

Seaford Health Hub proposal

Background and frequently asked questions

Background

In September 2018, Lewes District Council's Cabinet agreed an investment of £18m to deliver a new health hub on the site of the existing Downs Leisure Centre in Seaford.

The scheme would see Seaford's two GP practices, Old School Surgery and Seaford Medical Practice, relocate to the new health hub which will also include new and shared space with the leisure centre, run by the Wave Leisure Trust and new facilities for the 60+ Club. The ground breaking health hub will create a 'go-to' location for improving health and wellbeing in Seaford. It will facilitate closer working between GPs, healthcare staff and Wave and will help them to support residents in a more pro-active and dynamic way, including through social prescribing.

Two public exhibitions on proposals for the new health hub were held in January 2019. This provided an opportunity to listen to residents' views, and understand any concerns, at the very earliest stage. Feedback from the exhibition has been summarised in a report which is available from the district council website at lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/SeafordHealthHub

The council is currently working to develop the scheme, prior to submitting a planning application later in the year. The council will give local people a further chance to comment on the detailed proposals before a planning application is submitted.

Why do the GP surgeries need to be moved from their current locations? Why can't one or both of the practices be extended?

In response to this question, the Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford Clinical Commissioning Group has explained that:

"The existing sites of both practices are too small to develop a health hub that would accommodate the expected local growth in population and the subsequent need for more and better care facilities in the future. A larger site will also support the changes anticipated as part of the national move towards Primary Care Networks¹.

The population of Seaford is projected to increase by nearly 20% between 2001 (22,000) and 2027 (26,000) with patient numbers across the two GP practices (Old School and Seaford Medical) expected to

increase to around 32,000 by 2027. Both practices urgently need more space and modern facilities to maintain the levels of care that they currently provide to the residents of Seaford.”

The Seaford Medical Practice and the Old School Surgery are private businesses and they both lease the premises that they currently occupy. The lease on the Old School surgery comes to an end in 2022.

In addition to the benefits already outlined, it is expected that the modern and fit for purpose facilities in the new health hub will also mean reduced running costs for the two surgeries.

Why has the Council decided to deliver health buildings and health care services? Is this part of its core role?

The district council's role, in respect of the proposed Seaford Health Hub, is that of developer. The council was approached by the two GP practices in Seaford, which are in urgent need of more space, and new, modern facilities. The council identified an opportunity, on land that it owns at the Downs Leisure Centre site, to develop a new health hub - to include new premises for the GPs alongside Wave leisure facilities, which would support the future delivery of health services for local residents.

I'm concerned about the impacts on Seaford town centre if the two surgeries move to the Downs site.

We are aware that there are concerns about the two surgeries moving from the town centre, and the potential impacts on the town centre's existing shops, cafes and other small businesses through any loss of footfall from the surgeries' staff and patients.

Following the public exhibition in January, we are reviewing proposals to include a food retail unit at the site of the new health hub.

The council doesn't own either of the existing sites that are occupied by the GP practices in Seaford town centre. NHS Property Services owns the Seaford Medical Centre and we will be working to influence the future use of this site, as much as possible, towards an appropriate town centre use - one that contributes to the vitality of the town.

While a pharmacy is planned at the new health hub, residents will still be able to choose to fill prescriptions at town centre pharmacies. We will also be talking to bus companies about bus routes and timetables to and from the Downs site, including routes to and from Seaford town centre.

How will the new Health Hub be paid for?

Lewes District Council is funding the development through borrowing and is not using public money or funds.

Will there be fewer GPs at the new Hub?

The same number of GPs would be based at the new hub as there are in the current two surgeries. Working from a single base will enable the GPs to be more flexible and resilient in the face of increasing demand. The health hub will also provide the capacity to offer a greater range of health and social care services. Plans for the future delivery of services are at an early stage.

Will the Hub have a minor surgery unit?

The GPs' plans include a minor surgery unit to reduce the need for local residents to travel to the hospitals in Eastbourne and Brighton for minor procedures and to help improve the waiting lists at these hospitals. There will be no minor injury unit on the site – minor injuries units will continue to operate from the Victoria Hospital in Lewes and in the A&E department at Eastbourne District & General Hospital.

Will the Over 60s Club be provided for in the new scheme?

The Over 60s club will be been designated brand new space within the Health Hub. They will have access to their own 'Club Rooms' and the wider facilities within the 'Wellbeing Hub'

Will the playground on the site be removed?

The children's playground area will remain on the site.

What will happen with the grass pitch?

Any proposals that affect the grass pitch will need to demonstrate that they meet relevant planning policies in the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework. Lewes District Council Planning Authority is in the process of developing a playing pitch strategy that will look at the current provision and future need and demand in the district.

Will the artificial pitches be affected?

The existing artificial pitches will not be affected by the proposals.

Is a shop included in the scheme?

This proposal is under review as part of the detailed design stage.

Will there be a pharmacy at the hub?

Yes – it is intended that the scheme would include a pharmacy.

Will there be a dentist at the hub?

The proposals include space for a community dentist which will deliver bespoke dental services for people with specific needs.

What will happen to the pharmacies in town?

The scheme doesn't include any proposals for existing pharmacies in Seaford town. These are private businesses.

Why did the swimming pool that used to be on the site close and will the new hub have a pool?

The swimming pool was open when Downs site operated as a school. When the school closed, the pool was filled-in to provide additional parking for the leisure centre. The current plans do not include a new swimming pool. For people wanting to swim, in addition to the pool at Seaford Head School, new facilities will be provided at the Sovereign Centre in Eastbourne. The existing pools at Newhaven and Lewes are also within reasonable travelling distance of Seaford.

Will there be enough parking at the hub and how will the site cope with the extra traffic?

We recognise that parking, public transport to the site and potential traffic impacts are key concerns about the scheme. As part of the detailed design stages, transport consultants will carry out a full assessment of traffic and transport issues, including parking, which will inform the proposals.

The scheme will aim to increase and maximise the amount of parking at the site. There will be different peak times of use for each part of the site and the aim is to provide sufficient parking at all times, taking into account increased demand.

We will be talking to the bus companies that operate in Seaford and the county council passenger transport team to see what improvements could be made to routes and timetables to make the hub as accessible as possible by public transport. The transport consultants will also be developing a travel plan for the scheme that will be assessed as part of the planning application.

What will the environmental impact of the hub be?

We will be seeking to identify and mitigate against any potential negative impacts of the scheme, such as noise and traffic impacts, during the detailed design stages.

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Any potential impacts will be assessed as part of the planning application process. The scheme design will have an emphasis on sustainability.

To find out more about the proposals and sign up to our mailing list to keep informed please visit our website:

- lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/SeafordHealthHub
- Or email seafordhealthhub@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk
- Or write to us at **Seaford Health Hub feedback, Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, BN7 1AB.**