

Planning Policy Comments

Application No	APP/20/01115
Address	North Street House, 6 North Street, Emsworth, PO10 7DD
Development	Conversion of existing doctors surgery to offices. Demolition of single storey extension and erection of a three storey building comprising of a retail unit at ground floor and two residential dwellings on the first and second storeys.
Case Officer	TP
Comments By	JB
Date of Comments	22 January 2021

Policy Status

The [Local Plan \(Core Strategy\)](#) and the [Local Plan \(Allocations\)](#), together with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan form the development plan for the borough. [The Pre-Submission Local Plan](#) (September 2020) may be afforded limited weight. The post-examination [Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan](#) should be afforded significant weight.

Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Shops

Policy comments are sought in particular on the application of policy DM2 of the adopted plan and CS7 of the emerging Plan to this proposal. Both policies seek to protect existing community facilities and shops, and both policies set out requirements which applicants must meet before such a loss will be supported.

The supporting text to DM2 explicitly includes health facilities in the uses to which this policy applies (paragraph 10.08). Under this policy, the applicant is required to undertake an active marketing exercise to demonstrate the premises are 'no longer viable for their authorised use or any other use which would provide a beneficial facility to the local community'. In addition, alternative provision of the facility must be demonstrated. The new surgery currently under construction a very short distance to the north of the application site clearly meets the second criterion. However, no marketing has taken place to satisfy the former.

Emerging policy C7 contains similar requirements, but they must no longer both be met. As noted above, the replacement surgery clearly meets the requirement under C7a that 'Alternative provision is made available of equivalent or, where possible, greater community benefit which is easily accessible to the community it is intended to serve'. While this policy may only be given limited weight, it does set the direction of travel.

In addition, it must also be considered that health facilities and offices (the proposed replacement use) now both fall into the same use class, class E, since the changes enacted nationally in September 2020.

Taking all these factors into consideration, it is suggested that it would be disproportionate to insist on the requirement for marketing as set out in DM2 in this particular case.