

# Proposals for a new West Suffolk Hospital in Bury St Edmunds



**West Suffolk**  
NHS Foundation Trust

July 2021

West Suffolk Hospital has been serving the local community at its current location at Hardwick Lane since 1974. The hospital has continued to evolve on the site with significant renovations and the addition of several new buildings. These include a number of clinical areas to improve patient experience, such as our state-of-the-art Cardiac Centre, Labour Suite, and Acute Assessment Unit.

Whilst we continue to provide high quality care for our local community, many of our hospital site buildings have exceeded their intended 30-year life span and are showing signs of wear and tear. West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust has invested heavily in the upkeep of these buildings over recent years to ensure they are appropriately maintained. However, in order to deliver the 21st century healthcare our patients and staff deserve, we need buildings that are fit for purpose.

Our need for a new hospital has been acknowledged nationally and in 2020, as part of the Government's Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP), West Suffolk was confirmed as one of 40 new hospitals to be built across the country by 2030.

To progress plans, we have been working closely with a dedicated team of partners to identify, assess and select a site upon which to build our new hospital. This is a hugely important decision; an extensive process has been undertaken by a team of specialists from technical disciplines including planning, architecture, transport and ecology to name a few.

The Trust has selected Hardwick Manor as the preferred site at this stage, although it is not definitive until we have carried out all our investigations and obtained planning permission. Whilst technical work is progressing to assess the site further, we will continue to work with the local community and patients of West Suffolk Hospital to ensure we capture as many voices on the decision as possible.



## Get involved

To ensure that everyone has a way of getting involved that suits them, we will be using a variety of methods to gather feedback from the community. This will include direct mailings, updates on the project website, face to face events and an online virtual meeting.

## Pop up exhibition events

The exhibitions are being held in a COVID-secure manner with a number of measures in place. These include temperature checks, a one-way system, social distancing, a limit on the number of people in the room at any one time and regular cleaning and sanitising of the equipment.

### Thetford

Main Hall, The Charles Burrell Centre,  
Staniforth Road, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3LH  
**Monday 12 July – 2pm-8pm**

### Haverhill

Main Hall, Chalkstone Community Centre,  
Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 0JB  
**Wednesday 14 July – 2pm-8pm**

### Bury St Edmunds

The Ballroom, The Athenaeum, Angel Hill,  
Town Centre, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,  
IP33 1LU  
**Thursday 15 July – 2pm-8pm**

### Newmarket

Memorial Hall, High Street, Newmarket,  
Suffolk, CB8 8JP  
**Monday 19 July – 2pm-8pm**

### Sudbury

Assembly Room, Sudbury Town Hall,  
Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1TL  
**Tuesday 20 July – 2pm-8pm**

### Stowmarket

Milton Room, Stowmarket Community  
Centre, Hillside, Stowmarket, Suffolk,  
IP14 2BD  
**Wednesday 21 July – 2pm-8pm**

## Online virtual meeting

A virtual meeting will be held on  
**Tuesday 13th July at 7.30pm** and can  
be joined using the following web address  
**[www.wsh.nhs.uk/Live-event](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk/Live-event)**

## Shortlisted sites

More than 20 potential sites were initially identified and from this 'long list', four were found to best support the needs and ambitions of the project. These were; the redevelopment of the current hospital at Hardwick Lane, Rougham Airfield, Westley and Hardwick Manor.

Using a thorough and objective evaluation process, each of these four sites were rated. This included a technical assessment which looked at elements focussed on the ability of each site to support the delivery of a new hospital. We then sought views and feedback from public, staff and patient representatives on non-technical areas such as ease of accessing the sites and the impact each would have upon our environment.

As the project has progressed, the importance of natural surroundings in which to be treated and work has become apparent and is a further consideration. Existing research has shown the positive benefits that being able to enjoy dedicated outside spaces can have on patient and staff wellbeing. We want the new hospital to be a place where staff enjoy coming to work and which supports our patient's recovery.

The main differentiating factors between the shortlisted sites were found to be;

- ✦ The risk associated with being able to buy the land and the relative complexity of the construction process
- ✦ The cost of the overall project
- ✦ The impact that a site might have on patient and staff wellbeing

Here is a summary of the pros and cons for each shortlisted site:

### Redevelopment of the current Hospital on Hardwick Lane

Given that the Trust already own the land at Hardwick Lane, the risk associated with acquiring it is negated.

The estimated costs of a phased development, where we demolish and rebuild parts of the site in stages, are high due to it being a longer process i.e. the longer we require a construction team, the higher the cost. This makes the project less affordable.

Redeveloping our existing site whilst maintaining our current level of clinical services and avoiding major disruption to patient care and experience, would prove problematic. As this is a significant reason, this option did not score highly during the evaluation process.

## Westley

This site, close to the A14, on the edge of Westley has long since been identified within West Suffolk Council's plan for the town as a location for a new West Suffolk Hospital.

Despite being earmarked for health purposes, there is no guarantee that we would be able to buy the land. Historically, other NHS hospitals have faced challenges in obtaining land and this was a concern. The purchase of this site is made more difficult by the fact that it has multiple owners, all of whom would need to agree a sale and a price. The site has also been identified for residential development, a fact that complicates the planning process and increases the cost of a development as a relief road would be required to accommodate both provisions.

