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# Survey asks staff and west Hertfordshire residents for their say on new hospital buildings

Posted: 4 September 2020



**Local residents and NHS staff are being asked for their views on the best way to improve hospital facilities in west Hertfordshire.**

West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust (WHHT) and Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) have been pursuing funding for many years and are closer than ever to securing a major investment to transform the facilities on offer.

The boards of WHHT and HVCCG would like to hear from as many local people as possible before making an important decision on which options should be looked at in more detail at a key meeting in early October.

All the proposed shortlist of options are based on our current three hospital sites and prioritise investment in emergency and specialist care services at Watford General Hospital. This is because these services see the highest number of patients and those with the most acute clinical need. It is also the site where, overall, the buildings are in the poorest condition.

The proposed shortlist does not include any 'new' or 'greenfield' sites, although our proposed preferred option for emergency care would see major new hospital facilities being developed next to the current hospital at Watford, including using some land currently owned by Watford Borough Council.

Our proposed options also include improvements to urgent and planned care services at Hemel Hempstead and St Albans hospitals. This includes a new build urgent treatment centre, women's and children's services and new diagnostic facilities on the Hemel Hempstead site and a new rapid access cancer diagnostic centre and improvements to theatres at St Albans City Hospital. Both hospitals are really important to future service models and the Trust will continue to develop and invest in the services provided from these hospitals over the coming years.

An independent site feasibility study\*, which looked at six site options, concluded that "the greenfield options carry far greater risk and complexity compared to the Watford General Hospital site options and that it would take longer for new hospital facilities to be up and running on any of these sites."

The study also showed that the Watford site (using the existing hospital footprint or adjacent land on the Riverwell site) can be successfully developed by 2025 or soon after. This deadline is very important as the Trust and CCG need to demonstrate that the preferred option is deliverable to secure funding and avoid any further delay in providing a much-improved environment for patients and staff.

WHHT deputy chief executive Helen Brown says: "Improvements to emergency and specialist care services are urgently needed. We have a once in a generation opportunity to transform our hospital buildings, enhance the patient experience and create great places to work. This survey is an important part of our engagement with our patients, staff and local communities. We would like to hear from as many people as possible, particularly people who may not have commented or been involved so far."

David Evans, managing director of Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group added: "Our partnership work is really paying off when it comes to increasing the care that is delivered at home or in more local settings. This is reducing the need to go to hospital, but for those times when a visit to or a stay in hospital is needed, we know that current facilities fall short. It's very exciting to be this close to seeing a complete transformation of hospital buildings and although there are different views on where these should be, I think the time is right to unite behind one option and make it happen."

Once a shortlist has been confirmed by both boards, extensive analysis of the benefits and costs of each option will be undertaken. The aim is to confirm the final preferred option early in 2021 and to complete the OBC later in the year. Once the OBC is approved the final step in the process is to finalise the detailed design, procure a construction partner and agree a detailed construction contract, build plan and cost. This is all set out in a full business case (FBC).

There is a lot of work to do to get to the point where building work can start – but WHHT and HVCCG are absolutely committed to pushing forward to deliver the hospital facilities that patients and staff deserve at the very earliest opportunity.

People are asked to read a [short briefing document](#) before completing [the survey](#). The closing date is midnight on Tuesday 15 September 2020. More information about

redevelopment plans is also available on the WHHT website [here](#)

## Ends

1. For more information, please contact the communications team on: 01923 436280 or email: [westherts.redevelopment@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.redevelopment@nhs.net). Out of hours, please call the Watford General Hospital switchboard on 01923 244366 and ask for the on call communications manager.
2. West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust serves people from across Hertfordshire, north London and further afield. It operates from three hospitals; Watford General, St Albans City and Hemel Hempstead. The trust has a catchment area of over 500,000 people and is one of the largest employers locally, with around 5,000 staff and volunteers.
3. For further information about the OBC please see our '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)' information sheet.
4. If you are member of the public with an interest in the future of hospital services in west Hertfordshire please think about joining the Stakeholder Reference Group and if you are member of staff or healthcare partner please fill out the Professional Reference Group form. Application forms can be found on our [website](#) under 'Find out how you can get involved'.
5. For more information about our hospitals, visit [www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk). You can also join our followers on Twitter ([twitter.com/westhertsNHS](https://twitter.com/westhertsNHS)) and find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/westhertsNHS](https://facebook.com/westhertsNHS))

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