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# Engagement report: Grantham and District Hospital frontage

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## Introduction

Between Monday 17 February and Monday 31 March 2025, United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (ULTH) conducted a public engagement exercise regarding the future of the NHS-owned derelict buildings at the front of Grantham and District Hospital on Manthorpe Road, Grantham.

Various engagement methods were used with the Lincolnshire population, including media, social media, emails, survey and public meetings (both online and in person), with a substantial reach of invitation to be involved. 680 people took part directly, and more than 300 people provided their contact details because they were interested in continuing to engage in this process, with several offering strategic, community and charity business intelligence as well as practical project support.

It is important to understand that results analysed reflect the views of an opportunistic sample, not all questions were always completed fully. EDI data was offered fully as well as partially by some and reflects some representation from diverse participants. Raw data is available upon request.

Engagement numbers:

Date	Time	Location/Venue/Contact type	Numbers engaged
Various	n/a	Emails	13
03 03 25	6-7pm	Public meeting, Grantham Hospital	7
11 03 25	6-7pm	Public meeting, on Teams	0
11 03 25	Not stated	Meeting with Langford Gardens Residents Association	2
12 03 25	1-2pm	Public meeting, Grantham Hospital	10
06 03 25	10-11am	Public meeting on Teams	1
Various	n/a	Comments on Social Media platforms	26
17 01 25 to 31 03 25	n/a	Survey	631

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## Section one: emails and social media responses

### Healthcare needs

- Lots of contributors shared the desire that any development should address healthcare needs. Suggestions included maintaining the site's healthcare focus, such as converting it into a nursing home to alleviate bed-blocking issues or using it for respite care or a children's ward.

### Community support suggestions

- Community Wellbeing Café: There was a suggestion to transform the building into a Community Wellbeing Café, offering a safe and supportive environment for frequent hospital visitors. This café could be supported by volunteers and community services, aiming to reduce emergency service visits by providing a place for social interaction and health checks
- Charity-Run Cancer Support Centre: Another suggestion was to use part of the building as a charity-run cancer support centre, providing practical, emotional, and social support to those diagnosed with cancer and their families.

### Economic contribution

- Commercial and Non-Commercial Use: While some participants expressed interest in commercial use, others felt it would be unacceptable if it did not align with the building's original purpose. Ideas include using the space for a restaurant, a charity shop, or even Airbnb's for families of long-term patients and locum medical staff.

### Historical preservation

- Architectural Significance: The Victorian cottage hospital buildings are seen as architecturally significant and a landmark in Grantham. There is a strong sentiment to preserve the building's historical significance, either by retaining and restoring the original façade or reusing materials like Ancaster stone in any new development
- Community Memories: The building holds sentimental value for many in the community, with personal connections such as family members who trained or were born there. Preserving a piece of the hospital's history is important to many.

### Creative solutions

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- DIY SOS scenario: there was enthusiasm for a collaborative effort involving providers and volunteers to transform the building, like the DIY SOS approach.

#### Concerns and criticisms

- Neglect and dereliction: Some people said the site has been neglected for around 19 years, leading to its current derelict state. There was frustration over the funds spent on hoarding and artwork instead of clinical services
- Opposition to demolition: this section of data indicated that the community prefers development that is sympathetic to the building's historical and architectural significance; thoughts were aired by some that any plan to demolish the building for car parking would be met with strong opposition.

#### Other potential uses

- Warm Hub/community space: suggestions include renovating one of the buildings to serve as a warm hub, community space, or small charity shop, with historical photographs displayed to retain the building's heritage
- Education Centre: there is interest in using the space to develop an education centre for advanced course training, bringing training back in-house for the trust.

### Section two: engagement events

The events were offered online and in person at a range of times. Teams' events were open to anyone, but the in-person events were by advanced booking only, necessitated due to venue capacity. There was executive attendance at the events, 30 people attended four out of the five public meetings facilitated by ULTH.

Date	Time	Location/venue/contact type	Number
03 03 25	6pm to 7pm	Grantham and District Hospital	7
06 03 25	10am to 1am	Teams Event (online)	1
11 03 25	6pm to 7pm	Teams Event (online)	0
11 03 25		Meeting with Langford Gardens Residents Association	2
12 03 25	1pm to 2pm	Grantham and District Hospital	10

Public views were collected from these events, and the following themes analysed:

#### Safety and structural integrity

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- There was acknowledgement that making the building safe or fully renovated would not be viable with NHS resources alone, but that there would be organisations that would be able to support this project.

