solar panels and LED lighting, which is more user-friendly, environmentally friendly and comfortable for staff and patients.

The RUH is working with resource management company Veolia to deliver these changes. Now Veolia has submitted a planning application to Bath and North East Somerset Council on the hospital's behalf so that this work can begin.

Toni Lynch, Chief Nursing Officer for the RUH, said: "The RUH is aiming to reach Net Zero for scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 2030, in line with Bath and North East Somerset Council, and for the benefit of all of the people in our community. Decarbonising our site, and moving towards cleaner, more energy-efficient options, is essential in helping us reach this goal. We are very grateful to all the partners who are working together with us on this exciting project to make these vital changes."

The application focuses on the redevelopment of the hospital's existing Energy Centre on the west of its site and would see four Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) installed on the roof of the Energy Centre. The carefully researched proposals include steps to reduce noise omitted by the ASHPs, to make sure that residents living on roads close to the development notice as little difference as possible.

The ASHPs would also heat water to a lower temperature before distributing it around the RUH site. This means less heat is lost as it's transported from the energy centre to the end users. Because ASHPs would provide the same output more efficiently, their installation would mean that the RUH could decommission some of the existing, less environmentally friendly gas boilers. The new system would also see fewer leaks and disruption to services, as the pipes would be more accessible for maintenance.

A future planning application, expected to be submitted in the new year, will see the hospital apply for additional permissions where required to install the pipework and other infrastructure that is needed to circulate this lower-temperature water.

Improving air quality in this way is not just important for the environment. It also benefits the health of all those who use, work in and live near the hospital. Fossil fuels are one of the main contributors towards ill-health caused by air pollution, and it's thought that over one-third of asthma cases could be avoided by efforts to cut carbon emissions.

Ian Rodger, Director of Public Sector Decarbonisation at Salix, said: "The NHS has set challenging net zero targets and we are looking forward to working with the RUH as it progresses its journey in support of these targets."

If plans are approved, work would start soon after and be completed by 2026.

Ends

Notes to Editor

About Air Source Heat Pumps

ASHPs are a form of renewable energy that transfer warmth from the air outside into heating and hot water, and they work even in colder temperatures. They run on electricity, rather than gas, and require less energy than traditional gas boilers, which is what makes them a more efficient, greener choice.

About Salix

Salix's role is to support the UK government in driving the transition to a low carbon future and meet challenging net zero targets. We deliver and administer grant and loan funding on behalf of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Department for Education and the Scottish and Welsh governments. This is delivered across the public sector as well as housing.

The schemes we deliver provide funding for energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects for public sector buildings as well as the housing sector. Our schemes are dedicated to reducing carbon emissions and supporting the government's ambitious net zero targets. These programmes include the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Home Upgrade Grant, the Low Carbon Skills Fund and Scotland's Public Sector Heat Decarbonisation Fund. We also play an important role in increasing awareness of energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation across the public sector throughout the UK. Our teams work closely

with the public sector organisations throughout their decarbonisation journey, from the moment a grant is allocated to the moment the scheme is fully operational.

About the RUH

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

Our new Dyson Cancer Centre brings together many of the RUH's cancer services under one roof to provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West. The centre includes the RUH's oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, a 22-bed inpatient ward, a dedicated pharmacy, research team and nuclear medicine and physics teams.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub. The three-storey hub provides a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. It also includes comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk



**Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero**

