

Proposals to improve health services in Chipping Ongar and surrounding district

May 2008

Introduction

The town of Ongar has seen development of health services over the past seven years as a result of investment by both the West Essex Primary Care Trust (the PCT) and through local people via the League of Friends and other charitable organisations. These include new primary care services in both the GP surgeries and the refurbishment of Ongar War Memorial Hospital.

However, the town's current health care facilities are poor and lack the space to meet even present day needs. Further improvement and development cannot be made unless urgent action is taken to address the inadequacies of the building stock.

The PCT has been discussing with a group of local stakeholders, options around how to improve local health facilities so they meet the town's needs now and in the future. This paper sets out the options agreed during these initial meetings on how best to re-develop the health care facilities in Chipping Ongar.

We now want to ask for the views and experiences of those who use the services in Chipping Ongar, as well as those who provide them and of the population as a whole about the best way to improve local health facilities.

The consultation will run from 6 May to 6 August and this document is designed to seek your views on our plans and to identify anything we may have not considered.

The outcomes of the meetings and any written submissions will inform the final decision on these proposals and how we will implement them. The West Essex PCT Board will review the outcomes of this consultation at the PCT Board meeting in September 2008.

Our commitment to public consultation

Our most important partners are our local population, service users and their carers. We promised in our *Strategy for healthcare in west Essex 2008 – 2012* to engage with the public at every opportunity in the development of our strategic approach; in the planning of specific service developments and changes; and in monitoring the quality of the services we commission. This consultation is a key part of our community engagement.

Current position

The town has two excellent GP surgeries, Bansons Lane and The High Street, along with the Ongar War Memorial Hospital. Each has its own issues which are set out below.

Bansons Lane

The Bansons Lane surgery is a teaching practice, a vital role to ensure the NHS trains GPs for the future. There are six GPs and two trainees, providing care for approximately 9815 patients.

The building they operate from is a rented property which, although in a good location, has significant structural problems and is short of space to enable the development of the services the practice would like to provide. It is not possible to extend the building.

The High Street

The High Street is a single handed practice providing services to approximately 2189 people. The building, again though in a good location, is old fashioned and too small to provide the extended services that the modern NHS expects primary care to deliver.

Ongar War Memorial Hospital

Ongar War Memorial Hospital was built in the 1930s and, whilst the PCT recognises the local contribution made into improvement of the building over recent years, the building cannot now meet modern standards for privacy and dignity and infection control.

While the inpatient standard of care is very high, facilities are too small to enable effective rehabilitation and are a safety hazard for staff. The toilets are too small to enable safe access for disabled patients and there is only one single bedroom, all other patients are nursed in the more traditional multiple bed ward. This also compromises the hospital's ability to manage patients who have infections.

The out patient facilities are too small to effectively provide modern health care and the wooden lean-to structure will require replacing within the next year.

In addition to the specific problems outlined above, a number of other points need to be taken into consideration:

- land available for development in Chipping Ongar, at a price the NHS can afford, is at a premium and previous attempts in the recent past to secure suitable sites have failed
- the Department of Health has funds available for capital schemes to develop primary care facilities. These will be available from early summer
- we cannot integrate the two GP practices on either of the existing locations
- the existing GP premises cannot develop locally based services which will reduce or remove the need for hospital visits
- significant investment is required at Ongar War Memorial Hospital to enable it to be used as a health care facility for in-patients or out-patients
- the hospital is unable to provide the therapeutic or rehabilitation intervention which is available at the PCT's other community hospital settings at St Margaret's Hospital, Epping, or Saffron Walden Hospital
- the majority of patients using the Ongar in-patient facility are from outside the Chipping Ongar area.

Options considered

The PCT believes no change is not an option as the health care facilities available to the people of Chipping Ongar and surrounding areas are substandard. Whilst there is absolutely no criticism of the quality of care being provided, the building stock does not allow the huge potential and enthusiasm of local health care professionals to develop and deliver increased services to local people.

The PCT has considered the use of the lorry park facility. However, this is an expensive option as the land would have to be purchased and it is on a flood plain.

The PCT has considered expansion of current facilities. However, due to their location and construction this is not an option.

Proposal

The PCT proposes building a new health centre on the current Ongar War Memorial Hospital site to provide a full range of primary care, diagnostic and therapy services incorporating both GP practices and to relocate the in-patient beds to the new Epping Forest Unit at St Margaret's Hospital.

