

**Residential and Southview Close Consultation
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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1. Background and preparation

1.1. Who currently owns the Hookstead building?

The building is owned by East Sussex County Council.

1.2. Is planning permission required for the proposed new site?

Yes, we would need to submit a planning application should the proposals be agreed. We would need to ask for change of use from Offices to Residential Accommodation and for extended hours of use of the building.

1.3. If the proposals went ahead, would Hookstead need much refurbishment?

Yes, the building would need a significant refurbishment. It is estimated that should the proposals go ahead this would take at least 6 months to complete, excluding the enabling works and fitting out periods.

1.4. Will clients be able to go and look around the Hookstead building?

We have already started to work with clients to show them around the outside of the building.

The inside of the building currently does not give a clear picture of the proposed plans. Therefore we have shown clients plans of the proposed layout inside of the premises and pictures of a recently refurbished respite building, to give them an idea of what it could look like.

We would be able to show clients what the inside looks like, as the building work is completed.

1.5. Would moving to a new site mean changes to what people pay?

Moving to a new site would not have a direct impact on the amount people pay for the service.

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2. Timescales

2.1. If the service moved to Hookstead, when would this happen?

If the proposals are agreed, subject to planning agreements, we are looking to start building works in September 2016. It is estimated that the refurbishment works would take around 6 months. Therefore we are looking to open the new service from April 2017.

2.2. What would happen if Hookstead wasn't ready in time for the move?

If the works were delayed we would continue with the current services as they are now until the building work is completed. We have time to make sure that everything and everyone is ready before we make any changes.

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3. Capacity, intake, staff and relationships

3.1. Would staff numbers and the staff working in the services remain the same?

The numbers and level of staffing for the Day Service would remain unchanged.

There is a saving attached to the proposals to consolidate the three group homes onto one site. This would include reductions to the staffing budget.

We would need fewer staff to work on one site in comparison to working across three sites. However, all of the current staff would be able to move to the new service as we are currently recruiting to vacancies and will recruit to temporary posts.

3.2. Would this reorganisation mean there will be fewer agency staff?

By combining the staff from across the group homes into one team, there would be more flexibility for staff support and cover. This together with the use of our relief staff means we would be less likely to need cover from agency staff.

3.3. What would be the refreshment facilities, and would a staff member also work as a cook?

At this stage we are looking to provide a restaurant-type facility to provide main meals and snacks. We may be able to extend this to the day service should this be something day service clients would like to buy whilst attending the day service.

We are considering various options relating to this, including employing a cook to undertake this role or a catering contract to provide this. As yet, this has not been finalised and requires further consideration.

3.4. How would you manage the risk that day service clients may be seen as using the same space as residential clients when sharing areas of the new building?

We will work with clients from both services in the design and layout of the proposed services. As part of this work, we will need to look at the spaces used both for the day service and outside of these hours for the people living in the accommodation, and have clear agreements in place.

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4. Facilities and activities

4.1. Do the plans for the new building ensure sufficient access on corridors for wheelchair users?

The existing corridors at the Hookstead building are being retained and are mostly 1.3m wide. This is sufficient for wheelchair access.

4.2. Do the plans for the new building include a lift?

The existing lift at the building would be replaced with new equipment, serving all four floors that can also be used for evacuation purposes if required.

4.3. What opportunities would clients have to shape their new environment – e.g. garden and outside space?

We want to work with clients, parent/carers and families in the design of the building, including the outside spaces.

We have already had some really clear ideas from clients during the consultation events about what they would like in the outside spaces. This includes shaded seating areas and raised beds for growing things.

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5. Support and advice

5.1. How will you update us on consultation findings, and on what decision will be taken?

We are issuing these FAQs to provide information about the questions and queries we have had so far and to provide answers to these to keep you informed.

We will also keep you informed throughout the consultation, providing information on display in each of the Residential Homes and at Southview Day Service.

Any updates will also be available on the website.

The Manager of the services, Gemma Wanstall, is available to answer any queries you may have on 01892 667388

We will send out letters in June to inform everyone of the outcome of the consultation and the decisions made.

