

Whipps Cross Redevelopment – Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 24/11/2020

1. Overall

Why is Whipps Cross Hospital being redeveloped?

Whipps Cross Hospital, in Leytonstone, is a cherished part of the local community it serves, and has been for over 100 years. This however means we have a very old and disjointed estate – over 40% pre-dates the NHS – and we now have one of the highest backlog maintenance bills in the NHS. The way the current hospital is spread out is not suitable for the efficient delivery of healthcare, provides a poor environment for our staff and patients and is confusing and time consuming for people to find their way around.

The health care needs of our population are changing and the existing hospital is not able to adapt with its current buildings and poor layout. The age and layout of the buildings make it very difficult and costly to install and make best use of new healthcare equipment and digital technology. Designing a hospital from scratch puts us in a unique position to improve how healthcare is provided for local people and improve our patient care and outcomes.

What is the vision for the redevelopment of Whipps Cross Hospital?

Our vision, shared with our local health and social care partners, is to build a new state-of-the-art hospital providing the same core services as today, including A&E and maternity. The redevelopment of the wider Whipps Cross site gives us an opportunity to position the hospital at the heart of a new neighbourhood with much needed new homes as well as the potential for other health and wellbeing services, leisure and cultural facilities, green and public spaces, bringing real benefits and investment to the local community.

What stage are the plans at and when will a new hospital be built?

We have progressed past the first stage of the Government's business case process (Strategic Outline Case) and established the case for investment – see our September 2020 publication, [Building a Brighter Future for Whipps Cross – Moving to the next stage](#). We are now developing detailed plans in the Outline Business Case Stage which we expect to complete in the first half of 2021. Our indicative timeline, subject to business case approvals and planning permission, would see the construction of a new hospital begin towards the end of 2022 and be completed towards the end of 2026.

On 20th November, we launched a significant engagement exercise with our staff and local people, the aim of which is to seek feedback on the emerging designs for the new Whipps Cross Hospital and emerging ideas for the development of the wider Whipps Cross site. This can be found [here](#).

How can I get involved and provide my views?

There are a number of ways you can do this:

- Get in touch at: FutureWhipps.BartsHealth@nhs.net
- Join one of our online focus group: see our [website](#) for further details

- Join one of our upcoming public meetings on 1st, 2, and 5th December – see our website for details
- Complete our [online survey](#)
- Follow the latest developments using #FutureWhipps and @WhippsCrossHosp on Twitter.

Where will the new hospital be built?

The disused site of the former nurses' accommodation has emerged as the preferred way forward for the location of the new hospital. This is because it enables it to be built in a single phase, meaning it would be delivered faster, with the least disruption to existing clinical services and whilst providing the best value for money.

How much will a new hospital cost?

The final costs of the new hospital will be estimated over the next stage of the development of plans, informed by the detailed design work. The overall capital requirement from Government will be subject to approval by the Department of Health and Social Care and the Treasury as part of the Government's approval process for the Outline Business Case.

2. Health and care services

What services will the new hospital provide?

A new Whipps Cross hospital will continue to provide the same core services as it does today, including A&E and consultant-led maternity care as well as becoming a centre of expertise for the treatment and care of frail and older people. Our clinical strategy for Whipps Cross will see improvements in how services are delivered which aim to increase convenience and quality and reduce the amount of time people need to spend in hospital through:

- faster access to senior clinicians and diagnostic tests for those that do attend hospital, meaning more will be seen and discharged on the same day rather than be admitted
- more operations able to be done as day cases, meaning people leave hospital earlier
- more outpatient appointments able to be done remotely

How many beds will the new hospital have?

Overall the new hospital will provide more clinical space for healthcare than the current site. We have not yet agreed the overall number of beds that will be required in the new hospital, that work will be completed as we develop our Outline Business Case. Our current assumptions can be found in [Building a Brighter Future for Whipps Cross – Moving to the next stage](#). Our clinical strategy – shared with our local partners in primary and community services – is to improve services in a way that reduces the need for people to have to attend hospital and, if they do need to attend, reduces the amount of time they need to stay there.

