

- a) **DOV/22/01319 - Erection of a two-storey medical centre with solar panels to roof, new vehicle access, car parking and landscaping - Land Between Arable Drive and Field View Road, Whitfield**

Reason for report – Number of contrary views (6)

- b) **Summary of Recommendation**

Planning permission be Granted

- c) **Planning Policy and Guidance**

Core Strategy Policies (2010): CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6, CP11, DM1, DM5, DM11, DM13, DM15, DM16 and DM17

Land Allocations Local Plan (2015): DM27

Whitfield Urban Expansion SPD – Adopted Masterplan (April 2011)

Draft Dover District Local Plan (Regulation 19): SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6, SP11, SP12, SP13, SP14, SP15, SAP1, CC1, CC2, CC5, CC6, CC8, PM1, PM2, PM3, PM4, PM5, PM6, H1, TI1, TI3, TI5, NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, NE5, HE3

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

National Design Guide & National Model Design Code (2021)

- d) **Relevant Planning History**

Various applications, outline and reserved matters and variations/amendments relating to the wider Whitfield Urban Expansion, including:

DOV/10/01011 – Outline planning application for the construction of a new community hub/district centre, comprising BRT hub; health and social care centre (Class D1); retail space (Class A1-A3); and 100 no. 2-5 bed residential units including 6no. supported living units (Class C3) provision of learning and community campus to incorporate new 420 place 2fe primary school including early years provision and provision of access arrangements, all associated car parking, infrastructure and landscaping, with all matters reserved for future consideration – Granted

- e) **Consultee and Third-Party Representations**

Representations can be found on the online planning file, a summary has been provided below:

Whitfield Parish Council – support the application for the erection of a two storey medical centre which has long been needed for the people of Whitfield. Supports the arrival of the building and would like to see it brought into service as soon as possible. However, would like to see measures in place to alleviate concerns over traffic management for people using the new centre. Residents regularly report speeding vehicles along Sandwich Road, with an increase in the number of vehicle movements into and out of Field View Road, this will only become worse. The line of sight from

Field View Road as you are joining Sandwich Road is poor and made worse by the lack of maintenance of the hedge line and grass on the right of the Field View Road junction. This junction joins Sandwich Road at a current speed limit of 40mph, which we would like to see reduced to 30mph. In addition, potential alterations to the junction to improve the line of sight should be considered. Would also like to see more robust proposals in respect of zero emissions and carbon footprint. This would be an opportunity to set a high standard for any future applications.

KCC Flood and Water Management – no surface water drainage strategy has been provided – recommend the application is not determined until a complete strategy has been provided for review and provide further guidance on the information that it would need to contain.

KCC Highways and Transportation – The proposal seeks a new medical facility to accommodate approximately 15,000 patients due to the closure of Whitfield surgery. The facility estimates to provide 14 consultation rooms (incl 3 remote), 4 treatment rooms and 2 HCA rooms. The surgery will employ 18 medical and 12 non medical staff. Visibility splays 2.4 metres x 43 metres are illustrated at the access, which is acceptable and can be secured by condition with no obstruction above 1 metres. 6 disabled spaces are proposed in the vicinity of the access, which is acceptable. A further 3 motorcycle/scooter spaces are also proposed. 16 cycle parking spaces are proposed, which is acceptable. The proposal seeks to provide 57 car parking spaces. In line with SPG4 car parking standards for D1 medical practices, the 15 spaces (1 per 2 staff) and 68 spaces (4 per consulting/treatment room - assuming 3 remote) are required. This represents a total of 83 spaces. Acknowledge the parking standards sited are maximum but no justification has been provided in relation to the reduction.

TRICS has been interrogated to establish the vehicle trips associated with the site. This sees 35 two way trips during the AM peak and 29 two way trips during the PM peak. The trip rates are outlined for the morning and evening peak periods, whereby a suitable percentage increase should be included for surges in demand. A Travel Plan has been submitted outlining measures of alternative methods of transport. The site is in a relatively sustainable location, with good access to alternative modes of transport. The Travel Plan will be subject to a £948 monitoring fee and would be subject to a suitable condition. Further information is requested in respect of:

provision for an ambulance parking space (preferably at the entrance to the facility), facilities to enable delivery vehicles to park and manoeuvre clear of the public highway, pedestrian crossing and tactile paving at the site access, stage 1 safety audit carried out for the access at Field View Road. A bin store located in the south west corner of the site; tracking indicates that vehicle will override the edge of the parking spaces and the planting at the turning area – these aspects need to be addressed.

