



Our Offer : Your Support

**Beales Hotel**

# Peartree Hostel

## Redevlopment Decant Solution

## 1.0 OVERVIEW

As an organisation we are committed to providing high quality accommodation and support to those most vulnerable members of our local communities. Our mission and goals being to help them progress onwards towards independence and independent living.

In the Welwyn Hatfield area these services are concentrated and delivered from our YMCA Peartree Hostel. At this site our dedicated and experienced team provide a specialist range of person-centric support to those escaping homelessness and rough sleeping.

These services being funded, as an integral part of the local homelessness prevention pathway, by Hertfordshire County Council, Welwyn Hatfield Council, Central Government (via housing benefit) and our own fundraising and charitable contributions.

## 2.0 SOCIAL IMPACT

Over the 2019/20 financial our positive local impact directly supported over 470 vulnerable individuals to belong, contribute and thrive. This impact included us providing 267 individuals safe secure accommodation and support in our main hostel, and a further 207 within our emergency access accommodation beds.

This has been independently verified as translating to a total cost-consequences saving to the public purse of £3.56 million, in line with established Office of National Statistics and HACT data calculation methodology.

Most specifically with 195 of the total 470 vulnerable individuals that were supported being helped to move on positively into their own long term settled accommodation.

Ultimately, should our YMCA Peartree Hostel, our team or our key part within the local homelessness prevention pathway not existed, 208 of those noted have been independently confirmed and verified as otherwise being homeless or rough sleeping.

## 3.0 EXISTING ASSET

Over recent years it has become apparent that, although remaining legislatively compliant and safe, the existing YMCA Peartree Hostel is now moribund.

A detailed and extensive stock condition and viability assessment process has determined that the site is no longer economically viable to maintain or operate.

In response to this position an options appraisal has determined a redevelopment plan to be the most reasonable and appropriate course of action. That approach ensuring we remain best able to support those vulnerable individuals within the local community.

The redevelopment plan has progressed to an advanced stage, with grant of planning approval anticipated in January 2021 and a target construction commencement timed for May 2021, on an eighteen month build schedule.



## 4.0 REDEVELOPMENT SOLUTION

We have specifically and deliberately focused considerable effort and resources into ensuring that the new YMCA Peartree Hostel provides a sector leading solution to 'ending homelessness'.

This will see us provide 100 vulnerable individuals, who would otherwise be homeless or rough sleeping in Welwyn Hatfield, with high quality accommodation and support at any one time.

Overall accommodation will comprise 95 self-contained studios, 2 disability friendly accessible studios and 3 en-suite bedrooms in a single cluster flat format. This alongside life-skill development / focus areas, including PC skills suite, training kitchen, support rooms and engagement rich social / communal zones.



One YMCA  
Peartree Hostel Redevelopment  
Decant Solution (Beales)



All of the accommodation units within the hostel (100) will be provided on an affordable rent basis, in line with the definition outlined within the overarching regulatory rent standard.

Overall development funding will come from a blend of public sector grant, commercial borrowing and use of reserves. This will then be substantially underpinned via disposal of the front section of the overall site.

To enhance the value of the disposal piece the hostel shall carry the full liability for the delivery of affordable housing on the site. This will see a total of 100 units of affordable housing provided, at circa 70% of total 143 intended to be delivered.

## 5.0 SERVICE CONTINUITY

The existing YMCA Peartree Hostel is an integral and key component of the local homelessness prevention pathway. It remains at an occupancy level beyond 96% with around 66% (circa 78) of those having local Welwyn Hatfield connection.

With this in mind, and in discussion with Welwyn Hatfield housing and homelessness leads, it is clear and agreed that the negative impact of service loss (albeit temporarily) would be severe.

