

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **11th March 2010**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Building Better Secure and Forensic Services in East Sussex – capital development programme**

Purpose of report: **To present HOSC with an update on the outcomes from consultation on this programme which involves proposals for new and converted facilities at Hellingly, East Sussex.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended to:

1. **Consider and comment on the update report provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (appendix 1).**
 2. **Determine how the committee wishes to monitor the development of the proposals**
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1. Background

1.1 In November 2009 HOSC received a report from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust with proposals for developing the Trust's Secure and Forensic Services, in particular those based at Hellingly, near Hailsham, East Sussex.

1.2 The proposals were informed by national standards and drivers, such as optimum ward sizes, the increased mental health treatment of offenders in hospital rather than prison, and providing services 'closer to home'. Local issues include increasing demand, increased lengths of stay, high occupancy levels and the number of people who are placed with other, often out-of-county, providers.

1.3 These proposals are part of the Trust's long term service improvement programme, *Better by Design* which aims to improve upon existing standards for mental health provision across Sussex and develop a range of services that will meet people's mental health needs in the future, whilst meeting financial responsibilities in a difficult economic climate.

2. Secure and Forensic Service proposals

2.1 *Building Better Secure and Forensic Services in Sussex*, presented to HOSC in November 2009, set out the case for the redevelopment of services provided at Hellingly, East Sussex to:

- Bring the existing facility up to national quality and security standards
- Increase the number of low and medium secure beds at Hellingly from the current 46 to 75.

2.2 The proposals stated that increasing bed numbers at Hellingly would reflect current levels of demand and enable the Trust to bring the majority of out-of-county placements back in-county, and closer to their families.

2.3 The proposed expansion would be achieved by constructing a building on open space adjacent to and linked by new shared facilities to an existing building (Ashen Hill), and the conversion of another existing building (Southview).

2.4 Total estimated investment for the programme is £15.3 million. As well as developing modern facilities, SPT state that the proposals will support growth in the local economy in the short term (through construction) and longer term (through increased workforce).

2.5 SPT undertook public consultation on the proposals over a period of 8 weeks ending on 15th February 2010. HOSC had an opportunity to comment on the consultation plans in November.

2.6 At the meeting in November 2009 HOSC agreed to support the proposals, but requested an update on the findings of the consultation process once it had concluded. An update report has been provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (attached at appendix 1).

2.7 Trust representatives Christine Bowman, Head of Strategic Projects and Andrew Dean, Service Director - Secure and Forensic Services will be in attendance to update HOSC following the conclusion of consultation and take questions.

3. Issues to consider

3.1 HOSC may wish to consider exploring:

- How the Trust is responding to issues raised in the consultation process.
- When and how a final decision will be made on the proposals, taking into account consultation responses.
- Whether an application for planning permission has been progressed.
- How service users, carers, staff and local residents in Hellingly will continue to be informed and engaged as the project progresses.

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Background paper: *Building Better Secure and Forensic Services in Sussex, Item 8, Appendix 1, HOSC Agenda, November 2009*

Report of public consultation into the development of secure and forensic services at Hellingly, East Sussex

1. Executive summary

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (Sussex Partnership) proposes to develop its secure and forensic mental health facilities at Ashen Hill and Southview, Hellingly.

The Trust ran a period of public consultation regarding these proposals from 21 December 2009 to 15 February 2010. The proposals, and the consultation process itself, were discussed and agreed with the East Sussex HOSC in November 2009.

The outcome of the consultation will be used to develop the Full Business Case for the proposals and provided as evidence to the East Sussex HOSC that the agreed process has been followed.

Comments and suggestions received during consultation will be used to develop the Trust's proposals before these are submitted to Wealden District Council during spring 2010.

By the close of consultation 40 responses had been received (including records of public events). Thirty-seven responses are supportive of the proposals.

Further comments are welcome and will help the Trust to develop its proposals before submitting a planning application to Wealden District Council.

2. Introduction

The development of secure and forensic low and medium secure inpatient facilities is a high priority for Sussex Partnership.

The Trust is developing plans to increase its provision at Ashen Hill and Southview, Hellingly, to meet known present and future levels of demand and to provide more capacity for these services within Sussex.

The proposals are to develop three new 15-bed wards for medium secure facilities, linked to the existing medium secure unit at Ashen Hill, and to refurbish Southview low secure unit to provide a 15-place low secure unit.

Planning permission for this development will be sought from Wealden District Council. A planning application is due to be submitted to the council during spring 2010.

In advance of this application Sussex Partnership has run a period of public consultation. The results from this consultation will be used to develop the detailed proposals and to inform the planning application.

Sussex Partnership presented the case for developing secure and forensic services to the HOSC in November 2009 and outlined the consultation process to be followed. The HOSC gave its agreement to the process and asked for a report on the outcome to be presented to its meeting in March 2010.

3. The consultation process

A public consultation document describing the proposals and asking for comments was published on 21 December 2009. The document was sent to a wide range of stakeholders including Wealden District Council, Hellingly Parish Council, members of the Hellingly Hospital Liaison Committee, Persimmon Homes, Hailsham Town Council, East Sussex County Council; the NHS primary care trusts in East Sussex and West Sussex, Sussex Partnership staff side representatives and staff working at Ashen Hill and Hellingly, people using the secure and forensic services at Ashen Hill and Hellingly, local GP practices, Sussex Police, the Probation Service, HMP Lewes and the East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK).