Environment Agency – provided standard planning advice on matters including land contamination, foundation design, drainage design, engineering works, soils and stones and waste.

Southern Water – initial investigations indicate foul sewage disposal can be provided to service the development, a formal application for a connection to the public foul sewer should be made. Initial investigations indicate there are no public surface water sewers in the area to serve this development. Alternative means of draining surface water are required. Supporting documents make reference to drainage using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Where SuDS rely upon facilities which are not adoptable by sewerage undertakers the applicant will need to ensure that arrangements exist for the long-term maintenance of the SuDS facilities. It is possible

a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site – should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required.

Environmental Health/Protection - the land in question is in close to residential dwellings, there are no times of operation included and no information on lighting or plant that may be installed. Would advise against 24 hour access given the proximity to residential dwellings and given that the building needs to be serviced, this should be completed during reasonable hours. Request the applicant outlines a reasonable period that can be conditioned. Request conditions are imposed in respect of details of floodlighting and external lighting and setting maximum noise levels of new items of fixed plant.

Tree and Horticulture Officer – no objections to the proposals provided that some substantial tree planting, preferably native species, is carried out to secure the semi-rural character of the area.

Third party Representations: 6 Representations of objection have been received and are summarised below:

- Highways/parking - Concerns regarding additional traffic and parking pressure for visitor parking spaces on Field View Road, road width and ability for cars to pass each other, visibility onto Sandwich Road due to vegetation/fence, 40mph speed limit being too high and speeding vehicles
- Noise and light pollution from car park lighting, vehicle movements and if used as out of hours (24 hour) service – car park should be on other side of building rather than adjacent to residents fences
- Query if suitable location for development / suggests alternative location near supermarket/ Honeywood estate/ off the A2 instead of housing estate

5 Representations in support of the proposals have been received and are summarised below:

- Desperately needed facility
- Suggest it would be better to restrict the speed of the road heading to the medical centre to 30mph rather than 40mph currently, especially due to amount of people accessing centre by foot
- Hope there will be a bus service for people who do not drive or have mobility issues

f) **1. The Site and the Proposal**

1.1 The site relates to a plot of vacant agricultural land to the southeast of Field View Road and Northwest of Arable Drive (shown in Figure 1). The land is part of a wider allocation of land for development under Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to manage the expansion of Whitfield and includes the provision of primary health and social care facilities.

1.2 Permission is sought for the erection of a two storey medical centre with solar panels to roof and vehicular access from Field View Road, car parking and landscaping. The building would be finished in Cedral vertical wall cladding (black), aluminium cladding panels, aluminium louvres, natural flint stone walling on the ground floor projection, aluminium windows and standing seam/standing seam roof panels. 57 parking spaces would be provided, of which 6 would be disabled parking and 6 would be EVC's (as shown in Figure 2). A cycle store for

16 bicycles would also be provided to the west of the building and an amended site plan includes provision of an ambulance space by the entrance to the building and a delivery space.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Figure 2: Proposed Block Plan

2. Main Issues

2.1 The main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of the development
- Impact on visual amenity
- Impact on residential amenity
- Other material considerations

Assessment

Principle of Development

- 2.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.3 Policy CP11 relates specifically to the managed expansion of Whitfield. The policy allocates land for the provision of at least 5,750 dwellings, together with transport, primary education, primary health and social care, utility services and green infrastructure, together with local facilities to serve the development. The policy sets out nine criteria against which development will be assessed, which seeks to ensure that, amongst other things, the development is delivered holistically and provides a range of housing, high standard of design, adequate transport linkages and is sustainable.
- 2.4 The proposed development, whilst submitted as a full application (rather than a reserved matters application in relation to the outline permission DOV/10/01011) is not considered to prejudice the implementation of the whole development, with

the proposed siting of the medical centre being in accordance with the masterplan submitted under DOV/10/01011 and the proposal being in accordance with CP11 which identifies this area as the proposed village centre. The policy broadly reflects the NPPF and is considered to attract significant weight.