#### Historical and architectural value

- Preservation vs. modernisation: there was a lot of commentary about preserving the entire building as well as expressed hopes for the preservation of the façade in the least, even if the rest of the structure is modernised
- Listing status: comments were shared that the building is not listed, partly due to modern additions, but it was said that it is on the 'at risk' register for British Heritage.

#### Community and clinical use

- Clinical and healthcare services: people attending the public events made various suggestions for use, include using the building for various healthcare services such as a step-down facility, GP surgery, dentist surgery, convalescence unit, maternity unit, a private healthcare facility, or a base for a district nursing team, etc
- Community services: other ideas in the meetings looked to a community focus, such as a community centre, charity shop, and a centre for young people with additional needs. The contributions include suggestion that the building/site could be used for a multi-purpose venue for community needs.

#### Commercial and practical considerations

- Funding and income generation: some people shared thoughts that any development needs to be financially viable, potentially generating income or being funded externally. There was suggestion that organisations and services, including the Alive Church, could help with planning and sourcing funding.

#### Future development and planning

- Planning permission: it was thought that any significant changes, including demolition or new construction, will require planning permission
  - Growth and development: it was highlighted that Grantham is seen as a growth point and so the building could become a valuable community resource in the future and that it could grow into its own purpose over time. The advice here was not to be overly prescriptive about use at this stage, which would help sourcing funding and wider support etc.
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## Aesthetic and environmental impact

- Visual impact: concerns were shared about maintaining the building's aesthetic appeal and ensuring any new construction fits in with the surrounding area
- Environmental considerations: ensuring that any new development does not negatively impact the environment or the local community. Feelings were shared that any new buildings should adhere to net zero standards and lead by example in sustainability.

## Section three: survey report

### Part A: survey overview

The survey was live from Monday 17 February 2025, responses were analysed up to Monday 31 March 2025. The survey was shared via various social media channels, via the local media, on the Trust website, via stakeholders and with patient representative contact lists, as well as being shared with interested parties and via partner organisations.

There were 631 responses, 70 (12%) were from patients at the hospital, 241 (42%) were residents, 153 (27%) were staff members and 106 (19%) classified themselves as others, for example sharing that they had been born at the hospital, were an interested party, resident of a local village, volunteer, a commuter, a past patient or previous staff member.

As part of the survey, the following core questions were asked:

Question	Number of responses (n)
1 Are you aware of the old buildings at the front of the hospital site that have not been used for many years?	574
2 If feasible, do you think the old buildings should be kept and brought back into use?	526
3 If the buildings are not able to be kept, would you like to see some of the old stonework retained and reused as part of the site's future use?	519
4a Suggestions for potential future uses (see details on page 8).	524
4b Other suggestions (collated independent responses)	56

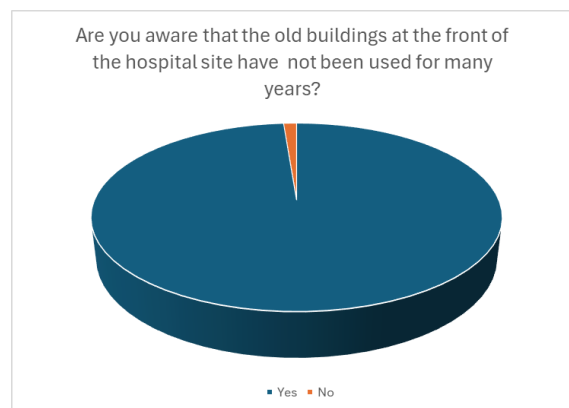
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4c Which of the above options would be your preference, and why?	456
Is there anything you would not like the site to be used for, and why?	396

### Part B: key question responses

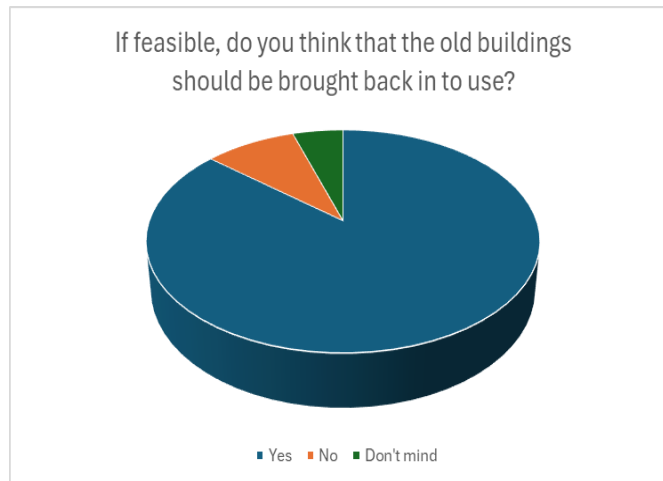
1 Are you aware of the old buildings at the front of the hospital site that have not been used for many years?