Letters announcing the consultation and describing the proposals were sent to residents living close to the site in Hellingly and the northern part of Hailsham. Letters were also sent to Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust members living in Hellingly and Hailsham.

As well as the direct distribution to stakeholders, staff, service users and local residents, the consultation was promoted in the local media (Sovereign Radio, Hailsham Gazette, Argus) and in the Hellingly Parish

Council newsletter distributed to all households in the parish during the first week of January 2010.

A feedback form was included in the document and issued with the letters. This asked people for their comments on: the proposed development at Ashen Hill; the proposed refurbishment of Southview, and landscaping and environment issues. A fourth question asked for any additional suggestions or comments that respondents would like Sussex Partnership to take into account.

Respondents were encouraged to send in responses by completing the feedback form, by writing to the Trust, by email (an email address was set up for this purpose at hellinglyconsult@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk) or by requesting a face to face meeting with members of the project team.

In addition, four public events were arranged where local people could find out more and make their views known. These were at Hellingly Parish Hall (drop-in event on Monday 11 January and public meeting on Wednesday 20 January) and at Union Corner Hall, Hailsham (drop-in event on Friday 15 January and public meeting on Friday 22 January).

A series of staff events was also held at Ashen Hill and at Southview. The views of service users were sought via the existing service user forum at these sites.

The consultation document and details of the public events were also published on-line at the Trust's website (www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk).

The consultation process was subjected to an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment before the start of consultation. As a result of this assessment the consultation document was amended to give greater prominence to the availability of the document in a range of formats on request and the feedback form was modified to enable more precise equality and diversity monitoring.

4. Responses to consultation

By the close of the consultation period 40 responses had been received.

These included reports of the public events and staff meetings held to that date, individual responses from members of the public and Foundation Trust members and three individual responses from staff members.

All but three of the responses were supportive of the proposals.

The first planned public event, the drop-in event at Hellingly Village Hall on Monday 11 January, attracted no members of the public. This was an evening of heavy snow and difficult traffic conditions, however Trust staff felt it was important to hold the event which had been publicised in the media and in the document and letters. The drop-in event at Hailsham on 15 January attracted two members of the public.

The public meeting at Hellingly on 20 January was attended by three members of the public, and the meeting at Hailsham on 22 January was attended by five members of the public.

Respondents were asked to give contact details, especially if they required a reply to their comments. Nine people chose to give their contact details.

Respondents were also asked to return the equality and diversity monitoring forms. Twenty forms were returned.

The East Sussex LINK were unable to provide a response during the consultation period as their planned meeting where this topic was on the agenda was cancelled due to bad weather. This meeting has been re-scheduled for 25 February 2010 and Sussex Partnership has agreed to include the comments from the LINK in preparing the detailed proposals which will form the basis of the planning application to Wealden District Council.

5. Issues and themes

Thirty-seven responses, including the records of the public and staff meetings, were supportive of the proposals.

There is clear evidence of support for the continued existence of secure and forensic services at Ashen Hill and Southview, and for the development of the site to provide increased capacity as proposed by the Trust. Responses confirm the acceptance of the existing services and make it clear they have no objection to further development at the site as proposed.

Responses confirm the importance of landscaping and protecting the environment at the site, as proposed by the Trust. Many responses, including some from staff and those giving their address as Ashen Hill, make detailed suggestions for landscaping including making use of trees and shrubs to enable the development to blend in with its surroundings, and to enhance the therapeutic experience of living and working at the site. These comments have all been passed to the project team to assist in the detailed development of the planning application.

Responses from the public confirm the importance of ensuring public safety is maintained at all times and that the standards laid down by the Ministry of Justice are met in full, as proposed in the consultation document. This point was also made strongly at the public meeting on 20 January. As a result of these responses Sussex Partnership has offered to hold further meetings with local residents, should the planning application be approved, to describe the details of the security arrangements (both physical and in terms of procedures) and to offer visits to the new buildings before they open to demonstrate the arrangements on site.

Feedback from the staff meetings include suggestions for optimal location of staff facilities within the new development to support effective staff deployment, suggestions for security features and for access to staff car parking. One response from a member of staff highlights the importance of designing the new buildings to meet patients' spiritual needs.

Several responses comment on the housing development on the former Hellingly Hospital site (although this is outside the scope of the consultation) and enquire about the impact of traffic from the new houses. These comments have been noted and will be passed to the parish and district councils, who have authority in these matters.

One response calls for the NHS to purchase the former hospital site for development as a therapeutic community for vulnerable people.

Objections were made on the grounds that the service should not be built near the new housing and that public safety could not be guaranteed. Sussex Partnership believes that these points can be answered fully:

- The proximity of the secure and forensic service to the new housing has not been, and is not currently, a planning issue;
- The development will create enhanced security. The existing units meet the current national standards.

A summary table of the responses is available separately.

6. Conclusions

The consultation process has been followed as agreed with East Sussex HOSC in November 2009.

The responses to consultation to date are supportive of the developments as proposed and support the proposed security measures which will provide safety and dignity for those using the service and security for local residents.

The outcome of the consultation, and the comments received, are available to Programme Board, East Sussex HOSC and Wealden District Council to support the proposals by Sussex Partnership when submitting the planning application for the new development.

This report will be published on the Sussex Partnership website (www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk) after the close of consultation as a public record of the process and of the comments received, in accordance with Trust procedures for public consultation.