- 2.5 The site is located on land which is allocated for development (including health and social care uses) in the plan (such that it falls within the settlement confines) and the development therefore accords with DM1. Policy DM11 seeks to locate travel generating development within settlement confines and restrict development that would generate high levels of travel outside the confines. As the site falls within the confines it is supported by DM11, with the site being within walking distance of public transport (which may be further expanded to the northeast of the site through the BRT service as set out in the Whitfield Urban Expansion SPD Masterplan). The policy is considered to be broadly consistent with the NPPF which seeks to focus development in locations which are or can be made sustainable, with access to a range of modes of transport and where development will support existing facilities and services and social integration. It is considered that DM11 is not out-of-date and should continue to attract significant weight.
- 2.6 DM15 seeks to resist the loss of countryside (areas outside the settlement confines) or development that would adversely affect the character or appearance of the countryside. The proposal would not result in the loss of countryside as the site forms part of the Whitfield urban expansion allocation and whilst the proposals would currently be visible from the countryside, as the urban expansion is built-out, the building would be seen within the context of the wider housing development. As such, it is considered the proposals would have a limited impact on the character of the countryside.
- 2.7 Consequently, it is considered the adopted development plan policies most important to the determination of the application are out of date and as such, the tilted balance approach of the NPPF is engaged.
- 2.8 The Regulation 19 draft Local Plan is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Draft Policy SP4 identifies settlement confines within which residential development will be acceptable and the site falls within the confines of Dover (including Whitfield). The draft Policy and the confines referred to have been devised on the basis of up to date housing requirements and in line with the current NPPF and are considered to attract moderate weight in the planning balance.
- 2.9 Draft Policy SAP1 relates directly to the Whitfield Urban Expansion. The policy sets out a number of criteria with which development proposals should comply and it is considered the proposals broadly accord with these objectives.

Impact on Visual Amenity

- 2.10 The site is located to the northeast of existing dwellings at Field View Road and Arable Drive which are predominantly two storeys in height and either detached or semi-detached, finished in brick and/or render set under tiled pitched roofs. In contrast, the proposed detached building would be finished in black cladding, with dark coloured window frames and standing seam (effect) roof (shown in Figure. 3 below). The D&A sets out that the form and massing of the building has

been influenced by the rural setting and has taken inspiration from the archetypal Kentish Barn. The single sized full height windows, larger openings and cladded elements have been chosen to allude to barn door style openings to create a simple and uncluttered arrangement. The box ridge is considered to break up the linearity of the roof line and could also serve the functional purpose of concealing ventilation grilles and pipe terminals. In addition, the solar panels could be considered to break up the massing of the roof when viewed from the car park and neighbouring dwellings to the southwest of the site (visible in Figure 4, see below). The projecting single storey side element to the car park, to be finished in contrasting sections of natural flint stone walling, has been designed to accentuate the main entrance to the building. It is noted that the building would eventually be surrounded by dwellings but that the design and materials of the building would nod to the agricultural heritage and the striking colour, taking precedent from the black cladding on Kentish barns. The design provides a contemporary building that would appear as a focal point for the community.

- 2.11 In the interests of visual amenity, and in order to ensure a high quality finish to the development, it is considered appropriate to impose a condition requiring samples of materials to be used in the external construction of the building to be submitted.



Figure 3. Proposed Elevations SW and SE

- 2.12 The proposed plans detail indicative landscaping and planting throughout the site. The site location plan (Figure 1) indicates a road may be constructed to the northeast of the site and as such, the treatment of landscaping in this view will be important. The plans show the provision of a hedgerow adjacent to the northwest, southwest and part of the southeast boundary, with grass elsewhere. In addition, tree planting is shown across the site, particularly focused to the front of the building, near to the site entrance and adjacent to the southeast boundary. In respect of hard landscaping, the plans indicate this would be comprised of tarmac for the internal roadway, concrete block paving for the parking spaces and internal footways. In order to ensure the provision and maintenance of hard and soft landscaping, it is considered appropriate to recommend a condition for details.



Figure 4. Perspective View

- 2.13 Subject to the suggested conditions, and for the reasons outlined above, it is considered the proposals would accord with the objectives of NPPF paragraphs 130 and 174, policy DM15 and draft Policy PM1.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 2.14 The site is located to the northeast of dwellings on Arable Drive and Field View Road and would be directly visible from these properties. The medical centre, although two storeys in height, would be positioned in the northern part of the site and due to its design and separation distance, is considered unlikely to result in an unduly overbearing impact on neighbouring amenity. Furthermore, due to the siting of the building within the plot and the orientation of the sun path, the proposals are considered unlikely to result in undue overshadowing or loss of light to nearby dwellings. Whilst the building would feature windows on all elevations at ground and first floor, these would predominantly overlook the site with more distant views of the dwellings beyond. There would be a distance of approximately 30m between the proposed building and the flank elevation of No. 18 Field View Road (not including the car port). There would be an increased distance of approximately 37m between the proposed building and the rear garden boundaries of the dwellings of Arable Drive (to the southwest), with a greater distance to the rear windows of these properties. There are a number of dwellings to the southeast (Arable Drive) which are currently under construction (DOV/17/00056 and subsequent amendment), from which the proposals would be visible. Due to the siting, scale and design of the proposed development, as well as the distance from these properties, the proposal is considered unlikely to result in undue harm to the amenities of the future residents of these dwellings, having had regard to the objectives of NPPF Paragraph 130 and the aims of draft Policy PM1.
- 2.15 Due to the non-residential use of the proposal, which would generate a number of comings and goings, in order to preserve the amenities of nearby residents it is considered appropriate to suggest a condition restricting the public opening hours of the building (such that the building would only be open to the public between the hours of 07:00 and 22:00 each day). Whilst there may be some