This would be a significant enhancement of facilities currently available and service developments could include:

- minor surgery, including joint injections and vasectomy
- a local family planning clinic
- cardiac and chest rehabilitation
- incontinence and urology services
- increased physiotherapy service and orthopaedic triage for conditions such as chronic back pain management
- counselling services
- greater integration with social services
- improved children's services
- ultrasound investigations
- pre surgical assessment for all patients prior to their admission for any surgical procedure
- increased training facilities for staff to improve services further
- increased opportunity for the community to use the building for other health related activities such as group stop smoking services, patient education or keep fit
- specific patient groups to help people to manage their long term conditions such as diabetes.

The Epping Forest Unit at St Margaret's Hospital is a purpose built modern unit which meets all the new infection control and privacy and dignity standards. It has additional ward space to incorporate the bed requirements from Ongar War Memorial Hospital. The unit has the full range of rehabilitation services to provide an enhanced patient experience. The PCT does not anticipate any redundancies due to this redevelopment.

The PCT will be bidding for Department of Health monies to develop the new health care facility. Initial feasibility studies indicate the current hospital site is large enough to build the new health care premises.

The redevelopment will require the relocation of services currently provided at the site; the PCT will ensure that essential services are provided locally using alternative facilities while work is underway.

The PCT acknowledges the local wish for the name Ongar War Memorial to continue as the name for the new centre.

Next steps

This consultation lasts from 6 May to 6 August 2008 and we hope you will take the time to let us know your views, preferences or other options you think we should have considered by completing the feedback form in Appendix 1.

You will see while we have asked some specific questions there is space for any comments or alternative suggestions you may have.

We want to know if you think we have considered all the options for the development of local health facilities, your thoughts on what should be delivered locally and if you think our plans are sound.

You can either complete the form online at www.westsexpct.nhs.uk or send the form in by post to the address below:

West Essex PCT
The Laurels
St Margaret's Hospital
The Plain
Epping, Essex
CM16 6TN

All responses will be acknowledged within three working days.

Public Meetings

We have arranged two public meetings and everyone is welcome to attend. The meetings will be attended by senior members of the PCT team who will be able to explain the overall plan and answer any questions you may have. The meetings are listed below:

Venue	Date	Time
Theatre Resource, Great Stoney, Ongar	Friday 23 May	7 – 9 pm
Budworth Hall, High Street, Ongar	Friday 20 June	1.30 – 3.30 pm

We shall keep notes of each of the public meetings, analyse responses and other matters raised. However, if you are a member of a group or organisation who would like us to come and meet with you, please contact the communication team on freephone 0800 7833396 or via e-mail at mail@westsexpct.nhs.uk.

We will use this information at the end of the consultation to finalise the plans to develop health facilities in Chipping Ongar. The Board will then review the plans at their meeting in September 2008.

More copies of this document can be requested by:

Post: Communication Team
West Essex PCT
The Laurels
St Margaret's Hospital
The Plain
Epping, Essex
CM16 6TN

Telephone: Freephone 0800 7833396

E-mail: mail@westsexpct.nhs.uk.

If you have any comments, questions or complaints about this consultation please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on freephone 0800 7833396 or, alternatively, you can write to the chief executive, Mr Aidan Thomas, at the above address.

Feedback Form

We want to know what you think so please answer the questions below. You can either visit our website www.westessexpct.nhs.uk to complete and submit the form online or send it to us in an envelope to the following address no later than 5 pm on 6 August 2008.

West Essex PCT
The Laurels
St Margaret's Hospital
The Plain
Epping, Essex
CM16 6TN

About you:

Although you can respond anonymously, your name, address and contact details are very important as they will help us analyse the results.

Name:

Address:
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Postcode:

e-mail:

Are you happy for us to keep your details for future health development news or consultations, (please tick as appropriate) YES NO

Preferred method of contact, (please tick as appropriate) Post e-mail

Are you responding as, (please tick as appropriate)
 Staff GP Public Carer Organisation/Group

Other (please state):

Do you think our plans for the development of a new health centre are fit for the future?
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Do you think we have missed out any key service from our plans?

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Are there other areas we should consider to meet the community's needs?

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Do you think the location is appropriate?

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Are there any other comments you would like to make about health services in your area?

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Thank you for your time and contribution