

**News**



## **The NHS: a political football once again**

Gleeds Director for Health, Roger Pulham, reflects on the forthcoming election and the importance of maintaining focus.

With just a few hours to the general election, the outcome is considered by political pundits and pollsters to be 'too narrow to call'. What is apparent is the NHS is the same political football as it always has been. All of the main political parties are 'bidding up' the additional funding they will give the NHS if in power.

Money alone, however, is not generally regarded as being a viable solution to achieving an affordable, efficient service. Fortunately the status of the Simon Stevens' paper 'Five Year Forward View' is regarded as the strategy all can sign up to.

Stevens' 3 prong solution - greater efficiency, reduced demand and more balancing funding - is intended to achieve an affordable, efficient NHS servicing a healthier general public. Each of these deliverables will be the subject of new initiatives, revised policies and in some instances imposition on persons and businesses.

Whilst we can't predict the ultimate format of these changes, nor the political party or coalition through which they will be delivered, our industry needs to be ready to provide solutions that help the NHS deliver its efficiency requirements whatever the outcome.

Sector experts are well aware that much of the low hanging efficiency fruit has been picked. Leveraging utility cost savings has been on the agenda for the past 5 years and there has been substantial streamlining of non-front line heads of expenditure. So what more can the NHS be doing?

In these post recessionary times we are experiencing the return of realistic prices for redundant fixed assets, in particular, brownfield sites. With government looking to use redundant land and buildings for housing, NHS Trusts are presented with an attractive opportunity.

Many are sitting on redundant stock, liquidating these assets would result in a three-fold benefit. The sale of disused space would generate capital receipts for the streamlining of NHS services, but more importantly, the Trusts would save on associated operational and overhead costs.

Whilst it may be tempting to wait around until the dust from the general election has settled, inaction from our industry to engage and advise NHS Trusts is only likely to lead to slower change. The construction industry much play its part in driving our economy forward.

**Ends**

**For further information please contact:**

Julian Barlow (on behalf of Gleeds)

Tel: 01628 857979

Mob: 07747 852 070

[julian@barlowcomms.co.uk](mailto:julian@barlowcomms.co.uk)

#### **Notes for editors**

- Photography: Roger Pulham
- Gleeds ([gleeds.com](http://gleeds.com)) is an international property and construction consultancy with 130 years' experience in the property and construction industry. With 1500 dedicated staff across six continents and 56 offices, Gleeds prides itself on being a global business that is structured to act and think locally.
- Working with clients in almost every sector, Gleeds services the entire project lifecycle and categorises its offering into the following core areas: programme and project management, commercial and contract management, asset management and advisory.