

22 November 2023

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Our Ref: PNA-2023-11-01
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21 November 2023

Dear Mr Xhemajli,

Re: Application offering unforeseen benefits at 1-154 Bartholomew Street (Including Kennet Shopping Centre), 5-19 Market Street, 1-29 Market Place, 1-41 Cheap Street by CA-Health Ltd

Thank you for consulting the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to the above application. The Board wishes to make written representations as follows.

When the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) was approved in October 2022, there were seven pharmacies in Newbury. Since then, we have lost two pharmacies – Lloyds in Sainsbury's Superstore, Hectors Way and Superdrug, 81/82 Northbrook Street. There have also been reductions in operating hours at some of the other remaining pharmacies.

The Health and Wellbeing Board did not consider that the above closures / changes had created a gap in the provision of pharmaceutical services that was sufficient to justify a review of the PNA or publication of a Supplementary Statement, since there were no additional households placed outside a 1 mile / 20 minute travel time to their nearest pharmacy as a result of the closures, and it was judged that there was sufficient capacity at the remaining pharmacies to be able to process the displaced activity. However, the Board would welcome an additional pharmacy within Newbury Town Centre as means of further helping to increase capacity and choice for patients and to improve the overall resilience of the pharmacy sector within West Berkshire.

The proposed pharmacy would enhance accessibility for patients. The existing Boots pharmacy at 4-5 Northbrook Street is located within the pedestrianised area of the town centre, so it is difficult for residents who have mobility issues to park nearby while the access restrictions are in force (10am to 5pm). Buses are also excluded from the pedestrianised area and run along Parkway, and the nearest bus stop is around 300m away. The proposed location for the new pharmacy would be close to existing car parks and areas of on-street parking, and would be closer to local bus routes.

In summary, the Board is supportive of the application and believes that it will deliver significant additional benefits for patients. The Board does not foresee any significant negative effects as a result of the proposal.

Although broadly supportive of the application, the Board would like to highlight some errors in the supporting evidence as follows:

- The population of Newbury is only around 44,000 (mid-2020 estimate). The application repeatedly refers to the population as being 113,400, which is nearly double the population of Newbury and Thatcham combined.
- Although Boots is the only other pharmacy within the town centre, the Day Lewis Pharmacy is located a short distance away at Strawberry Hill (approximately 600m to the north of Boots). This is not mentioned in the application. Newbury is served by five pharmacies in total, three of which offering extended opening hours on weekday evenings and four are open on Saturdays, and three on Sundays.
- The application also fails to mention that gaps in provision of pharmaceutical services have not been declared as a result of the pharmacy closures in Newbury. There are five other pharmacies in Newbury and the Local Pharmaceutical Committee has provided reassurance that under normal operating conditions, these will have sufficient capacity to meet local needs. Any short-term issues affecting the operation of these pharmacies have largely been due to staff shortages or logistical issues at individual pharmacies, and these have been managed with the support of the LPC and NHS England.

If you have any queries in relation to the above, then please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Alan Macro

Chairman of West Berkshire Health & Wellbeing Board