

Grosvenor Road Surgery and Withycombe Lodge Surgery – Combined Relocation Project

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Public and Patient Consultation Paper

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Back ground

Grosvenor Road (patient population 5,370) and Withycombe Lodge (patient population 2,293) surgeries in Paignton have identified significant shortcomings in their premises, which have an impact on the quality of services and access they are able to offer to patients. They have been trying to relocate to new purpose-built premises for over 10 years. Both surgeries were part of the erstwhile Clennon Valley Health Centre Development Project that had to be abandoned due to the adverse financial climate affecting many of the stakeholders involved in that project.

Both Grosvenor Road Surgery (GRS) and Withycombe Lodge Surgery (WLS) have, however, continued their commitment towards trying to find better premises and have now identified an exciting opportunity at Yannon's farm near the Roselands area of Paignton where there is a planned residential development by Cavanna Homes.

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal to move and offers an assessment of the likely impact within the Paignton area, both for our patients and for the public at large who are likely to be potential users of the health services that will be offered at these practices.

Why do we need new premises?

The existing premises at GRS fall 47% short of the desired area required to treat the number of patients presently registered there. There are two Portacabins which have, by default, become a permanent fixture.

The premises at Withycombe Lodge does have more than the desired amount of space, but the extra accommodation is inaccessible to most patients - making the additional space unusable.

In addition to this both buildings are converted residential houses. There is no room for expansion or redevelopment. Inadequate parking has been a longstanding concern to patients. The corridors are narrow and access, especially for disabled people, is inadequate. Some of the rooms are small and lack adequate natural light. It is quite likely that with the new regulations in place for Care Quality Commission registration, both practices will be deemed to have inadequate premises in both quantity and quality.

The proposal

We are proposing a relocation to a new purpose-built surgery at Yannon's Farm in Paignton, near Sainsbury's Superstore opposite the Roselands estate. The two practices will move in as distinct and separate entities as this is what our patients and staff indicate as their preference. There will, however, be opportunities for economies of scale through shared areas such as meeting rooms, staff room, toilets and waiting areas. This co-location could also lead to better integrated working between the two practices in the future, particularly in the development of specialist skills. It is also envisaged that the building will be environmentally efficient.

The benefits for patients

Purpose built, efficient accommodation and up-to-date facilities will allow us to offer a range of improvements that will be of benefit to patients.

Among these will be the ability of the surgery to provide other services such as a pharmacy on site, alternative therapies, better facilities for minor operations, baby clinics, health visitor clinics, mental health counsellors, a sports medicine clinic, provision of commissioned services by the Clinical Commissioning Group. We expect other possibilities to open up due to the availability of a purpose built space, and are keen to have discussions with our patients about their priorities for services.

Both practices are also training practices and we will be able to continue training GPs, Foundation year doctors and Medical Students, within premises that are fit for purpose.

We have also had discussions with South Devon College, which would be in close proximity, about collaborative working and this would enable us to target the younger population - especially for health promotion activities.

Impact assessment of the relocation proposal

The area known as Yannon's Farm is underserved in terms of health facilities. There is a proposal for up to 200 houses to be built there by Cavanna Homes. In addition, a further 350 homes are to be built further down the road at Whiterock and there is a further proposal for 100 homes to be built on the site of the existing Garden Centre at Yannon's Farm. There is therefore likely to be a significant rise in population in this area. The nearest surgeries at present to this site are Grosvenor Road Surgery and Mayfield Surgery to the east, equidistant at 1.6 miles away, and Cherrybrook Surgery to the west which is a similar 1.6 miles away.

The present situation in Paignton town centre sees a concentration of practices within a radius of half a mile (Grosvenor Road, Mayfield, Corner Place, Bishops Place and Withycombe Lodge). It has become obvious that the town centre is overpopulated by GP practices, while even a large residential area like the Roselands has been underserved for many years. For this reason it would make sense to have a GP practice in that area.

How would it affect our existing patients?

We have been greatly encouraged by our initial surveys of patients, which show that 96 % of patients at Grosvenor Road and almost 75% at Withycombe Lodge have been supportive of our proposal. Withycombe Lodge is located 2.1miles from the proposed site at Yannon's Farm. The practice does have patients in the Preston area who are likely to be affected by the proposal. Neither practice has any intention of losing patients due to a move and both are keen to ensure that patients, particularly those who have been with us for a long time, are supported in a variety of ways to ensure the travel will not be an obstacle.

We are therefore looking at a host of means of minimising this impact. Although we know public transport links to be good, we recognise that this is not ideal for all patients and we are actively looking at making other sorts of transport arrangements for our patients, for example through volunteer drivers, or minibus pick ups and drop offs. We could if feasible, explore the possibility of a small satellite surgery closer to the town centre.

Patients will, however, be able to exercise choice. There are three other GP practices in the town centre area which are able to accept new patients, and Pembroke House Surgery is already serving a large number of patients in the Preston area.

In surveys done recently and in the past we have seen that a majority of patients do drive and are therefore willing to travel. The recent widening of the Tweenaway junction, Brixham Road and present work at Yannon's Farm and around the Whiterock area has provided very good access by car and public transport. There is already a bus route to this area from the town centre (Stagecoach 12A and 12C). Large numbers of people already drive to the area to do their shopping at Sainsbury's and Asda.

It is also likely that in future, when the new development is completed, a sizeable number of people will be able to walk to their local surgery. This also applies to people from the Roselands estate.

In addition to this, Grosvenor Road also has a number of patients from Stoke Gabriel registered with the practice, and – given parking and traffic issues - this group is quite supportive of our proposed move.

Plans for patient consultation and engagement

Our patients are very important to us. We have therefore decided to consult our patients, colleagues in other practices and the public about this relocation. The process would be to disseminate as much information as possible about this to as many people as possible. We are publicising the proposal on our websites, and with posters in our practices as well as letters to colleagues in the Paignton and Brixham areas. We will have drop-in meetings for our patients and will also arrange a larger public meeting in early January so that we can inform as many people as possible and have the opportunity to listen to their views.

We hope to build on our indications so far that a majority of people would support our move.

Summary

We ask the Committee to note our proposal and to support the engagement work being carried out with our patients and the community.