Our partners in primary and community services plan to provide more care closer to people's homes through for example home monitoring and virtual appointments. In the hospital itself, we are aiming to provide more 'same day emergency care', supported by a significant expansion in the number of diagnostic tests we undertake, as well as providing more

operations as 'day cases' – these measures will reduce the need for admissions and overnight stays. Our working assumption is that these types of additional capacity across the community and the hospital are likely to lead over time to around a 10% reduction in the number of days patients admitted as emergencies spend in hospital beds each year compared to today, reducing the number of overall overnight beds required. Within this though we expect increases in some areas such as maternity and critical care beds.

We have based our current assumptions on the evidence of what our peers in other health systems have been able to achieve. However, these assumptions will continue to be tested. Moreover, the number of beds in any hospital is not fixed, it flexes up and down in response to operational pressures. A new hospital will provide us with greater flexibility and adaptability of spaces to be able to do this more effectively than today and we also plan to retain some space on the wider site for possible future healthcare uses.

What extra services will be put in place in the community that will reduce pressure on the hospital and how much extra money will be invested to support this?

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) plans include additional investment, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan, to support the shift of care and resources from the hospital environment as far as clinically safe and appropriate, so that people receive care as close to home as possible. For example, Waltham Forest will see a £12m rise in investment in primary and community services by 2023/24. Investing in areas such as: access to GPs, more phone and video appointments, more support workers with new roles such as social prescribers, more care and support packages available - including home monitoring - will help avoid attendance at hospital and improve discharge, with more people able to be treated closer to home.

Will COVID have an impact on how the new hospital is designed?

Yes. We have learnt a lot from the COVID pandemic which has had a significant impact on the health and care landscape. Our clinicians have completed a review into our original Health and Care Services strategy to assess the need for any changes to the models of care envisaged as a result of our COVID experience, this can be viewed in our summary document [*Health and Care in a new Whipps Cross Hospital*](#). We will also learn from best practice and emerging scientific findings from the NHS and globally to ensure that the new Whipps Cross Hospital is designed to incorporate the most up-to-date clinical practice.

Overall, our COVID pandemic experience has reinforced the direction of travel we envisaged for Whipps Cross and the existing hospital has already put changes in place that we proposed for the new building, such as expanding virtual outpatients appointments.

Building a new hospital now provides us with a great opportunity to future proof the hospital for another pandemic, for example through increasing the number of single rooms for greater infection prevention and control, segregating entrances and through designing our ward space for increased flexibility to respond to pressures.

Will there be changes in the provision of surgery at Whipps Cross?

There are wider changes proposed in the provision of surgery across the Barts Health group – which Whipps Cross is a part of - which are not related to the redevelopment itself but are likely to lead to changes in surgery at Whipps Cross over time. For many services, there is

increasing evidence that concentrating day-case surgery activity into a smaller number of specialised centres can improve patient outcomes. We are therefore looking across the Barts Health group as to whether we should be organising our surgical procedures in a different way to create centres of excellence at our different hospitals including Whipps Cross.

We want Whipps Cross itself to be a centre of excellence for care of elderly and frail patients so it has a specialist identity of its own, as well as providing general services for the population. We see the potential for a significant surgical centre of excellence as part of the redevelopment, but for some specialities the centre of excellence that we create may be somewhere else and we would need to adapt our pathways for this. However, this only applies to the surgery, all other steps including diagnosis and outpatients would be local, but there is likely to be a change over time to the specialities at the site.

What will Barts Health do if the improvement in community services that is assumed in the redevelopment does not happen?

Our local health system partners have ambitious plans to improve community services, backed by significant additional investment in line with the NHS Long Term Plan. We are working very closely with our health and social care partners to develop our plans further and to implement them together in a way that gives us the best chance of success. We are doing this through key system forums such as our Strategic Partnership Board and through the East London Health and Care Partnership.

The experience of having to respond to COVID as a health system - with the expansion of community response services that has entailed and the improvements in discharge through the integrated discharge hub at Whipps Cross – gives us greater confidence as a system that these improvements can be achieved. However, we are planning over the long term and we know that demands on the health system will change so a very important principle in our plans is providing flexibility to adapt over time. We will build flexibility and adaptability into the design of the hospital and we plan to retain some space on the wider site for possible future healthcare uses. These measures will help ensure we are able to respond to future pressures.