To avoid the operational difficulties of a hospital split over two sites, a 'greenfield' site such as Westley would need to host our entire hospital and its associated buildings. This would lead to the demolition of modern buildings and the need to acquire a significant piece of land – both of which would increase cost and wastage.

As mentioned, the ability of a site to provide access to a natural environment is an important factor in the recovery of patients and the wellbeing of staff. The Westley site does not have access to green space and the hospital would be in close proximity to a major road, a railway, a housing estate and a relief road.

## Rougham Airfield

Similar to Westley, the site at Rougham is not owned by the Trust and there is a risk that we would not be able to buy it.

Other sites evaluated were able to make use of existing accommodation. At Rougham Airfield, we would need to re-construct the whole hospital currently on Hardwick Lane, including the buildings which have recently been built and/or remain fit for purpose. This would lead to a greater amount of land being required, in comparison to some other sites, and additional buildings being constructed meaning the overall project cost would increase.

As with Westley, the positive benefits of a parkland setting for patients and staff and the effect this has on patient experience was a consideration. Rougham Airfield does not provide the same potential to access a parkland setting which the other sites evaluated did.

## Our preferred site - Hardwick Manor

Whilst Hardwick Manor did not score as highly as some other sites on matters like ecology or transport, it did achieve the highest score overall and has a number of significant benefits listed below.

Following thorough and extensive evaluation, Hardwick Manor was proposed as the most suitable location and in December 2020, the site was announced as the Trust's preferred site.

Although Hardwick Manor is our preferred site, this choice will not become definitive until we have carried out all our investigations and obtained planning permission. Our investigations are looking into the impact that any building will have upon the ecology, landscape and archaeology of the site. Our team is engaged with the local Highway Authority and will be working with Highways England to ensure we

understand and consider the impact that a new hospital will have on roads, traffic flows and parking.

Your views are important to us. We have continually been engaging with our local community, taking on board comments and views and listening to concerns. Ultimately, we want to get this decision right for our patients and our staff.

Whilst technical work is progressing to assess the site further, we will continue to work with the local community and patients of West Suffolk Hospital to ensure we capture as many opinions on the decision as possible.

More information on these investigations and the rationale for reaching this conclusion will be available at our face to face and online events.



### Preferred site location

### 1. Location

It is located in close proximity to the current site. This means that we can continue to use the modern facilities on Hardwick Lane, such as the potential to retain existing car parks, the education centre our new staff accommodation, Quince House, the sterile services unit, the Education Centre, and the Day Surgery Unit. Re-locating the main hospital building to Hardwick Manor will ensure existing close relationships with partners such as Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, St. Nicholas Hospice and Busy Bees nursery can continue.

### 2. Availability

The Trust already owns the site which eliminates the risk of not being able to purchase it. We purchased the site when it became available in order to maximise our choices when considering options for the location of a new hospital.

### 3. Parkland setting

Research has shown the positive benefits that green space has on the recovery of patients and the wellbeing of staff. The parkland setting of Hardwick Manor provides real benefits in this area.

## About West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

West Suffolk Hospital is an award-winning, vibrant, friendly and accessible hospital on the edge of Bury St Edmunds. With around 430 beds open at one time it serves a population of around 280,000 within 600 square miles. As well as running the hospital, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is joining up NHS care across the area providing many of the community services in West Suffolk.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust was announced as one of 40 hospitals to benefit from funding as part of the government's Health Infrastructure Plan. The Trust board, alongside the programme board, has a vision that this is more than the development of a future hospital, this project is part of a 'future system'.

The Future System team are overseeing the development and build of the new healthcare facility including the facilitation of co-production. Increasingly, a hospital and the services that it offers is just one part of a wider network known as a system that includes providers of; primary, social, community and mental health care as well as policy makers, regulators and commissioners. Because of this, all these partners are involved in the development of this project and bringing it to fruition.

## Next steps

The first round of engagement will run from Monday, 5 July – Sunday, 15 August with all feedback submitted during this time reviewed after it has concluded. All feedback will be reviewed by our project team to guide their plans.

The project team will take this opportunity to respond to the feedback gathered in the first round of engagement during the second round of engagement in the autumn.

**July/August 2021** - First round of engagement

**Summer 2021** - Project team reviews feedback

**September/October 2021** - Second round of engagement

**November 2021** - Feedback reviewed and technical documents finalised

**Late 2021/early 2022** - Planning application submitted to West Suffolk Council

We will continue to keep local residents and users of the hospital updated as our plans progress.

## Get in touch

The project team welcome your comments. You can ask questions or provide feedback through the following methods:



Write to us using the enclosed Freepost addressed envelope or directly to:

**The Future System Team  
Quince House Level 2  
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust  
Hardwick Lane  
Bury Saint Edmunds  
IP33 2QZ**



Email us at  
**[futuresystemprogramme@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:futuresystemprogramme@wsh.nhs.uk)**



Get in touch through the feedback page on this website:  
**[www.wsh.nhs.uk/New-healthcare-facility](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk/New-healthcare-facility)**



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