

Our ref: SW/NS/JCG26740



Date: 8 February 2024

20 Farringdon Street  
London, EC4A 4AB

Planning Department,  
Thurrock Council,  
Civic Offices,  
New Road,  
Grays,  
RM17 6SL

Dear Sir/Madam,

**ORSETT HOSPITAL, ROWLEY ROAD, ORSETT, GRAYS, RM16 3EU  
PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF PART OF THE CAR PARK FOR A TEMPORARY  
ENDOSCOPY UNIT**

On behalf of our client, The Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust (“the Trust”), we are pleased to submit this planning application seeking consent to use part of the car park area of Orsett Hospital, Rowley Road, Orsett, Grays, RM16 3EU (“the Site”) for a temporary endoscopy unit. Planning permission is sought for the following:

*“Installation of temporary mobile endoscopy unit within the car park.”*

The Trust is seeking to provide this critical facility within the existing car park at Orsett Hospital to enhance the health service offer and medical facilities provided as part of the wider hospital site.

**Site Context**

The Site is situated to the north of School Lane, to the south of Orsett Village and comprises of surface car parking space associated with the Orsett general hospital, as identified on the submitted Site Location Plan. The car park occupies the western part of the wider medical site (indicated in blue line on the Site Location Plan) and is immediately surrounded by built development. The site falls under Use Class C2 as it is associated with an existing hospital and provides surgery, outpatients and diagnostic imaging, birthing facilities and therapy services.

The hospital is primarily accessed from Rowley Road to the east and the main hospital car park is secured by a security gate and only accessed from the south off School Lane.

There are a number of trees and hedges situated on the wider hospital curtilage, including around the southern and eastern boundaries. A number of these trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

Residential properties are located in on Randall Drive, Rowley Road and Hew Watt Close directly adjoin the hospital boundary to the north, east and west. School Lane, Orsett Church of England Primary School and the Green Belt are located to the south of the hospital. To the south and east, the land is designated as Existing Open Space. The Green Belt surrounds Orsett village to the north, east, south, and west.

There are no planning designations or allocations applying directly to the site, according to Thurrock Council’s adopted Core Strategy Local Plan Policy Map. The site is located within ‘Zone of Influence’ (ZOI) for the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and RAMSAR.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and so has the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. Parts of the site are subject to low, medium and high risk of flooding from surface water. The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) according to the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs’ interactive map.

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The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor are there any listed buildings within or adjacent to its boundaries. The closest listed buildings are located on High Road, approximately 450m to the north. The Council has not published a list of locally listed buildings. The nearest Conservation Area is the Orsett Conservation Area, located approximately 130m to the north-east of the site.

## **Development Proposal**

There is an increased need for diagnostic imaging services across the UK and to bolster the capacity at existing healthcare facilities. The proposed development comprises the use of the land for the installation of a mobile, temporary endoscopy unit within the existing Orsett Hospital car park. This will provide additional healthcare services within the local area. The unit is proposed to be in use for up to 2 years.

The proposed mobile unit is a pre-fabricated single storey unit with dimensions of 15.025m x 17.26m x 3.12m and floorspace of 259.3sqm. The details will be provided by the supplier and can be agreed as part of a condition. The unit will be accessible via ramps in accordance with BS8300.

Power will be drawn from the existing hospital buildings.

There are no permanent proposed changes to the site as the unit will only be situated at the site for between 18 months to 2 years.

Full details of the proposals are shown on the submitted drawings, as listed within this Planning Statement Letter.

The site is currently occupied by 21 car parking spaces and associated traffic island within the hospital main car park. The hospital car park is supported by a total of circa 230 (including disabled) car parking spaces. From the 21 car parking spaces which will be temporarily lost, 20 car parking spaces will be re-located to the northeast of the wider hospital curtilage, within the estates yard to the rear of the hospital allocated for staff only parking.

Access to the Site will remain as existing which is off School Lane being the main access point for vehicles and the main pedestrian access will remain via Rowley Road.

## **Planning History**

The Council's online planning records returned a number of decided planning records on the site. However, a number of these permissions are over 20 years old. Therefore, only the following recent permission is considered relevant to the proposed development:

21/00920/FUL – Planning Permission was granted on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021 for the "*Retention of a modular CT (computerised tomography) Scanner Unit located within the car park*".

## **Planning Policy Context**

**The Development Plan** for Thurrock Council comprises the following documents:

- Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (as amended) (January 2015);
- Thurrock Planning Policy Map (2015); and
- Borough Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies).

There are no saved policies within the Borough Local Plan 1997 (saved policies) that are relevant to the proposed development. These have been replaced by the adoption of the Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development DPD in December 2011.

There are no relevant Thurrock Local Plan designations or allocations that apply to the site, according to Thurrock Council's adopted Core Strategy Local Plan Policy Map.

## **Material Considerations**

The following relevant supplementary planning guidance adopted by Thurrock Council is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application. These are also relevant to the consideration of the proposed scheme:

Thurrock Design Guide – Design Strategy SPD (March 2017).

Other relevant material considerations include:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023); and

National Planning Practice Guidance.