Will the Margaret Centre still be part of the site in a new development?

Our palliative care services will not be based in a separate building but based in the new hospital building alongside other services. Our clinical strategy set out plans for more closely integrated palliative and end of life care services in the future. Health professionals from across the system who identify a palliative or end-of-life care need will be able to ensure that patients receive a comprehensive needs assessment.

We continue to work with our community partners to support palliative and end-of-life care in the community. If patients do require specialist palliative care in an acute setting, then they will be cared for in the hospital.

How will the Trust have the ability to expand the new hospital, should more capacity be required in future years, if the majority of land is redeveloped for housing and other uses?

Once the new hospital is built and services have relocated into it, the land that is not required for the new hospital will be released for redevelopment. The new hospital will be designed to ensure flexibility and adaptability of spaces to better enable us to meet future demands. For example, through flexible, repeatable design, we will be able to change the function within the hospital, should it be required, so, for example, we can scale up critical care rapidly if we need to.

We also plan to retain space on the Whipps Cross site for possible future healthcare uses. For example, we have identified the opportunity for a building that could house complementary primary and community facilities on the site. We and our local partners are considering what services could benefit from being co-located at Whipps Cross, to improve community facilities and to strengthen the provision of integrated care on the site.

The NHS has always changed how it uses its buildings as new treatment options become available and new technology is introduced. We have previously had to adapt buildings that were never designed to be easily changed. We will be able to design flexibility and adaptability into the design of the new hospital so that change in the future is easier, quicker and more cost effective to achieve.

Are there plans for mental health wards in the new hospital?

There are no mental health wards in the current hospital and no plans to house any within the new hospital. Barts Health will continue to work with our mental health provider colleagues, North East London Foundation Trust, to support continued development of out of hospital care pathways for patients, including ensuring that they are able to access acute care when that is required.

3. Hospital Design and Development

How big will the new hospital be?

The new hospital will provide more clinical space for healthcare than the current site. Our initial assumption is that the new hospital will have a total floor area of around 77,000 square metres. This would mean a slightly smaller floor area than today – but one with more clinical space, with over two-thirds of the hospital given over to clinical space, compared to around just 50% today. Wards will be developed to modern standards with a significantly expanding proportion of single rooms, growing from around 17 per cent today to at least 50 per cent, improving patient experience and infection control.

Will the new hospital be environmentally sustainable?

We have a fantastic opportunity to build a hospital at the leading edge of environmental sustainability design, striving to deliver the lowest carbon footprint possible and we are investigating the opportunity to design a net zero carbon hospital. We are also committed to the hospital achieving a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'excellent' standard, with an aspiration to achieve 'outstanding'.

Will you retain the heritage buildings on the site?

We are now entering the next stage of detailed planning and have appointed an Architect Led Design Team (ALDT) – Ryder Architecture - to lead the hospital design and

masterplanning work. As part of their work they are conducting a heritage assessment of the site to inform our thinking. Our aspiration and design brief is to seek to retain key elements of the older buildings (heritage buildings).

How tall will the new hospital be and is there consideration being given to impacts on light and privacy to residential properties?

We anticipate a building of varying heights with taller elements of around nine storeys towards the centre of the overall site and the scale reduced and set-back on the western boundary to reduce its impact on neighbouring homes.

4. Redeveloping the wider Whipps Cross site

Will there be primary and community health and care services on the site co-located with the hospital?

We have identified the opportunity for a building that could house complementary primary and community facilities on the site. We and our local partners are considering what services could benefit from being co-located at Whipps Cross, to improve community facilities and to strengthen the provision of integrated care on the site.

How much of the site will be sold for housing and how many houses will be built?

Once the new hospital is built and services have relocated into it, the land not required for the new hospital will be released for redevelopment. The vision is for a hospital at the heart of a new neighbourhood with much needed new homes as well as the potential for other health and wellbeing services, leisure and cultural facilities, green and public spaces, bringing real benefits and investment to the local community.