noise generated from vehicle movements and staff outside of these hours, this lower level of activity is considered unlikely to result in undue harm to neighbouring residential amenity.

- 2.16 Furthermore, in the interests of visual and residential amenity, and as no details of external lighting have been provided, it is considered appropriate to impose a condition requiring the submission of further details. A condition in respect of the cumulative noise level of any fixed plant to be installed has also been suggested and as no other details have been provided in this respect, the condition is considered necessary in the interests of neighbouring amenity.

Impact on Parking/Highways

- 2.17 A vehicle access would be created to serve the development from Field View Road and a pavement provided on either side of the access and with a crossing point. The road surface would be finished in tarmac, with parking spaces finished in concrete block paving. 57 parking spaces would be provided, with the 6 closest to the medical centre entrance being for disabled parking and the 6 to the southeast of these being EVC bays. KCC Highways has requested justification of the number of parking spaces to be provided as well as amendments to the parking layout (to include the provision of an ambulance parking space, delivery parking and manoeuvring space, relocation of the bin store outside of a turning area, provision of a pedestrian crossing and tactile paving at the site access). In addition, they request a stage 1 safety audit is completed and a financial contribution towards monitoring of the submitted travel plan.
- 2.18 A revised site plan has recently been received to demonstrate ambulance and delivery vehicle parking. Justification for the number of parking spaces proposed has also been requested and any updates will be reported to Members verbally at the Committee Meeting. The key issue to consider with regard to these updates will be whether the development causes an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (paragraph 111 of the NPPF). It has been confirmed that the travel plan monitoring will be secured through a legal agreement if permission is recommended for approval by Members. The purpose of the travel plan would be to reduce the reliance upon private cars to improve the sustainability of the operation of the development. It is considered appropriate to include conditions requiring details of the stage 1 safety audit, the provision and maintenance of 2.4m x 43m visibility splays (no obstructions above 1m), in the interests of highways safety. Whilst the parking provision proposed is below the maximum set out in SPG4, it is noted that the site is within walking distance of bus services and cycle parking would be provided on site which would reduce the need for patients to travel by car. The building would be likely to serve a principally 'home' community from existing and future residents in and around Whitfield, being an infrastructure project required to meet the needs of the first phases of the Whitfield Urban Expansion. On balance, it is considered the proposed parking provision would be acceptable and the development would be unlikely to result in a significant impact on the highway network, having had regard to Policies DM11 and DM13 and draft Policies SP12, TI1, TI2 and TI3.
- 2.19 It is noted that draft policy SAP1 (u) identifies that financial contributions may be required towards upgrades to the Whitfield and Duke of York roundabout. The proposed surgery would serve the existing and expanding community and would be unlikely to generate significant additional vehicle movements on these

roundabouts and the strategic road network that would necessitate a contribution towards the highway mitigation measures set out in draft Policies SAP1 and TI2. Moreover, the provision of a health centre was granted under outline application 10/01011, which remained extant at the time that this application was submitted, albeit the time limit for the submission of further reserved matters applications has now elapsed.

Other Material Considerations

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.20 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 which represents the lowest risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. The site is also outside of any areas which are identified as being at risk from surface water flooding. The scheme proposes to drain foul water to the mains sewer and surface water would be disposed of via a sustainable drainage system. KCC Flood and Water Management have reviewed the proposals, noting no surface water drainage strategy has been submitted and request the application is not determined until this has been provided for review. However, it is considered that a condition can be imposed requiring this information to be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the development. It is considered that there is sufficient land available to accommodate surface water drainage, subject to these details being provided. Subject to this, it is considered the proposals could accord with the objectives of NPPF Paragraphs 167 and 174 and draft policies CC5 and CC6.