5.2. Will there be accessible plans of the new building, with pictures, so parents and carers can understand and assist clients?

We have provided plans of the proposals at all of the engagement events and these are also on display in the services affected. We have provided pictures of some recently refurbished services, a “Respite Service” and a “Day Service”, to give clients, parent/carers and families an idea of what we are proposing and the standard we are looking to achieve.

If the proposals go ahead, we will provide pictures and updates on the plans and how things are progressing throughout the building works.

5.3. Could a welcome pack be designed and given to clients once the new building is in use?

Yes, this is something we will be looking to provide to all clients moving to the new service(s).

5.4. If the proposals go ahead, will you be providing clients with feedback forms, so they can let staff know how the changes are working?

Yes, we encourage client feedback continuously in all our services and this would continue in the new service.

In addition to this we will be holding reviews with each person living in the accommodation 6 weeks after moving in and at the 6 month point.

We will undertake a formal review one year on to look at how the new service is working and if any changes are needed.

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6. Other ways of doing this

6.1. Would you still close and relocate these services if responses to the consultation were not favourable?

The responses to the consultation are collated and are then carefully considered before making any recommendations about the outcome of the consultation.

Our recommendations are presented to the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Community Safety along with all of the consultation findings, and decisions are made with the feedback taken into account.

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7. Other things

7.1. Is the money for this proposal ring fenced?

We have capital funding provisionally agreed for the proposed Hookstead refurbishment project should the proposals go ahead.

7.2. Have neighbours voiced any concerns about the proposals?

We are not aware of any feedback from neighbours currently; however we are planning to hold a meeting with neighbours if the proposals are agreed, to share the plans.

We would need to make a planning application for the building works proposed. This would provide neighbours with further opportunities to voice their opinion.

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1. Timescales

1.1. When would current residential accommodation close and the new accommodation open?

The planned dates for opening the new services should the proposals be agreed are April 2017. This is however subject to planning consent and the building works being completed on time.

Existing services will continue to run as they are now until the building is ready.

Transition plans will be put in place for all services and individual clients as required, to ensure any move to the new service is carefully planned and at a pace required by each individual.

We will not release any of the buildings we currently use until the transition has been completed.

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2. Transport

2.1. If the relocation went ahead, it would mean that some parents and carers would have to travel much further distances, at greater expense, to see their cared for. How would this be managed?

As part of the consultation and thereafter we will continue to talk to families about the proposals. If the journey time is prohibitive we ask families to provide this as part of their feedback.

The proposed Hookstead site is approx. 1 mile from Southview Day Service and less than ¼ mile from The Gables, and is across the road from Beacongate.

The Greenacres residential service is 14.8 miles or 25 minutes' drive from the proposed Hookstead site.

The improved facilities would mean families visiting people living in the accommodation would be able to access the catering/restaurant facilities and have access to the grounds and communal space when visiting their relatives.

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3. Capacity, intake, staff and relationships

3.1. Would other residents at a client's current accommodation also be able to make the move?

Yes, we are proposing that all clients from the three group homes move to the new service. We currently have 16 clients living across the three homes and there is space for 16 people to live in the new accommodation.

We will be working individually with clients and their representatives to ensure any proposed move meets their needs and preferences.

3.2. Clients from one residential service may not get on with clients from another service, or with Southview Close day service clients. What would be done to ensure that issues of compatibility are taken into account?

Currently some people who live at Beacongate and The Gables attend Southview Close for their day service. Several clients from Greenacres also have contact with Southview and St Nicholas Day Services. What this suggests is that there is already established contact between the services and some of the people who live in the residential group homes know people within their local day services.

We appreciate that not everyone can get on with each other all of the time, However, we believe that the new residential service at Hookstead would provide larger accommodation and therefore people would have more of their own space, as well as more space generally across the service.

3.3. In combining different residential premises into one, how will you ensure continuity of service?

We are proposing that all clients currently living in the group homes move to the new service. This would ensure a level of continuity for people to continue living with the people they do know, as well as get to know the other people living in the homes better. All three homes regularly meet up for different events, so people are familiar with each other across all the homes.

