

cc: Mr Womald  
Dr Harris  
Dr Oliver  
Dr Walford

Mrs Firth  
Mr D Harris  
Mr Bench  
Dr Wills

Mr Godfrey

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BLA 1/4

BLOOD PRODUCTS LABORATORY: REDEVELOPMENT

1. I think it may be worth summarising how things stand.
2. Ministers have agreed that
  - BPL should be redeveloped, making some use of the existing buildings if possible.
  - Up to £17m capital will be provided (either by the PES addition which is to be sought or, more likely, by top-slicing the allocation to Regions).
  - The Joint Management Committee may set up a steering group to handle the planning and designing of the new laboratory.
3. We are waiting for
  - RHA proposals on project management.
  - Further information about the costs of collecting different amounts of plasma.
4. We are required to submit for Treasury scrutiny and approval all capital projects costing £4m or more, normally before any detailed design work has begun.
5. We now need to
  - ✓ - Appoint the members of the JMC's steering group. (You are drafting letters of invitation for Dr Harris to send. Unless Mr Armour can tell me that he is the RHA's nominee we shall have to ask the RA to nominate someone.)
  - Press the RHA for proposals on project management. (Mr Armour has explained to me that the RHA's silence is not a sign of inactivity, but that they are trying by diplomatic means to overcome local difficulties in offering us proposals we may find acceptable.)
  - Arrange for steering group members to meet and to be briefed as soon as possible. (They will need to be told of undertakings to arrange a staff input to the planning and design processes.)
  - Press on rapidly with work on plasma costs so that we can (i) seek Ministerial agreement to an approach to the NHS about plasma collection at a preferred level, (ii) subsequently provide the steering group with information on which the capacity of the new BPL can be based.
  - Determine the stage at which the Treasury should be approached and prepare a suitable paper. (You are working on this.)
6. MS(H) wishes to go to Elstree to reassure the staff. It would be nice if he could tell them what I have said above, but Mr Armour's advice is that he should not go until the long term management issue is decided. The longer a decision is delayed the harder it is to save the news that we are ready to go ahead so that MS(H) can deliver it. We shall have to form a view about whether we should soon feed a situation report to them through the joint consultative machinery or advise MS(H) to visit BPL whether or not a decision has been reached on the management issue. If he is going to talk about management, then we should arrange for representatives of BGRL and PFL staff to be there.

GRO-C

J. HARLEY  
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3 July 1981

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