

**Media release**

**For immediate release**
**Thursday, 1 July 2021**

**Get involved and share your views**

**Planning application engagement launches for new hospital**

**West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (WSFT) is launching the first phase of engagement for its proposed hospital site and is inviting members of the local community to share their views.**

The Trust is launching two periods of engagement. The first, running from Monday 5 July – Sunday 15 August, will provide opportunities for the public to find out about aspirations for the new hospital, how and why the preferred site of Hardwick Manor has been selected in comparison to the other locations shortlisted, and share comments and feedback.

The second round of engagement will begin in the autumn - once further investigations have been carried out and initial plans developed. The result of these investigations, along with feedback gathered from the engagement, will help shape and formulate the planning application due to be submitted this winter.

Trust chief executive Stephen Dunn said: “This is an exciting opportunity for you to share your thoughts. Hardwick Manor was chosen as our preferred site using a thorough and objective evaluation process, but this decision isn’t final until we have completed all our investigations and received planning permission.

“We consider Hardwick Manor to have a number of benefits, including the fact that we already own the site. It’s next to where the existing hospital is so we can continue to use our newer buildings - such as staff accommodation at the rear of the site and our office building, Quince House. Building the new healthcare facility on Hardwick Manor also means we can continue to be co-located with organisations such as Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, St. Nicholas Hospice and Busy Bees nursery.”

“However, we want to make sure we get this decision right and that everyone's views and thoughts are considered. That is why, whilst technical work is progressing to continue to assess the suitability of the site, we are committed to continuing to work with staff, the local community and patients of West Suffolk Hospital to ensure we listen to as many opinions as possible. Please do share your views by going to one of our planned events in person, online or by visiting our website and completing the online feedback form.”

“The views of our staff, patients and community are important to our Trust. We have been engaging with you, the local community, taking on board your useful comments and views, and your concerns. It is paramount that everyone who wishes to can be involved in this exciting project and have their say.”

A series of COVID secure face to face events have been arranged 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. The events will provide information about the proposed site have been arranged and members of the community are encouraged to attend.

All events are open 2pm – 8pm on a drop in basis:

12 July -Thetford - The Main Hall at The Charles Burrell Centre, IP24 3LH

14 July - Haverhill - Main Hall at Chalkstone Community Centre, CB9 0JB

15 July – Bury St. Edmunds - The Ballroom at The Athenaeum, IP33 1LU

19 July - Newmarket - Memorial Hall, High Street, CB8 8JP

20 July - Sudbury - Assembly Room at Sudbury Town Hall, CO10 1TL

21 July - Stowmarket - Milton Room at Stowmarket Community Centre, IP14 2BD

Alternatively, a virtual meeting will be held on 13 July 5.30pm - 7pm and can be joined using the following web address [https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/Live-event](https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/Live-event%22%20HYPERLINK%20%22https%3A//www.wsh.nhs.uk/Live-event%22%20HYPERLINK%20%22https%3A//www.wsh.nhs.uk/Live-event)

For those unable to attend any of the planned events, information about how and why the preferred site has been selected and an online feedback form will be available on the Trust website https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/New-healthcare-facility/ from Monday, 5 July until Sunday, 15 August. To make sure everyone has a chance to share their views and get involved, the online form is compatible with screen readers and the language can be amended.

Hardcopy versions of the feedback form will be posted to those households nearest to the preferred Hardwick Manor site and will be available at face-to-face engagement events. The feedback form is provided with a return freepost address and can be requested in an easy read format. Additional copies and hard copy versions of the information can be requested by writing to the address below or emailing the team at futuresystemprogramme@wsh.nhs.uk;

The Future System Team

Quince House Level 2

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Hardwick Lane

Bury Saint Edmunds

IP33 2QZ

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

In 2020, West Suffolk was confirmed as one of 40 new hospitals across the country which the government has committed to build by 2030 as part of the Health Infrastructure Plan. The funding is to be used to build a new facility replacing the existing West Suffolk Hospital.

More than 20 sites were investigated for suitability with four potential locations shortlisted and investigated by experts including surveyors, planners and highway professionals. Assessed against several criteria, Hardwick Manor was selected as the Trust’s preferred site for the new hospital.

The hospital situated at Hardwick Lane is an ageing site and the buildings based at Hardwick Lane have outlived their projected 30-year lifespan.

For more information, please contact the communications team at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust on: Telephone: 01284 712588 / 01284 712589 | email: media@wsh.nhs.uk

**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.

Visit: [www.wsh.nhs.uk](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk) | Twitter:@WestSuffolkNHS