565 respondents said that they were aware that the front of the hospital site had not been used for many years, 9 said no.

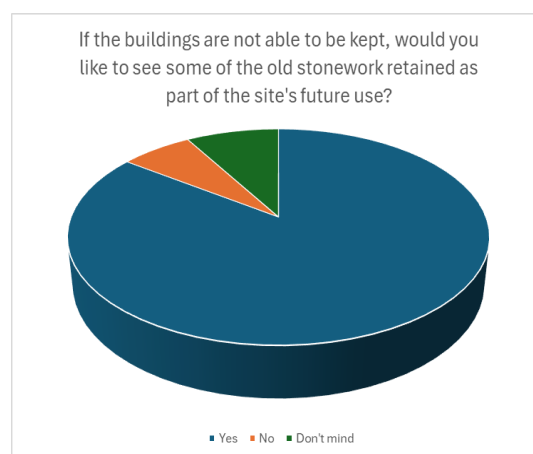
2 If feasible, do you think the old buildings should be kept and brought back into use?





453 out of 526 respondents thought the old building should be kept and brought back in to use, 47 said no, 26 didn't mind.

3 If the buildings are not able to be kept, would you like to see some of the old stonework retained and reused as part of the site's future use?



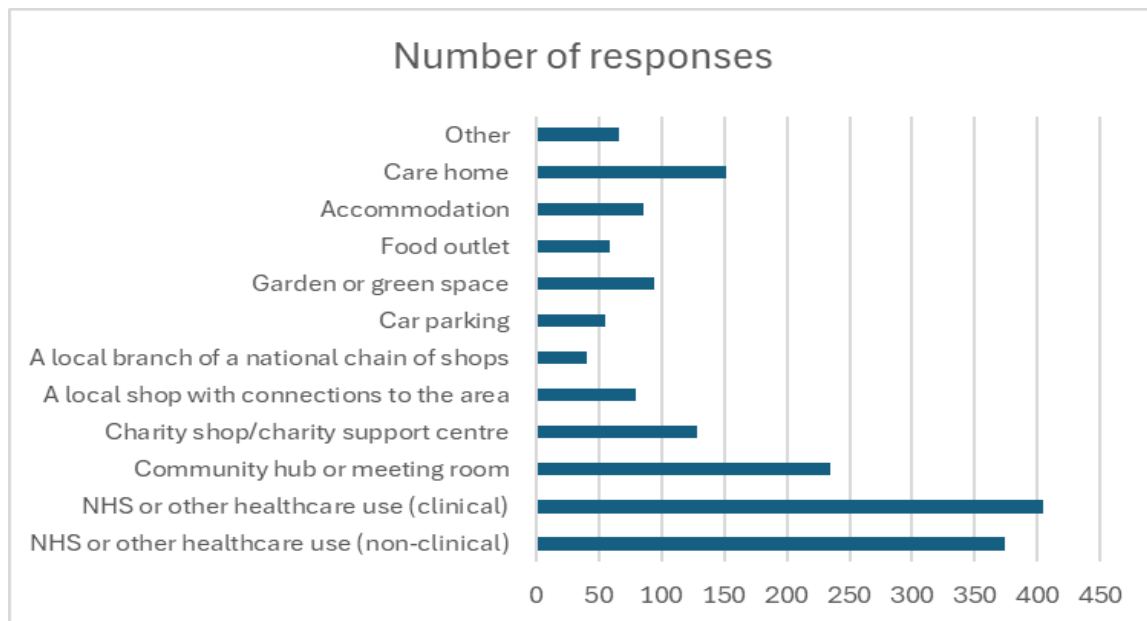
440 said yes, 34 said no, 44 didn't mind.

4a Please tick all the options for future use you would support (see details below).

Without obliging any future use assumptions, we provided some options for the future use of this part of the Grantham hospital site. People could choose as many options as they wished, as well as suggesting their own.

