

Dorset County Hospital Expansion



Image courtesy of ONE Creative environments

Delivery of critical healthcare infrastructure and key worker housing to serve the community

CLIENT

Prime PLC & Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

LPA

Dorset Council

STATUS

Planning permission granted / ongoing

SERVICES

Planning, Heritage, Townscape and Landscape, EIA

Our role

- The proposals comprise the improvement to the existing hospital facilities including a brand new emergency department and critical care unit. Turley secured outline planning permission in accordance with the Trust's critical programme timescales, which helped secure £77.3m of funding in the first phase of the New Hospital Programme. The proposals will also deliver a new hospital support centre and an integrated health hub. Approximately 95 key worker homes are proposed within the western section of the campus to ensure that hospital staff/key workers have access to accommodation.
- The proposals comprise a fundamental component of the local healthcare infrastructure that serves and supports the growing population of Dorset.
- We undertook positive pre-application engagement with the council and established a rapport with key stakeholders which aims to minimise unforeseen complications during the planning determination period.
- For the hospital facilities application, we co-ordinated inputs from the technical consultant team to inform a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) undertaken by the council, which concluded that the proposed development would not result in a likely significant effect upon the Poole Harbour SPA or its integrity.
- For the key worker housing application, we co-ordinated a bespoke budget calculation of nutrient budgets and a strategy to achieve nutrient neutrality.

Results

- The site is located within the catchment of Poole Harbour, a designated European Special Protection Area (SPA) identified by Natural England as being vulnerable to nutrient impacts. To ensure the critical hospital expansion works would not be held up, we advised upon an amended planning strategy which resulted in the submission of two separate applications.
- Two outline planning applications were submitted in May 2022. Planning permission for the hospital facilities was granted in January 2023. Owing to delays associated with the nutrient impacts, the new key worker homes were subsequently granted planning permission in July 2025 once a neutrality strategy had been secured.
- Our robust approach to EIA Screening resulted in the council being of the opinion that an Environment Statement was not required to support the submission, generating costs savings for the NHS Trust.
- We continue to work with the NHS Foundation Trust and its development partner to work towards realising their redevelopment vision for the site.

Turley