

Whipps Cross Redevelopment – Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ provides further information - based on feedback we have received from the public and hospital staff about the new Whipps Cross hospital. We welcome the scrutiny, challenge and engagement to our plans, which are essential to ensuring our communities and partners are involved in the improvement of their local health services and also contribute to the development and implementation of our proposals.

We look forward to continuing to regularly update and involve local people and partners throughout the creation of the new Whipps Cross Hospital.

Last Updated: March 2021

There are a number of ways you can get involved and send feedback:

- Email us at: FutureWhipps.BartsHealth@nhs.net
- Call us on freephone at: 0800 307 7961
- Write to us via freepost using the code: Freepost RTZX-GRSR-BLXR
- Follow the latest developments using #FutureWhipps and [@WhippsCrossHosp](https://twitter.com/WhippsCrossHosp) on Twitter.

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 more than 100 years.

This however means we have a very old and disjointed estate – more than 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 brand new hospital from scratch puts us in a unique position to deliver better care, giving patients and staff a better experience.

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. The new hospital will still have the same core services as today, including A&E and maternity – in addition it will make better use of space, with more room for clinical activities. The flexible and adaptable design will be able to respond more efficiently and effectively to changing healthcare demands in the future. We've also updated our plans and identified space next to the new hospital for it to expand in the future if needed.

The redevelopment of the wider Whipps Cross site is an opportunity to position the new 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 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 developing our plans to the next level of detail and expect to submit planning applications in the coming weeks and our Outline Business to Government later this year. Subject to business case approvals and planning permission, we anticipate construction of the new hospital to begin towards the end of 2022 and be completed towards the end of 2026.

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 the current hospital services and also providing the best value for money.

How much will a new hospital cost?

The estimated cost of the new hospital will be informed by the detailed design work currently underway as part of developing the Outline Business Case. 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?

The new Whipps Cross hospital will continue to deliver the same core services as today, including A&E and maternity, for the whole community. It will have a fully functional 'blue light' A&E within the core NHS services it will inherit from the current hospital. This will remain a key part of a brand new emergency department, which will also have the ability to see and treat patients without needing to be admitted overnight.

The new hospital will have more clinical space than today – at least 65% of the overall space in the future will be for clinical activities, compared to around 50% today (which is an increase of around 5,000sqm). This will help staff deliver improved care with more space to diagnose and treat emergency patients on the same day to avoid admissions and more spaces for day case surgery. It will also improve patient experience, privacy and dignity with more single rooms in the new hospital, compared to today.

The overall size of the planned new hospital is around 80,000sqm. This is smaller than the current hospital (which is around 91,000sqm) but the layout of the new hospital will be organised much more efficiently than the current one, with clinical departments closer to each other so that journeys between them are much shorter for patients and staff.

The new hospital will have:

- Improved core NHS services brought closer together for better patient care
- All new clinical departments including intensive care, A&E and maternity
- More clinics and same day patient care
- Better access to diagnostics
- Increased clinical space for patients
- Easier access and navigation for patients, staff and visitors
- Coordinated transport links and improved parking
- A sustainable design

How many beds will the new hospital have?

Overall, the new hospital will have more space for clinical activities than the current hospital. The ongoing modelling is confirming that the assumptions we made in our Strategic Outline Case still apply (Our current assumptions can be found in [Building a Brighter Future for Whipps Cross – Moving to the next stage.](#)). We have not finalised this work but, overall, we should expect to require fewer beds in the new hospital. The number of beds in any hospital is however not fixed and we will have the flexibility to respond to changes in operational pressures, with an appropriate number of beds. We've also identified space next to the new hospital for it to expand in the future if needed.

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 people 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

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-19 have an impact on how the new hospital is designed?

Yes. We have learnt a lot from the Covid-19 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-19 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-19 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 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-19 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 have identified a site on our overall plan as a potential location for a community health building.

How will the Margaret Centre services be affected by the redevelopment?

The new hospital will continue to provide specialist palliative and end-of-life care. We have agreed to review what we have been describing as the future model of care. This review will be looking at how we organise the provision of specialist palliative care and end-of-life care in the new Whipps Cross Hospital; and we are working with our clinicians and partner organisations in the local health and care system to agree next steps, ensuring the focus continues to be on planning and delivering the highest quality care for our patients, their families and those that care for them.

