

26th July 2013

Mr Tony Ward
Warwick District Council
Planning Department
Riverside House
Milverton Hill
Leamington Spa CV32 5HZ

Dear Mr Ward,

Warwick District Council – New Local Plan

Thank you for consulting NHS Property Services and NHS England on the District Council's Revised Development Strategy.

The response from NHS Property Services is set out below. It is submitted on behalf of NHS England and has been informed by the general response from Public Health Warwickshire.

Context

The response has had regard to national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This acknowledges the important role the planning system has in facilitating healthy communities, and requires local planning authorities to plan positively for the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. The Local Plan will not therefore be found "sound" unless appropriate provision is made for primary care facilities to serve existing and future communities, and in making this response NHS England set out how they propose to assist the Council in addressing this matter.

Evidence base and strategy

Having access to a general practitioner is an important component of a healthy community. In order to serve the community and meet their varying health needs, the general practitioner must have suitable primary care facilities in which to operate from. These surgeries need to be accessible to the community they serve, safe and convenient for all users needs, and of sufficient capacity to cope

with the demands on general practitioners both in terms of the number of patients they must serve and the variety of health services they must provide.

The District currently has 20 surgeries (including branch surgeries) of varying age, size and configuration, and therefore their capacity to meet healthcare needs also varies. The surgeries are also located on very different sites and therefore their ability to expand or adapt to increase capacity also varies between surgeries. Some of the existing surgeries are in areas where demand for healthcare is high due to the characteristics of the area or the nature of the local population, other surgeries are better placed to cater for the needs of their area. The picture of existing surgery provision and the demands placed upon it is therefore complex, and capital for investment in improvements within the wider NHS system is limited.

However, NHS England, NHS Property Services and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) have commenced a review of its existing estate as part of preparing a long term primary care strategy for the District. This will establish the following:

- the current position in terms of existing surgery capacity and its ability to meet the healthcare needs of the current population;
- the scope for future improvements/extensions or rationalisation of surgeries; and,
- the nature and cost of proposed changes to surgery provision to meet existing and expected future primary healthcare needs over the next 15 years.

This will be informed by the work undertaken by Public Health in terms of the specific health needs of different areas of the District, as well as the proposals within the Revised Development Strategy referred to below.

There are a number of underpinning principles that will guide the review of the NHS estate:

- We support the need to see more care provided to people closer to home and in the most appropriate setting, in particular the movement to less care in hospital settings and more in community settings;
- We support the development and use of new technology to enable more self-care;
- We would like to see the flexible use of health care estate to provide not just core contractual services but an enhanced and extended range of care; and,
- We will look at sustainable and flexible approaches to the development of healthcare estate, which may impact on the size and scale of buildings required, including the use of multi-function buildings.

Work has commenced in gathering baseline data from each of the surgeries and gathering up to date evidence as to the typical costs of new build surgeries and extensions to existing surgeries, and it is intended that this work will be completed in phases over the coming months, and will feed into the preparation of the Council's Draft Local Plan, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule prior to their publication in January 2014. It would be helpful to share this work with you and engage with your officers during this process to ensure the information provided will satisfy any requirements at the relevant stage. I would be grateful if you would advise me who I should contact at the District Council.

At this stage, it is noted that the Revised Development Strategy is proposing a significant level of housing growth in Warwick District over the next 15 years, which will increase and change the demands placed on existing surgeries within the District. Some of this growth is planned in specific locations or areas, other growth is to come forward on yet to be identified sites within the District. In the absence of the above evidence, this makes it very difficult at this stage of the plan preparation process to respond with certainty as what specific improvements or new primary care facilities will be required to meet any increase in demand.

However, NHS England will use this strategy and its distribution of housing growth as far as possible to inform its assessment of future healthcare needs as part of preparing its long term primary care strategy as detailed above.

Interim response to the strategy and applications

In the interim period, and in response to several planning applications, NHS Property Services have provided the Council with information as to the healthcare provision required to serve the Strategic Development Sites to the south of Warwick and Whitnash. These developments combined will generate 4,300 dwellings. Based on the existing average household size within the District of 2.33 persons per dwelling (Source: SHMA, para 2.14), this equates to an estimated 10,019 future residents of the proposed developments.

NHS England has considered the potential to extend the existing surgeries within the area to meet the requirements from the proposed developments. However, in addition to the limited capacity on the existing surgery sites to extend their buildings, NHS England consider that the proper healthcare planning of this area warrants a new surgery of commensurate size to the existing surgeries and strategically located away from the existing surgeries in order to provide a sustainable and practical solution to meeting the future primary healthcare needs of the area.

The size of the surgery would need to provide services for an estimated future increase in resident population in the area of 9,532 (10,019 minus 487 residents from the approved development at St. Fremund Way which will contribute towards improvements to existing surgeries). Based on 1,750 patients per GP and taking into account the limited capacity there is within existing surgeries, this equates to a need for a 5 GP surgery practice. NHS England will therefore be seeking contributions from all of the proposed developments by way of planning obligations towards the delivery of a building of approximately 718m² utilising an area of serviced land equating to 0.47ha to the west of Europa Way on land proposed for development within the Revised Development Strategy.

Should any other of the housing allocations elsewhere in the District be subject to planning applications prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy, NHS England will consider whether there is sufficient evidence to secure contributions by way of planning obligations to improvements to primary healthcare facilities. The long term strategy referred to above will provide the necessary evidence when completed.

Summary

In summary, following recent changes NHS England, NHS Property Services and the CCG's are now in a position to undertake the work required to support the Council in preparing its Local Plan to address and provide for the future healthcare needs of the District. This work will be undertaken over the coming months and will be guided by the Revised Development Strategy. NHS Property Services will look to engage with the Council during this process to ensure the information provided is sufficient to support the Council's draft policies and community infrastructure levy charging schedules in due course. In the interim, NHS Property Services, on behalf of NHS England will continue to respond to planning applications where appropriate and seek contributions through planning obligations where appropriate and supported by evidence.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

D Goodwin

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