It is important to note that for ease of analyses the top three most frequently selected choices in the survey were selected for focus on understanding why people chose what they did.

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#### 4b Other suggestions

Other suggestions offered by 56 people included:

- Discharge suites for patients awaiting community support
- Mental health day centres to prevent hospital admissions
- Convalescent homes for those unable to return home immediately
- Preventative health services, such as self-care education
- Accommodation for short-term stays on hospital grounds
- Bigger hospice facilities
- Red Cross/St John's/EMAS centre points
- Nursery or children's care centre for staff children
- Health and wellbeing hub and a fitness centre
- Clinical skills education and training suites
- Nurses' accommodation
- Museum or heritage site highlighting the hospital's history
- Community space for wellness events
- Centre for holistic therapies
- 24-hour pharmacy
- Info hub to provide additional support for patients, staff, and visitors.

#### 4c(i) Why people in the survey want clinical NHS or other healthcare facilities at the site of interest:

- Healthcare demand: Grantham is expanding, and there is a significant need for more healthcare services to accommodate the growing population. This includes clinical appointments, beds, and specialised services.
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- Historical significance: the building was originally gifted for healthcare purposes and has historical value. Many believe it should continue to serve this role, preserving its architectural heritage and honouring its history while modernising its facilities to meet current healthcare needs
  - Community health and wellbeing: A health and wellbeing hub for residents and staff would support the community's health and prevention of illness. This could include holistic therapy support centres, a district nursing team, and educational rooms focused on disease prevention and patient engagement
  - Transitional and convalescent care: there is a need for facilities that provide transitional care for patients who are fit to leave the hospital but are awaiting community or family care. This would help with patient flow and support patient recovery
  - Economic and social benefits: utilising the site for healthcare purposes would create jobs, support local businesses, and provide essential services to the community, ensuring that residents benefit from their contributions as taxpayers
  - Accessibility: providing local healthcare services would reduce the need for residents to travel long distances to other hospitals, making healthcare more accessible and convenient.

4c(ii) Why people in the survey want non-clinical NHS or other healthcare use at the site of interest:

- Staff and patient support: facilities like a hub, food outlet, and accommodation for staff would support both staff and patients, improving their overall experience and wellbeing
  - Childcare facilities for staff working shifts would also be beneficial
  - Economic benefits: non-clinical facilities can create jobs and support local businesses, contributing to the local economy
  - Flexibility: non-clinical uses offer flexible options, such as a self-care hub, education centre, or appointment rooms, which can benefit individuals and reduce hospital numbers over time
  - Staff wellbeing: facilities like a fitness centre and common room areas would support wellbeing
  - Accessibility: non-clinical facilities can make it easier for residents to access resources and services, enhancing the overall quality of life in the area.
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4c(iii) Why people in the survey want a Community Hub or meeting room at the site of interest:

- **Community engagement:** a community hub or meeting room would provide a space for local groups and organisations to gather, fostering a sense of community and encouraging social interaction
  - **Support for local initiatives:** such a facility could support various local initiatives and charitable organisations, offering them a venue to hold events, meetings, and activities that benefit the community
  - **Flexibility:** a community hub can serve multiple functions, from hosting educational workshops and self-care programs to providing a venue for social events and support groups
  - **Accessibility:** having a dedicated space for community activities would make it easier for residents to access resources and services, enhancing the overall quality of life in the area
  - **Historical preservation:** utilising the building as a community hub would preserve its historical significance while repurposing it for modern community needs
  - **Economic and social benefits:** a community hub can create jobs, support local businesses, and offer social benefits by providing a central location for community engagement and support with facilities such as food outlets, cafés, and shops. This would offer convenience for the public, visitors and staff
  - **Support for vulnerable groups:** meeting rooms and hubs can provide a safe and welcoming space for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or those with mental health needs, to receive support and connect with others.
  - **Health and wellbeing:** a community hub can offer health and wellbeing programs, such as yoga, fitness classes, and mental health support, contributing to the overall wellbeing of residents.
  - **Integration with healthcare services:** a community hub located near healthcare facilities can provide complementary services, such as health education and preventive care programs, enhancing the overall healthcare ecosystem
  - **Green spaces:** incorporating green spaces and gardens into the community hub design can provide a soothing environment for the public, visitors and patients promoting relaxation and wellbeing.
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## 5 Is there anything you would not like the site to be used for, and why?

In general, people felt that the site should not be used for anything that is not related to the major preferences expressed above (clinical NHS or other healthcare use, non-clinical NHS or other healthcare use, community hub or meeting room).