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?

Many people in our first phase of pre-application planning consultation wanted to see additional space retained for the hospital to potentially use in the future. Additional space has therefore been identified for potential hospital expansion should it be needed in the future.

The hospital's flexible and adaptable design will also ensure it is better able to adjust to new clinical ways of working and future healthcare demands.

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.

Will the ambulance station site be integrated within the new development?

While the ambulance station does not form part of the Whipps Cross land, the Trust is in discussion with London Ambulance Service to understand the strategy for their site and to ensure that they are engaged in the new development.

Could you tell us about non clinical space, such as offices and communal areas?

Staff will be involved throughout the planning of the designs for office and communal space in the new hospital. We also understand the importance on staff wellbeing and will make sure that the new hospital has space to support that. Building on the agile working policy, we will be working differently in the new hospital and the health care strategy team will be supporting the divisions with this work.

The new hospital will have shared office space, privacy booths, virtual booths, seminar rooms, MDT rooms and multifunctional rooms. We are working to ensure we have the latest digital technology to support room bookings and other areas. We are learning from other newly built hospitals on how they are designing and using non clinical and office space.

How will Services for Older people improve?

The Trust is committed to establishing Whipps Cross as a centre of expertise for the joined up care for frail and older people in which it could become a centre of excellence for fragility surgery.

3. Hospital Design and Development

How big will the new hospital be?

The new Whipps Cross hospital will continue to deliver the same core services as today, including A&E and maternity, for the whole community. The overall size of the planned new hospital is around 80,000sqm. The new hospital will have more clinical space than today – at least 65% of the overall space in the future will be for clinical activities, compared to around 50% today (which is an increase of around 5,000sqm). This is smaller than the current hospital (which is around 91,000sqm) but the layout of the new hospital will be organised much more efficiently than the current one, with clinical departments closer to each other so that journeys between them are much shorter for patients and staff.

This will help staff deliver improved care with more space to diagnose and treat emergency patients on the same day to avoid admissions and more spaces for day case surgery. It will also improve patient experience, privacy and dignity with more single rooms in the new hospital, compared to today.

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.

Will you retain the heritage buildings on the site?

Our aim has always been to retain the most valued parts of the historic buildings and give them a new lease of life. We also heard in our first phase of pre-application planning consultation from some people how much they value the historic buildings.

The updated plans show how the chapel would be restored, to create a feature of it in a new park, north of the new hospital. Meanwhile, new homes, with shops and community spaces at ground floor level, spilling out onto the park, could be sensitively integrated between the four historic pavilions to create a place with a sense of identity and character.

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

We listened to feedback in the first phase of our pre-planning application consultation about the proximity of some of the proposed buildings to existing homes around the site. As a result, both the hospital and the multi-storey car park have been moved further away from

the boundary and parts of the hospital closest to our residential neighbours have been lowered. The updated design has the highest part, at nine storeys (excluding roof top servicing), furthest away from our neighbours. It is also proposed to plant more trees along the site's boundaries.

How tall will the multi-storey car park be?

Following feedback from local residents in the first phase of our pre-application planning consultation we have moved the car park further away from the residential boundary. The car park will be made up of split levels and will be equivalent in height to a seven storey residential building.

Will there be a boundary around the hospital to prevent people from smoking?

This is something that was raised in our first phase of planning consultation in Nov/Dec 2020. We are looking into this further as part of our ongoing design development.

Are you proposing to use the strip of land between Lea Bridge Road and the hospital site – known as the 'panhandle' as a new access route for the hospital?

We have begun a consultation with local residents and borough partners to consider the options for determining the most appropriate access routes in and out for construction traffic in light of the considerable constraints of the existing site. [View the consultation here](#). The challenge includes the need to safeguard the flow of emergency vehicles and hospital traffic, whilst ensuring safe and efficient construction and minimising the impact both on local residents and the environment. We have identified a long list of options and are working with Waltham Forest Council, Transport for London and our local residents to assess the options to arrive at a preferred way forward.