Ecology

- 2.21 The site is currently agricultural land. No ecology reports/assessments have been submitted in support of the application, however having had regard to Natural England's standing advice, it is considered the site is unlikely to be a suitable habitat for protected species. Notwithstanding this, it is noted that draft Policy SAP1 seeks the submission of a wintering bird survey (in accordance with draft Policy SP13). Again, no survey has been provided, however the site is located adjacent to existing housing and has been used as access to ongoing development to the east of the site. On balance, given the disturbance to the site and status of the draft policy, it is not considered necessary to require the submission of a survey on this occasion.

Archaeology

- 2.22 The site is located in a general area of archaeological potential and KCC Archaeology has been consulted, however no response has been received. As such and having had regard to draft Policy HE3, it is considered appropriate to suggest a condition is imposed dealing with any items of historical importance which may be discovered during the construction of the development.

Use and Public Benefits

- 2.23 The proposed medical centre is considered to fall under use class E(e) (previously class D1). The building would contain consulting and counselling rooms, remote consult facilities, treatment rooms, isolation suite, enhanced treatment room/recovery, dispensary, community use multi-purpose room and includes a changing places facility. The building has been designed to serve 15,000 patients, with accessible thresholds throughout and a wheelchair accessible lift being provided. The building has also been designed to meet

BREEAM 2018 'New Construction Healthcare Centres Criteria' with a target score BREEAM rating of excellent (which would accord with the objectives of draft Policy CC1, albeit a BREEAM assessment has not been submitted with the application and a condition is therefore suggested). In addition, the design seeks to provide natural light and ventilation to almost all areas and includes photovoltaic panels on the southwest facing roof slope. The benefit associated with the delivery of this infrastructure project is considered to carry substantial weight in favour of approval.

Planning Balance

- 2.24 The site is allocated for development in Policy CP11 as part of the managed expansion of Whitfield. It therefore lies within the confines and the draft settlement confines. Notwithstanding the tilted balance engaged under NPPF Paragraph 11 (as Policy DM1 and the settlement confines it refers were devised on the basis of a lower housing target, is more restrictive and in tension with the NPPF therefore holding reduced weight in the planning balance), the principle of the proposed medical centre is considered to be acceptable.
- 2.25 For the reasons set out above, and subject to the suggested conditions, the proposals are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area, as well as in respect of residential amenity (including future development) which weighs in favour of the proposals. The impact on travel, highways and parking, flooding and drainage, ecology and other material considerations has also been considered and subject to the imposition of the conditions, is considered to be acceptable in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF, which weighs in favour of the proposals.
- 2.26 Overall, it is considered that the disbenefits of the proposals do not outweigh the benefits, with material considerations indicating that permission should be granted.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The site is located in an area identified for development as part of the managed expansion of Whitfield. The tilted balance approach set out at Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is considered to be engaged. Notwithstanding, the principle of development accords with the objectives of Policies CP11, DM1, DM11 and DM15, as well as draft Policy SAP1 of the draft Local Plan. For the reasons set out and subject to conditions, the development is considered to have an acceptable impact on visual and residential amenity and in respect of other material considerations addressed above. In light of Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and taking into account other material considerations, it is considered the benefits of the development outweigh the disbenefits and it is recommended that permission be granted in line with the recommendation.

g) Recommendation

- I PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED subject to the receipt of further comments from KCC Highways and any subsequent minor revisions to plans required, completion of a legal agreement to secure a contribution to the travel plan monitoring and the following conditions:

- (1) Standard time

- (2) Approved Plans
- (3) Samples
- (4) No external lighting unless details (location, design, height of columns, levels and direction of luminance) are submitted
- (5) Operational noise levels of fixed plant
- (6) Opening hours to the public
- (7) Car parking spaces, delivery space and ambulance space
- (8) Submission of Stage 1 safety audit
- (9) Completion of the access, footpaths, dropped kerbs and tactile paving
- (10) Visibility splays
- (11) Provision of a min of 6 EVC points
- (12) Covered bicycle parking facilities
- (13) Refuse and recycling storage
- (14) BREEAM pre-assessment statement
- (15) Landscaping scheme
- (16) Unexpected archaeology
- (17) Pre-commencement for a surface water drainage scheme

II Powers to be delegated to the Head of Planning and Development to settle any necessary amendments, planning conditions and legal agreements in line with the issues set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee.

Case Officer

Rachel Morgan