

## First community ambulance station revealed



The site of the first of three new community ambulance stations set to be created in Redditch has been revealed as health chiefs prepare to implement a major shake-up of the service.

West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust wants to use part of the Rushton Fencing site in Howard Road to create a new response base.

It will have basic toilet and kitchen facilities and space for an ambulance. A planning application is currently being considered by the borough council.

It is part of the ambulance trust's Make Ready scheme set to be brought in across Worcestershire by the end of March 2013.

The idea is that by having ambulances spread out at different sites across the town they will be able to respond quicker to 999 calls rather than returning to a central base. Details of the other two sites have yet to be confirmed although Redditch Fire Station has been mooted as a possibility.

It is not known at this stage whether the existing ambulance station in Cedar Park Road will be closed and sold off or retained as one of the three bases.

A spokesman for West Midlands Ambulance Service said, although a definite timetable for the introduction of Make Ready in Worcestershire had yet to be set, if permission was granted the new response base would be put into action straight away.

"The more bases we have and the more scattered they are means we will be closer to patients and will be able to respond to 999 calls quicker rather than all being based in one place. "In Redditch's case we will be going from one to three sites. Location is key and we are grateful to Rushton Fencing for their help and allowing us to use their land."

The scheme will also see the creation of a new 24/7 super hub in Worcester where ambulances will be cleaned, stocked, serviced and repaired by a specialist team before being dispatched to the community stations.

The aim is to reduce the amount of non-clinical tasks ambulance crews are expected to carry out to avoid tying them up for hours on end and having ambulances off the road. The move is in response to the fact the trust expects to see the number of patients it deals with increase in future years while funding will fall.