Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Council of Governors
9th March 2015

TITLE	**Catering Provision at Ashford Hospital** **Public Café / Restaurant Review**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Ashford Hospital currently has three restaurant / café outlets and this number has not decreased since the hospital reduced to its current size. This has resulted in there being too many catering facilities in relation to potential customer numbers. The location of Aspects restaurant is now away from the main activity of the hospital with the closure of A&E and the maternity block resulting in it being now poorly located and more difficult to find. Aspects restaurant was designed to service a medium sized acute hospital. The current Aspects restaurant has not seen any recent refurbishment works carried out in the last 15 years and the decor is in a poor out of date state and in need of updating.
The Council is asked to:	Note the report
Submitted by:	Chris Bell, Associate Director of Estates and Facilities on behalf of Valerie Bartlett, Deputy Chief Executive
Date:	February 2015
Decision:	To Note

1. Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper is to outline the rational for the closure of Aspects restaurant at Ashford and to replace it with a restroom with vending facilities located close to it. Other options have been considered and included within this paper.

2. Background

Two small cafes and one large staff and public restaurant serve Ashford Hospital.

The catering contract awarded in April 2012, allowed for a sum of £375k CAPEX to be used over the term of the 5-year contract for the refurbishment work to our cafes and restaurant so as maintain hygiene standards and to make them appealing to customers. The Catering Steering group, which is made up of, Patient Representatives, EPF, Staff Governors, Non-Executive Directors, Catering and Facilities Management, was used to advice on how best to use the CAPEX.

The Catering Steering group decided in 2012, not to recommend any CAPEX investment into the Ashford Aspects restaurant, due to the large cost of upgrading the facility requiring £70k- £80k. The high cost was due to the restaurant having had no investment / refurbishment works done to it within the last 15 years, due to falling customer numbers when compared to the other catering / café outlets in our hospitals. This has resulted in the decor looking poor and in need of updating e.g. new flooring, seating furniture, and decoration.

One of the main factors in the declining usage of Aspects restaurant is due to its current location, which is now away from the main activity of the hospital with the closure of A&E and the maternity block that used to be adjacent to it and there being less activity within the hospital. The restaurant was built and designed to service a medium sized acute hospital.

3. Current Situation

Catering Outlet	Opening times	Customers per day	Profit / Loss
Aspects Restaurant	7.30am-3pm Monday to Friday	66	-(£30k)
Retreat Main entrance Café	7.30am-5pm Monday to Friday	88	£20k
Outpatients Café	7.30am-3pm Monday to Friday	35	£3k

The above table shows Aspects Restaurant currently operates at an annual loss of £30k whilst the other cafes operate at a small surplus.

Currently 46% of the usage of Aspects is associated with builders using the facility from the block of flats being built adjacent to the restaurant side entrance. The building work is due to finish in early 2015; therefore, the income from them is not counted in the above figures.

4. Options

There have been a possible four options considered: **Appendix 1**

a) **Do nothing**
b) **Close Front entrance Retreat**
c) **Close Outpatients Café**
d) **Close Aspects**

Option d) Close: Aspects restaurant was highlighting the greater benefits in terms of savings, cost avoidance and gained space for clinical activity, however there would need to be some investment in the current vending facility adjacent to the restaurant to allow staff an alternative facility to take their breaks. An enhanced hot grab and go items menu will be introduced in the two existing café facilities.

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5. Benefits

- There would be an annual £30k catering subsidy saving to the Trust.
- Cost avoidance £70-£80k refurbishment work required.
- The space gained in Aspects restaurant will be utilised for clinical services, which the space utilisation group will consider.

6. Preparatory Work Required

- Implementation plan developed: **Appendix 2**
- Vending room extended and refurbished adjacent to Aspects for staff as an alternative facility to take their breaks. CAPEX required £15k (Capital control group February)
- Grab and go hot items such as jacket potatoes, pastas, pizzas, Cornish pasties, and hot soups introduced to the Retreat and Outpatients cafes (March)
- Trial opening of Retreat main entrance cafes Saturdays due to an increase in clinical activity (January)

7. Conclusion

Three catering / café outlets serve Ashford hospital and there has not been a catering review of how many are required for the current size of the hospital since it amalgamated with St Peters 15 years ago, other than to close all of them at weekends.

The closure of Aspects will limit the choice of places for staff to take their breaks in a relatively quiet environment; therefore, the current vending room adjacent to Aspects restaurant is to be slightly enlarged and refurbished. An enhanced hot grab and go items menu will be introduced in the two existing café facilities.

Appendix 1

a) Do nothing: Retain all three catering outlets

Advantage

The hospital retains a large dining facility and should the hospital increase in size then there is adequate catering facilities

Due to its size, the restaurant is used for volunteer's lunch and other large gatherings, which cannot be accommodated at the smaller restaurant facility at St Peters.

Disadvantages

Within the next two to three years, there will be a requirement to change the carpet to vinyl flooring and improve the seating and servery. The cost is in the region of £70 - £80k the kitchen equipment also needs to be maintained and renewed i.e. cost avoidance in the same time period of £5-£7k, there too is the utilities costs of water, power and electrics – circ £6k a year

Space utilisation is not good in an underutilised restaurant that could be reused for clinical services.

b) Close: Outpatients café

Advantages

Reduction in catering subsidy of £1k
Freed up space available for other clinical usage
Low patronage as there are too many catering outlets so reduces the amount
Could put vending machines into place – Capex would be required – suggest a Snack Vendor, Sweet Vendor and Drink Cold Vendor and Hot Drink Option vendor (Circ £12k)

Disadvantages

Mainly used by patients visiting Outpatients and well located to the clinics
Very small amount of catering subsidy achieved against the loss of the cafe

c) Close: Main Entrance Retreat café

Advantages

Option to use the space for other patient services
Less people gathering in the main entrance

Disadvantages

Other catering facilities are not located near to the wards and too far away
Increase in subsidy as the Retreat makes a profit whereas the other two catering facilities do not
No reduction in subsidy as the café breaks even
Costa Coffee and offering is well used

d) Close: Aspects Restaurant

Advantages

Savings in catering contract subsidy of £30k per annum
Space utilisation is not good in an underutilised restaurant that could be reused for clinical services

Cost avoidance to change (modernise) old carpet and furniture circa £70-80k

Disadvantages
There would be a limited hot meal services available in the other two cafes to snack items.
Restaurant used for volunteer Christmas lunch and other large events
Costs to make change (redundancies) £16k worst case scenario if they cannot be redeployed
Some staff disaffection as reducing their choice of food offering from hot meals to snacks

Appendix 2

Implementation Plan

OCS staff affected effected will be kept informed by OCS their employee and managed under their own contractual arrangements.

Timetable will be as follows:

Action	**Dates**	**Responsibility**
Brief: EPF	14th January 2015 **(completed)**	Chris Bell
Brief: Staff Governors	14th January 2015 **(completed)**	Chris Bell
Brief: Patients Panel	20th January 2015 **(completed)**	William Britton
Brief: Board	19th February 2015 **(completed)**	Valerie Bartlett
Notice in Aspects, plus Aspire informing staff and the public of changes and contact email address	23rd February 2015	William Britton
Brief: Council of Governors	9th March 2015	Valerie Bartlett
Start procuring enabling works for closure of Aspects	9th March 2015	William Britton
Closure of Aspects restaurant	End of April 2015	Chris Bell