

Belford Replacement progress update.

Welcome to the latest update in our series which aims to keep you up to date with our progress towards the replacement for the Belford Hospital, which will be on the Blàr Mòr site opposite the police station in Fort William. Previous updates explained the approvals process for a new hospital that all NHS Scotland boards must follow. In this update we will be discussing the current works being undertaken by NHS Highland with the support of your Community Representatives and Contractors in preparation for making sure that services are patient focussed, both within the new hospital and surrounding community. There has been a great deal of work going on which is often unseen and our thanks go to all of those individuals contributing to this process.

The design team are working with the schedule of accommodation, which is the list of rooms required for each department, as agreed with the local clinical teams, to develop the initial layouts for your new hospital. Community care services are about to start a series of four workshops, which will support the evaluation and development of services, to work in tandem with the new hospital, to support local patient care. The design team are also working with our clinical teams to put together proposals for “repeatable rooms”. These are room layout designs which can be repeated; for example patient bedrooms. The benefit of this is that we can tailor these to the specific requirements of the patients and clinical teams. Departmental layouts will be discussed in the coming months.

There has always been the drive to deliver more services locally and to reduce unnecessary travel within Lochaber and to Inverness. The Transport Strategy Group has met and is currently gathering data to support planning for access to the hospital. This group is made up of NHS, Highland Council, and HiTrans, working together to develop and inform the way in which the new hospital is accessed physically, considering and encouraging all routes allowing independent ease of access such as fully accessible pathways, cycle provision, clear and easy collection and drop off points. This of course includes the discussions on Helipad location which are ongoing with our Scottish Ambulance colleagues.

Blàr Mòr site surveys are being commenced including 3D topographic surveys, scanning and geotechnical surveys and environmental/ecological surveys. These include detailed surveys, such as background noise, which support the design team in ensuring that our patients are in an environment that is as therapeutic as possible and are not impacted by road noise, or intrusive sound from technical aspects of the building. There are so many areas to consider in this process, but all impact upon patients and our colleagues.

Following the recent and well-attended public event held in Lochaber a “Question and Answers” paper has been developed and distributed and can be accessed on the following link (www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/about/service-redesign/lochaber-health-and-social-care-redesign/). , Further Q&A papers will be developed as there will be many questions throughout this process going forward. Please do contact us to let us know of any concerns, so that we can answer questions as the services develop. There are further meetings being planned to ensure that all questions are answered throughout the planning and design process.

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If you'd like to get touch with questions or comments, you can contact us via the NHS Highland Feedback team Nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot or 01463 705997, or via our project email address on nsh.nshighlandstatesprojects@nhs.scot.

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