



18 September 2020

Dear Sirs

Ref: 20/01484/FUL

Extension of the Wickham Surgery of 3.8 metres (namely the Gudgeon Wing) and alterations to the roof void (currently used as storage) to provide an additional 14 GP consulting rooms with associated external works

On behalf of the Wickham Society we are writing to object to the above planning application for the following reasons:

- Not in accordance with a previous planning decision
- Road access
- Traffic generation
- Highway safety
- Effect on listed buildings and a conservation area
- No public transport to the site
- Lack of community consultation
- Impact of pollution on young children in educational establishments close to the site
- Inadequate parking arrangements

1. Wickham Society is particularly concerned that this proposal is one of the first steps of the local Clinical Commissioning Groups' openly declared, long term strategy to rely on Wickham Surgery to provide for the healthcare needs of the vast majority of Welborne residents as stated in the supporting letters from West Hampshire and Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Groups within the above planning application. This is unacceptable to Wickham residents who have previously been assured that medical provision would be enabled within the Welborne development. This is contrary to local and national policy that planning matters should reduce, and ideally remove, reliance on car journeys to access key facilities such as primary health care.

2. The Planning and Biodiversity Statement provides no supporting evidence for its assertion that the number of patients attending the practice is forecast to double over the next 10 years. While there is some population growth planned for the area supported by the surgery, an increase of 14,000 patients, as implied by the proposal, can only occur if it includes the majority of the population growth created by the Welborne development. Evidence for this also comes from the supporting statement from Fareham Clinical Commissioning Group which states:

We would be supportive of an application which addresses the shortfall in accommodation required to meet the additional population demand from Welborne...

... These discussions have demonstrated that the member practices within our area are currently anticipating that the majority of new patients resulting from the phased housing growth at Welborne will seek registration with Wickham.

However, the design statement for Welborne (FBC P/17/0266/OA) states clearly that the plans include the provision of a purpose-built Health Centre. Buckland Development Ltd has confirmed that they are committed to including this facility within the first phase of the development. There is therefore no justification for an increase of provision at the Wickham surgery site of the scale proposed.

Instead of the proposed development at Wickham, the provision for the majority of new residents at Welborne should be within the Welborne site at the Health Centre planned by Buckland Development Ltd. This is in accordance with the plan for Welborne approved by Fareham Borough Council in October 2019. This facility could be brought on-line quite rapidly as there are already 800 households (population 1511 at 2011 census) in Knowle, with an additional 200 house (18/01612/OUT) in development whose residents would probably prefer to access health care closer to their home, which Welborne would deliver. Such provision could be operated as a satellite from Wickham Surgery as already occurs in Droxford. This would be a practical and sustainable solution to ensure viability for NHS primary care in Welborne. It would offer primary healthcare within walking distance for a rapidly growing local population and would avoid the many problems which would ensue if the provision is all based in Wickham.

3. The Surgery is located to the north of the village and the access road (Mill Lane) to the site is narrow and with no pavements. Most of the additional 14,000 patients, as is alluded to the application, would travel to the surgery by car – an estimated additional 100 + car journeys an hour to reach and leave the surgery during their opening hours. The direct journey to the surgery would be via the church crossroads in Wickham, which is already a traffic blackspot and area of risk to pedestrians, and then along medieval Bridge Street and up Mill Lane. The alternative route would be through the Square. None of these streets is designed to absorb high volumes of traffic safely. Wickham Square and Bridge Street are in a conservation area.

4. There is one bus service passing no more frequently than once an hour that passes through the south side of the village, travelling between Winchester and Fareham. It is not a practical means of transport to the surgery from Welborne. There are no plans for the rapid transit bus system for Welborne to include a route to Wickham. The First Bus no 20 that previously travelled between Wickham to Knowle and Fareham has been suspended between Wickham and Knowle. Future residents of Welborne are entitled to primary care within their own community. What may seem, at first glance, like an easy quick fix for the CCGs represents a significant failure to include a key community facility. This will hit the most vulnerable Welborne residents the hardest.

The consequence of this would be a significant increase in the already heavy traffic congestion and pollution in Wickham village at key times of the day with a detrimental effect on the well-being of villagers, particularly those in those immediate vicinity. This is avoidable if healthcare is provided within Welborne as originally planned and will be the best solution for Knowle and Welborne residents.

5. There is very limited evidence of any consultation within the community for this application. Wickham Community Centre, Wickham Community Land Trust and Wickham Primary School, all organisations within the immediate vicinity, have not been approached by surgery personnel about their plans, and yet the people these organisations support will be directly impacted by the implications of this planning proposal.
6. The Surgery site lies within close proximity of a primary school, pre-school and children's nursery, plus sports facilities for children; the additional traffic will have a detrimental effect on the air quality for the young children attending these establishments.
7. The planning application includes a short email from Bloor suggesting that the company may be willing to negotiate with the surgery to provide some additional land for parking – but only enough for 30 spaces not the requested 53 (the email refers to a plan but none attached/displayed on the WCC website). The Society believes that this would depend on planning approval to build houses on their site behind the surgery, which is currently not within any local plan and therefore may never materialise - and certainly not in the foreseeable future. The surgery is currently undertaking an extension to provide dental services to their building (Ref. No: 19/02526/FUL) and the impact that this will have on existing parking availability in the area is yet to be realised or assessed.

Wickham Society considers that far greater consultation with key stakeholders should take place before this planning application is taken any further forward. This is to ensure a coherent and agreed plan for primary care in this area, which includes healthcare delivery for Welborne residents in Welborne and avoids the detrimental impact on the wellbeing of Wickham residents which will ensue if the current purpose of this application is approved and realised.

We also believe that this application is premature as the delivery of healthcare is likely to change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and further assessment of the outcomes of these changes needs to be taken into account before committing to further capital projects.

The Society recognises that Wickham Surgery is a high-quality and well-regarded practice and strongly supports proposals to expand and improve provision of different kinds of allied healthcare within the community provision as outlined in the statement. Our objection is to the proposal to double the number of patients the practice is expecting to support in Wickham when there is already a plan to support the majority of these patients in Welborne – self-sufficiency in primary care provision being one of the main intentions behind giving Welborne the status of being a 'Garden Village'.

Yours faithfully

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