<u>WASTE DISPOSAL</u>

Since Health Secretary Matt Hancock axed plans for more big cuts to NHS hospitals in West London – saving Charing Cross and Ealing A&E in the process – tricky questions have arisen about the vast cost of the doomed 'Shaping a Healthier Future' (SaHF) project.

Over seven years, a planned "reconfiguration" of hospital services serving 2 million people in 8 London Boroughs has wasted more than the cost of a brand new hospital to produce a stack of piss poor documents- and huge earnings for management consultants and other "experts".

SaHF itself stopped publishing embarrassing details of fees earned by the likes of McKinsey, Ernst and Young, PWC and Deloitte at the end of 2017 when they topped £72 million. But they were just the tip of a taxpayer-funded iceberg. In 2015, a commission led by Michael Mansfield QC estimated that by 2017/8 the total cost of the proposed shake up would be a staggering £235 million.

SaHF project leaders dismissed this but refused to publish any figures of their own. They admitted that 130 people including 75 "interim executives", were being employed to run the project. By the time Hancock killed it off last month, despite publishing a seven-volume blueprint for reform the project had still not completed a final business case.

The only initiative implemented was closure of A&E services at Central Middlesex and Hammersmith Hospitals in 2014 – which led to a predictably disastrous collapse in A&E performance standards at hospitals nearby. Project leaders and consultants badly miscalculated the number of beds required. They assumed (wrongly) that as yet unbuilt "community" and other NHS services would drastically reduce the number of patients needing hospital care (99,000 fewer by 2025) and so justify 364 fewer beds in "Outer West London".

Campaigners now want the Commons Public Accounts Committee or the National Audit Office to investigate why so much time and money was frittered away on a scrapped plan whose arguments have been largely discredited.