

Member of the public 2

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Health Service Costs

I have not read the report and have no connection to the field of medicine.

However, I would like to make a suggestion. I see the key to many things can be solved by the design and build of new hospitals. As you know with present designs, they are extremely expensive and with massive cost overruns.

Maybe with a little thought, this could be overcome.

I would envisage something like an hospital village whose design is rather like a shopping centre. There would be separate towers for individual companies, shared facilities for utilities and other services like diagnostics, all built above a large underground area that could form the basis for an area command post and stocking emergency supplies for a large number of people over an extended period. I would even consider putting a dome over the whole site so that there would be a large area of controlled climate to cope with any sudden influx.

The need is best shown by New Orleans and Katrina when the facilities at the hospital failed miserably.

I would select a site next door to an existing shopping centre so that it could share existing car parking and other services. I would make the hospital part of a major hub for an extensive mass transit system to reduce travelling costs. I would favour a lightweight overhead railway system but that is another story.

I would take as my guide the octopus design adopted by Brunel for a mobile field hospital.

The key to reducing costs is to build in easy and flexible maintenance. Wards should be closed down and emptied on a regular basis so that it can be deep cleaned. Perhaps many items can be semi disposable in that they can easily be recycled. Although common abroad, I have yet to see a centralised vacuum cleaning system in this country that would reduce cross infection and time.

I would even look at a small modular nuclear reactor on site such as liquid fluoride thorium to have independence of power and water supply.

It is annoying that under the present system the main contractor has total control and can hold everybody to ransom. This way a company could take a tower and outfit it at a reasonable price and make savings by sharing services with other companies operating on the site.

Certainly, the country is ill equipped to cope with a major emergency. I haven't a clue as where to go if one should occur. Apart from extreme weather there is a whole range of other dangers from solar flares, meteors, tsunamis, earthquakes and even pandemics.

I am sure if you laid down some guidelines, it would make the basis of an excellent open competition which would enable a far deeper consideration about the whole situation.

You will probably find that the existing companies in the field do not welcome being in what is considered a monopoly position and perhaps even be glad for other companies having the

ability to enter alongside themselves. You could even approach them and see what they think?