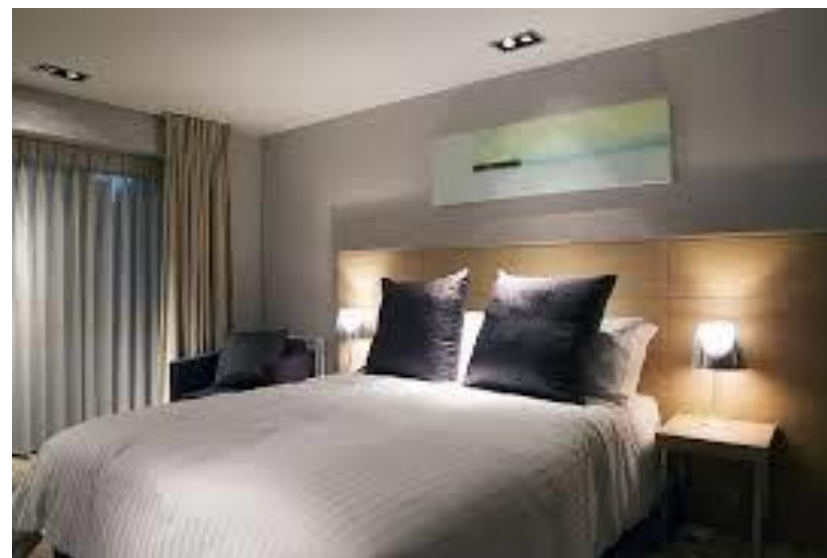
With this in mind we are focusing extensive resources on the identification of appropriate decant solutions. These solutions intended to enable ongoing provision of accommodation and support for the vulnerable individuals currently living at the hostel.

That decant location being temporary and required only for the redevelopment period. Whereby the existing staff team, with reasonable adjustments, can maintain their work to help residents avoid a return to homelessness or rough sleeping.

## 6.0 DECANT PROPOSAL (BEALES)

A site of optimum size has been identified in the local area, is available immediately and is confirmed as operationally feasible.

It has the potential, pending the ability to satisfy all relevant permissions and legislative elements, of providing an almost 'single site' solution to the decant challenge.



The site (Beales Hotel, Comet Way) has recently been acquired by a development company, who are already working with Welwyn Hatfield on housing delivery in the area. However, due to these other ongoing projects they are not in a position to commence works on this site for circa 24 months.

This intention to bank the site, leaving it dormant for this period, provides a unique opportunity for it to support the redevelopment of the YMCA Peartree Hostel.

It comprises 53 en-suite rooms, commercial catering kitchen, a variety of communal meeting rooms, reception / concierge area and (pending surveyed confirmation) would meet the requirements of the decent homes standard.



The overall logic would be to enter into a commercial agreement for the site, with specific granting of permission for it to be used as the intended decant solution for that period. The agreement being strictly time limited to the parameters of the redevelopment timeframe on a full repairing basis.

We are however aware that the site is currently C1 in nature and any shift to use it on a residential basis for this period of time would require relevant temporary consent.

As the opportunity to secure the site is strictly time limited, due to various commercial competition factors, we are extremely aware of the need to expedite any possible legal or planning processes. With those processes looking at two potential concepts:

*Concept # 1:*

*To seek temporary planning consent to use Beales Hotel as a decant residential setting, funded via housing benefit and existing commissioned income streams, for 53 existing hostel residents, on a fully staffed 24/7 basis.*

*Concept # 2:*

*To seek temporary planning consent to use Beales Hotel as a decant residential setting, funded via housing benefit and existing commissioned income streams, for 75 existing hostel residents, on a fully staffed 24/7 basis. With additional occupancy provided via the location of 20 appropriate units of temporary modular accommodation in the car park area.*

## 7.0 SUMMARY

The existing YMCA Peartree Hostel sits at the heart of the local homelessness prevention pathway, supporting some 470 vulnerable individuals annually.

However, the site is now moribund and as such requires redevelopment in order to secure its long term position and value as a local resource. There is agreement from all stakeholders that a permanent (or temporary) loss of the facility would have a severe negative impact on the local and wider community.

As such it is imperative that a decant solution be identified and secured in order that those existing vulnerable hostel residents be safeguarded and support maintained.

The Beales Hotel on Comet Way has been identified as an optimum solution for decant. However, it is understood that its current C1 use classification would require some form of temporary consent for residential use. With further opportunity, to deliver added value, through the consideration of additional temporary modular units.

It is also highlighted that the commercial nature of the opportunity presents specific time pressures. With a severe risk of opportunity loss / cost, should we be unable to reach legal agreement within the stated timeframes of the site owners.

**End.**