

**DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE
ON 8 JUNE 2011**

UPDATE REPORT

Item No: (2) **Application No:** 11/00490/FUL **Page No.** 55
Site: Land adjacent Falkland Surgery, Monks Lane, Newbury

Planning Officer Presenting: Michael Butler

Member Presenting: N/A

Parish Representative speaking: Councillor David Allen

Objector(s) speaking: Mr Graham Smith

Support(s) speaking: N/A

Applicant/Agent speaking: Mr Peter Frampton/Mr John Horseman

Ward Member(s): Councillor Johnston
Councillor Tuck

Update Information:

One letter from local resident - not supporting or objecting but appears to suggest that, if the application is approved then a link through to the adjacent Park House School Playing Field should be considered and so incorporate the adjacent rugby field into the school for pupils. Officer note – this point is not actually relevant to the planning application in question.

For information members are reminded that, under the Use Classes Order 2010, Class C2 has been amended to include a new class C2a which is specifically for use of secure residential accommodation, which includes units for mental health [secure hospital] and prisons. That is, if at any time in the future the nature of the residents was to alter to a secure unit this would require a specific change of use within the Use Class which will require planning consent.

A circular letter has been received from a Mr Carter to all members of the committee.

To take the points in turn with officer comment where appropriate / relevant.

1. Inadequate information provided to the public about risk to public from patients - the applicant has provided firm assurance that such patients will not be a risk. If the unit became secure a distinct change of use would be required – see above.
2. and 3. Effect on surgery adjacent – this application must be considered on its own individual planning merits. It cannot be right that the future expansion expectations of the surgery [if any] would prejudice the determination of this application. The public have had a considerable time since 25th May 2011 to make further representations if they so wished.
4. Parking issues – the highways officer is satisfied that this issue has been addressed. It is also the case that the patients are being introduced into the local community not vice versa, in terms of incoming vehicles.
5. Inadequate information on catchment area to be served by the facility – the applicant has provided considerable detail [without compromising patient confidentiality] about the need for this care unit in Newbury. The precise catchment area is not a planning pre requisite in determining the application since, if permitted, the patients will not have had to be resident before in the District [for example].
6. Lack of information about alternative sites - the applicant has provided some information on sites in the town in their supporting information on the sequential test and officers have discussed in detail three other sites but these cannot be noted given reasons of confidentiality. Members will know that in planning terms it is rarely possible to obtain the optimal location for a scheme but the acceptable must be considered as well.
7. Potential loss of sports facility to the school - this point is not understood as the application site is on Rugby Club land not the adjacent school site.
8. Subverting Council policy on green belt - firstly the objector is incorrect as the land is not designated Green Belt, but is green field. Secondly the officer report makes it abundantly clear that whilst policy would normally preclude such schemes, in this case the community need is such to override it, on balance.
9. Precedent and due process - for the first issue see comment in the committee report. As to due process the application has been widely publicised since its inception, being the middle of April, to date.

Planning policy response to the application.

The site lies outside the settlement boundary for Newbury as designated within the West Berkshire District Local Plan. In such areas development plan policies (HSG 1) strictly control new development and development in this area would not normally be considered acceptable.

It is however acknowledged that there have been various developments to the south of Monks Lane and the West Berkshire Core Strategy proposes that land to the south of Monks Lane be developed for up to 2,000 houses and other associated infrastructure (proposed Policy CS4).

Policy ENV 18 relates to development outside of settlement boundaries and the surrounding supporting text. While the wording of Policy ENV 18 does not relate to this application it should be noted that 2.43.3 states:

“The overall objective which lies behind the Strategy is one of fostering more diverse and sustainable rural communities and countryside. In many respects seeking balanced rural communities is compatible with wider environmental objectives for the countryside. Particular care is needed in reconciling social and economic needs with countryside conservation objectives. A further feature is that policies and proposals for rural areas must pay proper regard to encouraging forms of community development which offer scope for reducing both the need and desire for travel. It is important to recognise that many linkages exist between social, economic and environmental issues and opportunities”.

The Social and Community Infrastructure chapter of the South East Plan is also relevant. This states that local planning authorities should play a key role, bringing together the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to tackle priority issues including health, education/lifelong learning, community safety, housing and transportation /infrastructure, and access to social /leisure /cultural activities.

Policies S1: Supporting Healthy Communities and Policy S2: Promoting Sustainable Health Services are therefore of relevance.

While Policy S1 Supporting Healthy Communities relates to Local Authorities producing positive policies in their Local Development Documents, it clearly shows that the Local Authorities should be proactive in supporting measures to address ill health. This is further developed in Policy S2 which states:

Policy S2: Promoting Sustainable Health Services

“Local planning authorities should work closely with the NHS across its delivery bodies to ensure the provision of additional and reconfigured health and social care facilities to meet the anticipated primary care and capacity needs of local communities. Where need is identified, land should be made available for additional community, social and primary care facilities.

Local authorities and the various NHS Trusts should work closely together to facilitate joint planning and to influence NHS estate strategies. Health Impact Assessments should become an integral part of the decision-making process”.

Health - Critical Infrastructure

The West Berkshire Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan Schedule 2: Necessary Infrastructure contains details of the infrastructure identified by the Council and other service providers as being needed to support the delivery of the development within the Core Strategy (October 2010). This document is a material consideration as it has been produced in conjunction with the main infrastructure providers.

With regards to Sandleford Park, the Berkshire West Primary Care Trust has indicated that the development of Sandleford Park would require the possible extension of the Falklands Practice. The schedule states that this could be via the provision of additional land or an extension.

The IDP also states that the additional improvements to primary health services will be required West Berkshire wide to support the core strategy.

While the development proposal is contrary to the West Berkshire Local Plan Saved Policies 2007, it is considered that RSS Policy S2 and Policy CS4 of the Submitted West Berkshire Core Strategy together with the identified critical infrastructure needs in West Berkshire are sufficient material considerations for no Planning Policy Objection to this application.

CONCLUSION – Officers are continuing to recommend to the committee that the application be approved, and not deferred.

DC