Though in the minority, some respondents said the building should be destroyed completely. They explained further, saying dereliction would make way for new functional structures, the cost of restoration was seen as prohibitive to retention, they thought modern facilities were better as they would be more efficient and better equipped, they also thought there would be better use of the site space. Safety concerns were expressed by some, and they thought demolition would eliminate these concerns. Many people also said that they thought that the buildings are an eyesore that detract from the overall appearance of the area.

Several things evoked differing strengths of feelings and require consideration:

- **Commercial use:** there were more people resistant to the site being used for commercial purposes than not, these people believe the site should remain dedicated to healthcare or community use and not be used for outward private profit. Others believe these uses would not be in keeping with the character of the area and could lead to increased traffic and congestion.
  - **Car parking:** on balance, there was greater concern about converting the site into a car park than not. Though some responses supported the implementation of car parking at the site, some people commented that demolition to make way for car parking was particularly unjustifiable. Many felt that parking is already sufficient and that the site could be used for more meaningful purposes
  - **Demolition:** more people attending the public events do not want the building to be demolished than those who want it to be demolished Preservationists believe it has historical significance and should be repurposed rather than destroyed
  - **Housing:** some people shared concern about using the site for housing, they argued that there is extensive building already happening in Grantham. People commenting about this prefer the site to remain healthcare-focused and believe additional housing would strain local infrastructure
  - **Charity shops:** some people suggest the sight could be used as a charity shop, but others were against this believing there are already enough charity shops in the area.
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## Section four: summary and conclusion

### Summary:

There were several overarching themes that emerged from this public engagement exercise:

#### Preservation vs. modernisation

- Façade preservation: Strong desire to preserve the building's façade while modernizing the rest
- Architectural significance: Admiration for the building's historical and architectural value
- Desire to preserve the building's historical integrity using appropriate materials.

#### Site use

- Overall, there were many suggestions for future use. The more dominant suggestions related to desire for clinical healthcare services, non-clinical health care facilitates, and multi-purpose community rooms above commercial or non-commercial use. The overarching reasons were historical relevance, local health need, accessibility, as well as economic benefits these site uses would bring.

#### Financial and practical considerations

- Renovation costs: concerns were acknowledged about high renovation costs and the need for financially viable and practical solutions.
- Neglect by the Trust: There was a lot of frustration aired over perceived neglect by the Trust and some people also thought that this had contributed to high costs of renovation and limited restoration options.

#### Community sentiment

- Emotional attachment: it is evident from the information shared that there is much emotional connection with this building, many people have a keen desire for its renovation one way or another.

## Conclusion and next steps

As part of a public engagement exercise regarding the future of the NHS-owned derelict buildings at the front of Grantham and District Hospital on Manthorpe Road, Grantham, there were a range of accessible involvement opportunities within a

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reasonable time frame. These were not intended to be conclusive but instead would form part of a longer-term feasibility project.

This engagement exercise included emails, social media, survey responses, and engagement events and generated significant interest and ideas for the building, emphasising the importance of any changes being sympathetic to the building's history, its role as a health or community facility, and its aesthetic appeal. The survey revealed a clear preference for repurposing the site, with more people favouring clinical NHS healthcare use, non-clinical NHS healthcare use, and community use over other options.

Overall, public opinion from this engagement exercise indicated that maintaining the status quo is not desired. Many were opposed demolishing the buildings due to their historical significance, some advocating for its preservation and repurposing. While acknowledging the challenges, some respondents suggested that development would require extensive planning, involvement of local councils and stakeholders, and significant investment. However, to address concerns, some people suggested preserving the façade while modernising the rest by creating a sympathetic and sustainable resource. There was a clear desire for ongoing engagement, with assurances needed that any decisions made will reflect community input.

Approximately 300 people shared their contact details to be kept updated.

Now we have this feedback from the community in Grantham, the next step will be to progress with a use and design process.

At present, funding has not been secured for any development on the site and the options for the use of the buildings have not been fully explored, therefore the next steps and timescales are outlined below:

- Narrow down a list of options for uses of the building (to a shortlist of 3-4)
  - Explore funding options, including working with external providers to scope possibilities as well as exploring national, local and charitable funding streams
  - Utilise the estates capital design fund to appoint an architect to provide options as to what a new building could look
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- Both the use and design then be re-presented to the community for a further public engagement exercise, by the end of 2025