

Edenbridge Q&A

1. Why did you have a public consultation about changing healthcare in Edenbridge?

The GP practice is too small and we know it will struggle as new homes are built in Edenbridge. Edenbridge Medical Practice serves 12,400 people in and around Edenbridge and this is expected to rise to almost 15,000 by 2020.

The community hospital is old and it will be hard to keep up with the modern standards of care in the future.

We are always looking to improve the care we deliver for you. We carried out the consultation because we believe a combined hospital/ surgery provides an exciting opportunity to deliver an innovative healthcare service for the town, which is fit for future generations.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the public consultation – we are very grateful that so many people took the time to come along to public meetings, respond to the survey, or engage in different ways.

2. Did you really listen?

Yes. We listened to what you said to us during the summer of 2016, and that shaped the options we consulted you about in spring 2017.

Then, during the three month consultation from 1 February to 26 April 2017, more than 1,000 people responded by completing the survey (1,159), writing letters or emails, attending public meetings or talking to staff at roadshows. All responses were collated and analysed by the University of Kent.

The response rate was high and the outcome was conclusive. Ninety four per cent of those who responded to the survey supported moving to a combined hospital / surgery, and seventy nine per cent supported the preferred option (1a – a new building on a new site with no inpatient beds).

However, NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group's Governing Body was also told that the high level of support for the preferred option sat alongside strongly held alternate views. Since the consultation ended, the clinical commissioning group (CCG) has received some direct feedback from local members of the public: letters to the CCG and to the local press. One local resident

gathered 250 signatures on his petition opposing the plan to close down the hospital.

The Governing Body considered this at its meeting on 25 July 2017 before taking the decision to proceed with the preferred option.

3. What happens now?

NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group and Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust have jointly appointed a project manager to take this project forward. A project implementation group is being set up and an implementation plan developed. This will include:

- ongoing discussions with the local community and updates about progress
- looking at opportunities for the NHS to pay for Edenbridge people who need an overnight community hospital stay in local nursing or residential home beds
- setting out in detail how the practice and community staff will work in a joined-up way and make the best possible use of the opportunities presented by the new building to improve care for local people
- looking at the possibilities offered by modern design, and digital technology, to work smarter – better for patients and for staff

4. What will happen to the GP practice and the hospital now?

We plan for both to stay open until the new combined hospital / surgery is up and running. This is one of the benefits of a new site, no disruption to services while plans are worked up.

5. What will you do about community beds once Edenbridge Hospital closes?

We have no plans to reduce the number of community beds available in west Kent. We are currently doing some careful analysis of how many community beds are needed for the future and the indications are that the number will increase.

However, we expect those beds to be provided in a smaller number of larger units. Modern community hospitals/care homes have a minimum of 50 to 60 beds as this is the number that allows them to provide robust care, by a team of nurses, assistants and therapists, seven days a week.

To support Edenbridge people as close to home as possible, we will look for opportunities to pay for beds in nursing and care homes for Edenbridge residents who need “step up” or “step down” care, to avoid needing to go into a bed in an acute (main) hospital, or to help them make the transition home after a hospital stay. We welcome recent interest in opening a nursing home in Edenbridge.

6. What does this mean for hospital staff?

Our staff are our greatest asset and we can't do this without them. We are talking to staff who are involved and their feedback will also shape what services are provided if we came together in a new community hub.

We hope a new hub would provide lots of opportunities and be an attractive place to work. We are holding drop-in sessions for staff as well as the public.

7. What services are provided by the GP practice?

- GP appointments
- Dispensary
- Minor surgery
- Blood tests
- ECGs
- Blood pressure management
- Chronic disease management
- Wound management.

8. What services are provided by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust?

- Minor Injury Unit (MIU)
 - Minor ailments, seven days a week
 - X-ray (Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm)
 - A&E consultant attends weekly to do minor operations
- Consultant out-patient services, e.g. ENT, Orthopaedics, Geriatrics, Dietician
- Day hospital
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry for housebound patients
- Audiology (hearing tests)
- In-patient care, including support from a social worker
- A base for midwives, health visitors, district nurses, children's services
- District Nurse Service for housebound patients
- Speech and Language Therapy.

9. Is this about saving money?

No, this is not about saving money. More people are living longer with more complex conditions, which puts pressure on NHS resources, so we need to do more with what is available. We also need to plan the best way we can offer NHS support to provide care locally now and for the future, and we want to provide support for people which helps them stay fit and healthy as well as recover swiftly from illness.

10. What will happen to the minor injury unit (MIU)?

We know how important the MIU is to you and our plans incorporate a modern MIU clinically supported by Edenbridge Medical Practice GPs. About 457 people use the MIU a month with 100% under the four hour wait. Number of x-rays are around 40 a month on average.

11. What will happen to the war memorial?

It is a decision for the council, but we will work with them. If local people support the war memorial being outside the new building, we would welcome the opportunity to locate it there.

People have suggested that the name for the new facility might include memorial as a tribute to those who inspired the building of the current hospital.

12. Where will the new building be? What sites have you looked at?

In our consultation document, we mentioned two sites as possible locations for the preferred option of a new build on a new site. Both these sites are in Four Elms Road and are on green belt land.

We will be looking in detail at these and any other options available and discussing with the planners at Sevenoaks District Council and the owners of the land.

13. Is there going to be investment in services?

We are not going to reduce the money spent on services in Edenbridge, and we think the annual costs of running, maintaining and leasing part or all of the new building will be no more than the upkeep costs of the existing hospital and surgery in Edenbridge.

The practice staff and community staff are looking at how they can work better together, which will enable them to do more for the same amount of resource.

There is no new money from Government. We need to make better use of the resources we have, including our staff, and of new technology which means more people can receive care at home for longer and live independently. More people are living longer with more complex conditions, which puts pressure on our resources so we need to do more with what is available.

14. Will I be able to get an appointment with my GP more easily?

We know that GP appointments are in constant demand, and we cannot promise you immediate improvements, but with a wider range of services in the new facility, you may be able to see another professional who can help you, for example a nurse, health visitor or health trainer. This has the potential to free up appointments for



people who need to see their GP and we are pleased that the prospect of a new building and a more joined-up way of working with other NHS staff has already helped the practice attract two young GPs to the area.

15. When are we going to know more?

We can't give you an answer on that yet, but we will send updates to those who asked to be kept informed of progress, and will place them on the Edenbridge page on the CCG's website.

4 August 2017