The staff teams would merge to provide one staff team who would work flexibly to provide support to clients living in the accommodation. Clients would still be supported by staff that know them well and would have the opportunity to get to know the other staff better.

Gemma Wanstall, DPS Manager oversees the three homes and this would continue if the Hookstead project is agreed.

3.4. How many staff would be working overnight?

The proposed staffing structure for the accommodation service includes two waking night staff on duty each night. However, staffing levels are continually reviewed and may change according to the individual needs of clients.

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4. Facilities and activities

4.1. If the service is relocated, would residents be able to bring their furniture with them?

Yes, we would work with clients to be involved in the design, layout and furniture they wish to have in their rooms or bedsits.

4.2. Would clients have a choice of which bedroom would be theirs, and in how it is decorated?

To a degree, in terms of choice of room, dependent on their needs. We will fully involve people in room decoration.

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5. Support and advice

5.1. Would regular visits from family and loved ones continue with the same frequency?

Yes, we welcome and encourage visits from families at any time in line with people's wishes.

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6. Other ways of doing this

6.1. Couldn't The Gables, Beacongate and Greenacres be utilised or extended rather than closed, with the money put back into LD services?

A feasibility study of redeveloping the three buildings has been conducted, but two of them (the two Crowborough properties) cannot be extended easily or economically. Although Greenacres would be possible to develop, the location is not ideal because of it being relatively rural and lacking in transport links and community amenities.

We believe that Hookstead can offer better accommodation for all of the people living in the three residential homes, and it is close to a town centre.

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7. Other things

7.1. If the proposals went ahead, what would happen to the three current properties?

A range of options could be considered for these services. Due to the ongoing high revenue and maintenance costs for these services, they are not seen as viable to be kept as they are. If a decision is taken, following from the consultation, to vacate the properties, then options would be put forward for the future use of the buildings.

7.2. If the properties were sold, would the money from this be put back into LD services?

It is unclear at the moment as negotiations are ongoing with NHS England.

7.3. Is this part of a move away from residential homes to encourage supported living?

East Sussex County Council believes that there is a need to have a good mix of provision to be able to meet the needs of all the people that need support in the county.

If the proposals go ahead we would fully review the service model and provision for the individuals identified.

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Southview Close

1. Background and preparation

1.1. You provided a layout of the Hookstead plans at the 12 April consultation meeting. Can you provide one for Southview Close to the same scale?

Yes, this is now available for people to view at Southview Day Service. Alternatively Gemma Wanstall, DPS Manager has copies available. You can contact her on 01892 667388 or e-mail: Gemma.wanstall@eastsussex.gov.uk

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2. Transport

2.1. If the relocation went ahead, it might mean changes for how clients made their way to the day service, especially those who walk. How would this be managed?

As the proposed new site Hookstead is only approx. 1 mile from Southview Day Service, we do not envisage any significant changes to the current transport arrangements.

One of our key messages to all clients, parents and carers is that “Everyone who gets Council transport will continue to”.

We will work with people who currently walk to the service to find ways that they can get to the new service safely.

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3. Capacity, intake, staff and relationships

3.1. How can you be sure that Hookstead will be large enough to cope with the numbers of clients who will use the day service?

The total day service area offered at Hookstead would be about 6% larger than the space currently used at Southview Close, with a better layout of good-sized activity rooms.

Given the above increased space the day service would have space to cater for up to 45 clients attending the service each day.

3.2. At the moment the day service sometimes starts late and finishes early, because of limited staff resources. Would moving to Hookstead prevent or reduce this?

The Southview Day Service opening hours are 8.30am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am – 4pm on Friday. Staff are available to support clients during these times.

The Council transport also operates during these hours, so if clients are using council transport their pick up and drop off may vary to fit in with the timings for transport routes.

If clients or parent/carers have any concerns about the service currently provided, they should contact Gemma Wanstall, DPS Manager on 01892 667388 or e-mail:

Gemma.wanstall@eastsussex.gov.uk

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4. Facilities and activities

4.1. Would there be timetable changes at Hookstead, or would clients still be able to enjoy the same range of activities as at Southview Close?

