

## NEW COMMUNITY TREATMENT AND CARE CENTRE SETTING THE STANDARD

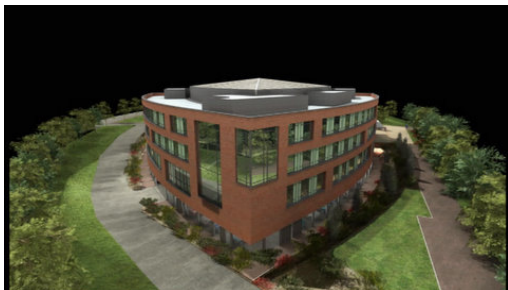
Health Estates are pleased to confirm that the Minister, Paul Goggins has given his approval for the construction of a new Community Treatment and Care Centre in Portadown. Costing approximately £16.5 million on completion and being project managed by Health Estates' Timothy Sheehan, the new building will replace the existing health centre and it is hoped that this flagship development will help to stimulate the town's regeneration, as well as providing primary healthcare and community services for the people of Portadown and the surrounding area.

The new centre will provide accommodation facilities for the 23 GPs which are currently operating in the Portadown area, split into seven separate GP practices within the building. There will be dedicated rooms for dental services, facilities for minor surgical procedures, a crèche, a pharmacy and also a café. The building will also have to be flexible enough to facilitate future changes in healthcare delivery in the area. For example it is anticipated that a wide range of new primary care services will be developed at the new centre in the coming years, including:

- Audiology
- Radiology and ultrasound
- Psychiatry
- ECG
- Telemedicine



The design team led by Kennedy Fitzgerald & Associates and Avanti Architects have produced plans for a three-storey building designed around a central atrium. The 8750m<sup>2</sup> building could be described as a triangular doughnut with the accommodation laid out in three gently curved blocks connected at each end to form an equilateral triangle. Consultations and discussions have taken place throughout the design process with both the public and staff who operate the services. This has led to very detailed requirements for rooms, space and adjacencies being incorporated into the plans, and also to meet the client's requirement for flexibility. In fact outline designs for the centre have won an award for "Best Future Design" at the recent Building Better Healthcare Awards ceremony in London. These awards publicly recognise the achievements of health trusts working in collaboration with healthcare design and the construction community.



The new building will be constructed adjacent to the existing facilities, overlooking the floodplain of the River Bann. Because of the building's close proximity to the river its basement will not contain any habitable rooms but will instead be used to house the staff car park beneath the building. The occupational therapy department, crèche, radiology and pharmacy will be located on the ground floor, while space on the first floor will be primarily allocated to GP surgeries. The second floor will be home to more GPs and surgeries and support offices.



At the heart of the scheme, both literally and metaphorically, will be the atrium. The centre's main entrance will lead visitors straight into the space which contains the main reception and information desk.

There will also be a number of secondary reception desks associated with specific clinical services including waiting areas, a planting, a café and also access to all parts of the building.

In its centre is the main staircase, with sky-bridges leading from the stairs to local reception areas at each floor level. These walkways have been designed so that they can be moved to re-apportion the space on each of the floors should the need arise in the future. There are also two scenic lifts.

The challenge for the scheme's building services engineers Cundall and their Northern Ireland partner Taylor Fegan was to develop the scheme to meet strict environmental criteria. In particular, the scheme had to be almost entirely naturally ventilated.

Sustainability has been a key consideration in the design. The compact building form should improve energy efficiency and this has been exploited to assist in meeting the new building regulation requirements for reductions in energy consumption and CO2 emissions. With its many low energy features including a biomass boiler, solar domestic hot water, geothermal energy and a thermal labyrinth for the fresh air- the building is expected to perform very highly in this regard.

The new building represents an innovative new model for primary healthcare service delivery and aims to create a one-stop primary care centre in which different services and agencies are located together within a shared environment. In addition to patient convenience, it is hoped to foster better integration and co-ordination between service providers in order to maximise the use of resources and improve operational efficiency.