Waltham Forest Council has identified in the Local Plan that the remainder of the estate could deliver a minimum of 1,500 new homes for the borough, including affordable homes and potentially key worker homes, complementing the communities around it.

Will there be affordable housing and key worker housing on the site?

The need for affordable housing and specifically key worker housing came across strongly in the feedback we had from our communities in developing the Strategic Outline Case. As such our assumption at this stage is that 50% of the housing development on the site will be affordable and as part of that we will look at the demand for key worker housing. Further work will be undertaken over the next few months as part of developing the Outline Business Case.

What infrastructure will there be to support the housing development?

We are engaging with the relevant key stakeholders, such as Transport for London and Waltham Forest Council to identify the type of services that may need to be considered.

Green space, access to nature and views of nature are crucial for the physical, psychological emotional and wellbeing of all who use the building. Will you ensure sufficient gardens, nature and green space are designed in around the hospital?

Our emerging design vision is to 'create a hospital in a garden and a garden in a hospital'. We want to connect the site more strongly into the local area and draw the surrounding landscape of Epping Forest in to the site with new accessible and attractive public green spaces, creating a health and wellbeing setting for the new hospital. Reconnecting the hospital to the forest will provide therapeutic and healing benefits for our patients and an uplifting environment for staff, visitors and the wider community.

We are exploring whether there will be a park, a public square or a series of smaller gardens – or a combination of some of these ideas. We want the green spaces and gardens to bring the forest into the site and provide an attractive setting which celebrates the older buildings (heritage buildings) on site.

Will you improve transport and access to the site?

We want to create a much more accessible place with new walking and cycling routes connecting the site to the forest and the town centres around us. A travel plan is being developed, which will be submitted as part of the outline planning application, identifying a package of measures aimed at promoting alternatives to the car. This is also a key aspect of Waltham Forest Council and the Greater London Authority's transport planning requirements.

We want to have more pedestrian and cycle routes into and across the site connecting it better to the wider area and making it easier for people to walk to the hospital. We also intend to take a much clearer, more organised approach to vehicular access, especially bus routes, and are considering a dedicated route for service vehicles, delivering supplies or equipment to the hospital, from James Lane.

Will there be enough car parking spaces on the site?

Our vision is for more people to use alternative travel to get to the hospital to reduce the amount of hospital car parking in line with the Council's policies to deliver low-car or car free developments where possible. We recognise however for many people travelling by car to the hospital may be their only option.

A new accessible multi-storey car park will therefore be provided alongside the new hospital. Blue badge holder spaces will be provided in both the visitor and staff car parking areas. We are still looking at how many spaces we may need but a multi-storey car park will enable us to accommodate more spaces in a smaller footprint on the site. There is further work to do to see whether all the car parking is provided in one area of the site or whether it is split between two areas. More detail on the design, layout and location of the hospital car park will be shared shortly.

Will the Woodbury Unit run by NELFT be part of the new redeveloped site?

Barts Health NHS Trust and North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) are in discussion about the future of the services currently provided in the Woodbury Unit in the context of the emerging proposals for the redevelopment of the Whipps Cross site.

5. The Enabling Works

What 'enabling works' are planned?

A programme of 'enabling works' is being undertaken to prepare the disused site of the former nurses' accommodation for the construction of a new hospital. This will include the demolition of the redundant buildings on that part of the site and the provision of a multi-story car park.

When will the enabling works begin?

We expect to begin a phased demolition of those buildings in early 2021. During this period we will create temporary car parking spaces to replace those that are lost during demolition. The construction of the multi-story car park will be subject to planning permission and the approval of our Outline Business case in 2021.

How will you ensure that the works are carried out safely and will there be a disruption to hospital services?

We will be commissioning approved specialist contractors to undertake the work, for example for the removal of asbestos. The work will not disrupt the provision of health services at the hospital.

How will you protect trees and surrounding houses during the demolition?

Our demolition plan, published on our [website](#) provides a range of information on how the work will be carried out including ensuring suitable protection for trees and for minimising the impact on our closest neighbours.