We will work with clients and parents/carers to ensure that the new day service provides the same type and range of activities that all clients enjoy now.

A copy of an example timetable was shared at the Southview consultation meetings to show what could be on offer should the proposals be agreed.

We would also want to increase the range of opportunities on offer and to expand upon community links wherever possible.

4.2. Would there be new or improved facilities and activities at Hookstead that do not exist at Southview Close (e.g. stronger chairs; more computers; a tv room; a larger photography room)?

There would be a good mix of day care activity room space allocated at Hookstead to meet all current needs and with flexibility to be adapted in future if required.

A budget would be allocated for new furniture and fixtures, but some things would need to be relocated from Southview Close if they are still fit for purpose.

We also plan to provide a welcome visual display board, a new large TV screen, as well as improved ICT equipment, including Wi Fi and improved sensory equipment.

4.3. Would there be space in the day service area for refreshments, a café, and a vending machine?

Yes, the plans show a large café/restaurant area which would be used during the day by the Day Service. This includes provision for a coffee bar/refreshments area that clients would be able to access through staff or independently, depending on their needs.

We had not considered the addition of a vending machine, but will speak to clients about whether this is something they would like in the new design and if it is, look into the financial viability of this.

4.4. Storage is an issue at Southview Close. Do the Hookstead plans include ideas to improve this?

There would be a good allocation of space for storage purposes within the Hookstead proposed floor plans, especially at the garden level of the building.

4.5. Where will the toilets be situated for day service clients in the new building?

There are four main toilet areas/facilities proposed for use by Day Service clients, with six toilets provided in all. These are spread out across the service to provide increased accessibility.

There are two DDA toilets accessible from the main dining area, and one personal care/toilet area also accessed from the main dining room.

There is one DDA toilet and one personal care/toilet area accessible from the front wing and reception areas.

There is an additional toilet on the lower ground floor that can be accessed when using the garden area or for gardening/outside groups.

4.6. Would the Town House arts collective be able to play a role in shaping activities and the environment at the new building?

We have keen artists across our services that form the Town House collective. We would want to encourage all of the artists to be involved in sharing their ideas and work within the new building.

4.7. Would there be opportunities to go out and do things in the community?

Yes, we would continue with the current community activities that are on offer. We would also like to build upon these opportunities and increase these going forward.

We have a community development officer who will be working on increasing these with us.

4.8. Will it be possible to regulate noise levels (for example, from residential service clients' music)?

The Hookstead building would be refurbished to meet with the current Building Regulation Standards to control sound transmission from residential areas.

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5. Support and advice

5.1. Staff offered support recently for clients moving from Sandbanks to the recently refurbished Greenwood. Would the same happen for clients moving from Southview Close to Hookstead?

Yes, if the proposals go ahead we would work with clients to ensure a smooth transition to the new service.

As staff would transfer to the new service with the clients, they will be available to support clients with the planning, getting people ready, with the transition itself and afterwards with the settling in period.

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6. Other ways of doing this or saving money

6.1. Could energy saving lighting be used at Southview Close, and automatic taps that switch off, as ways of saving money?

Energy saving LED lighting would be utilised at the Hookstead building together with sun tubes and automated lighting controls. Sensor fitted water taps could also be used at the Hookstead building where appropriate.

Please also see response to 6.2 below.

6.2. Would you consider redeveloping Southview Close rather than moving?

Southview Close has served Learning Disability Day Services really well for a long time, but there have always been compromises on the building, for example the small rooms, lots of corridors and the underutilised spaces (the outside quad space and upstairs rooms) that are not easily adjusted without considerable cost.

Southview has been considered for redevelopment, but the cost would be far in excess of the cost to refurbish Hookstead, which as a “blank canvas” would provide an opportunity for people currently using Southview Close to share and develop what they would like at a new day centre.

Any changes made at Southview would be very disruptive and mean that either people have to move out whilst any works occur, or building work would go on around people using the service. It would also be very unlikely to resolve issues around space that is currently not accessible, e.g. the upstairs space.

If the Hookstead development does not go ahead, it is likely that learning disability services would continue to look for an alternative venue to Southview Close, due to the problems highlighted.

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