As part of the redevelopment, after the hospital is built, our vision is for the strip of land known as the 'panhandle' to become a new green space, running from Lea Bridge Road through to James Lane with access for pedestrians and cyclists.

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 a site on our overall plan as a potential location for a community health building. 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 overall hospital site owned by the trust is nearly 18 hectares in total.

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 has come across strongly in the feedback we have had from our communities. Our assumption at this stage is that 50% of the housing development on the site will be affordable and within that there is the potential for key worker housing. We will undertake further work and work with Waltham Forest Council, to assess the demand and opportunities for key worker housing within the redevelopment and more widely.

Are you considering including a Community Land Trusts (CLT)?

The Trust's intention is to deliver 50% affordable housing in line with London Plan policies and is working closely with Waltham Forest council to achieve this. It needs to be mindful that its proposals are financially viable and achievable in line with NHS policies to satisfy its own business case requirements for the hospital's affordability. In addition to the affordable housing quota the Trust will be including many other social benefits to the scheme and the wider environment. It is therefore not envisaged that it would include a CLT.

When will the new housing be constructed?

Construction for the new housing cannot begin until the new hospital is built and the services have relocated into it. Subject to gaining planning permission construction of the new hospital is due to begin in the autumn of 2022 and completed by the end of 2026.

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 vision is to 'create a hospital in a garden and a garden in a hospital'. Overall, around a third of the site will be green.

There was support in the first phase of our pre-application planning consultation for our vision to include more green areas and create a new park. We have designed a strong, green route through the site and a new public park around the old chapel.

A new landscaped route is part of our updated proposals connecting Lea Bridge Road and James Lane for pedestrians and cyclists. Currently called Fille Brook Lane, it would have wetland features and places to play, improving local journeys across the area. The wetland features would also improve water management and drainage, to reduce existing local flooding issues, as well as improve biodiversity.

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.

In line with local and regional policy we are exploring ways to reduce the number of people who need to travel to the hospital by car. For example, we are developing an Active Travel Plan and have begun working with Transport for London to improve public transport, particularly bus connections.

For people who cannot use public transport, there will be dedicated drop off/pick up facilities located right next to the new hospital and there will continue to be parking on site for longer visits.

How will you mitigate air and noise pollution for neighbouring properties from the new access routes and car park as part of the new development?

This is an important area of focus for us. Comprehensive assessments will be carried out and reports submitted on air quality impacts as part of the planning application we're submitting this spring.

Will there be enough car parking spaces on the site?

There will be improved parking for patients, staff and visitors at the new Whipps Cross Hospital. The proposed multi-storey car park will be next to the new hospital and will have 500 spaces, including disabled parking, a bridge linking the car park to the hospital and electric vehicle charging points.

To minimise the scale of this car park and ensure future site flexibility, we have also identified a location for a potential second multi-storey car park, which would be constructed after the hospital is complete. Further work will be needed to determine the size required.

In line with local and regional policy we are also exploring ways to reduce the number of people who need to travel to the hospital by car.

Our ambition is for a gradual reduction, over several years, of between 25% and 40% from the current allocation of 1,200 spaces.

We are developing an Active Travel Plan and have begun working with Transport for London and borough partners to improve public transport and connectivity to local communities and surrounding transport hub stations.

Are any new bus routes being introduced as part of the development?

We are developing an Active Travel Plan and have begun working with Transport for London to improve public transport, particularly bus connections.

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

The services from the Woodbury unit are run by North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT). The redevelopment plans do not include the Woodbury unit.

Will the current Busy Bees nursery be included in the new development?

The current plans retain the nursery in its current location.

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 the 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 spring 2021. During this period, as each old building is removed, new temporary surface parking will take its place. By removing one building at a time we can help to maintain parking on site during the demolition.

Subject to business case and planning approvals, the construction of the multi-story car park is anticipated to begin towards the end of 2021.

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

The new hospital will be built on the disused former nurses’ accommodation, allowing for the existing hospital to remain fully operational while the new one is built.

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 current 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.

How will you protect local wildlife and minimise the impact on it as part of the development?

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 wildlife and natural features. An Ecology Survey has been undertaken to ensure that any possible implications as a result of demolition are identified to ensure there is minimal impact to local wildlife.