### **Emerging Local Plan**

The Council is working on a new Local Plan and have prepared a Local Plan Initial Proposals document which sets out how the borough could grow and what the new Local Plan should look like. Consultation on the Local Plan Initial Proposals opened on 18 December 2023 and will close on 19 February 2024

Stages 1 and 2 of the new Local Plan (Issues and Options consultation) took place in 2016 and in 2019. The Council's Local Development Scheme (2023) outlines that the publication of the draft consultation is anticipated to take place in autumn/winter 2024 and the emerging Local Plan is due to be adopted in 2026. Given the new Local Plan is in an early stage of preparation, it holds little weight in the determination of planning applications.

The following section addresses the proposals against these planning policies and the site's context.

## **Planning Assessment**

### **Principle of Development**

The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 10 and 11). This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) of the NPPF, states at paragraph 97(a) that planning policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community. Paragraph 97(d) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.

Chapter 11 (Making effective use of land) of the NPPF, states at paragraph 127 states that Local Planning Authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. Paragraph 127(b) in particular states that they should support proposals that make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

The Council's adopted Local Plan sets out a number of key strategic issues and drivers for change. The Core Strategy identifies that the Borough faces a range of challenges including the need to ensure adequate health care provision and reduce health inequalities. Therefore, it is outlined that it is important that the spatial distribution of development planned within Thurrock addresses current deficiencies as well as additional requirements to ensure adequate health provision for existing and future communities.

Core Strategy Policy CSTP10 (Community Facilities) supports the provision of high quality, accessible community facilities to serve new and existing communities.

Core Strategy Policy CSTP11 (Health Provision) identifies that the Council will work with partners to: deliver health care infrastructure within Thurrock; a reduction in health inequalities between different groups within the Borough, and between the Borough and the region, in line with national and regional NHS objectives; and facilities that are located according to need. The Council have identified that they will work closely with the NHS South West Essex to respond to local population changes.

There is an increased need for diagnostic imaging services across the UK to bolster capacity at existing healthcare facilities. The proposed siting of a mobile endoscopy unit will provide additional and much-needed healthcare services within the local area. The new service will deliver quicker and easier access to screening and greater convenience to patients. By diverting elective diagnostic procedures away from under-pressure hospital buildings, the unit will ease the strain and allow urgent and acute services within the local area to operate at maximum capacity.

The proposed development would enable greater local provision of critical healthcare facilities at an existing healthcare facility within Orsett and would also allow the NHS to better serve the needs of the local community. The mobile endoscopy unit would deliver quicker and easier access to screening.

Therefore, the principle of providing and locating the temporary mobile endoscopy unit at the existing Orsett Hospital is considered to be wholly supported by local planning policies and the NPPF policies.

## **Design and Amenity**

Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places) of the NPPF states at paragraph 131 that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It adds that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Core Strategy Policy PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity, Health, Safety and The Natural Environment) seeks to maintain the amenities of the area and the amenities of the occupants of the neighbouring properties and the future occupiers of the site.

Core Strategy Policy PMD2 (Design and Layout) requires that all developments should contribute positively to the character of the area including local views, the townscape and a positive sense of place, developments should contribute positively to the appearance and character of the area.

The proposed mobile endoscopy unit is a standard design and sized pre-fabricated unit in accordance with its operation and functional requirements to provide key medical services across the UK. It comprises of a square, single storey unit measuring circa 259sqm with windows and doors. It will include ramps to allow access to all.

The proposed development will be situated on part of the existing car park area of the Orsett Hospital as shown on the Site Location Plan and will operate during normal working hours (08:00-18:00). It is located to minimise impact on the operation of the car park and hospital in general.

The closest residential properties are located to the north and with very few of the dwellings providing direct views of the Hospital's car park. Due to the scale and height of the proposed mobile endoscopy unit will not result in an increase in overlooking or overshadowing and will not result in any loss of privacy to the local neighbours.

The proposed mobile unit has an in-built generator that operates intermittently and will provide a very low level of noise. Given the site comprises an existing car park, it is considered that there would be no additional noticeable noise generation resulting from the proposed development.

It is considered that the design reflects the needs of the use and the wider hospital setting. The proposals also respects the character and amenity of the surrounding area and it is therefore considered to be compliant with the NPPF and Local Plan policies PMD1 and PMD2.

## **Transport and Parking**

Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport), states at paragraph 109 that significant developments should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. Paragraph 155 state that developments should only be prevented or refused on highways ground if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Core Strategy Policy PMD8 (Parking Standards) states all non-residential development will need to comply with the Council's maximum car parking standards. Development will be required to facilitate more equitable access and sustainable transport modes.

Core Strategy Policy PMD9 (Road Network Hierarchy) will only permit the development of new accesses or increased use of existing accesses where there is no possibility of safe access taken from an existing or proposed lower category road.

Core Strategy Policy PMD10 (Transport Assessments and Travel Plans) identifies that Transport Assessments, Transport Statements, and Travel Plans must accompany planning applications in accordance with the Department for Transport guidance.

A Transport Statement has been prepared in support of this application. The Transport Statement outlines that the site where the unit would be positioned is currently occupied by 21 car parking spaces. 20 of these spaces will be re-provided to the northeast of the Site within a service area (without impacting servicing), hence the proposals result in a temporary net loss of 1 car parking space. Overall, there is an existing circa 230 spaces



so significant provision. Existing cycle parking provision would be able to accommodate the minimal uplift expected to be associated with the proposal.

The Trust has advised that the existing car parking provision serving the wider healthcare facilities is underused and hence it is considered that the temporary loss of 1 car parking space will not have a notable impact on the parking demand. The existing spare parking capacity will therefore ensure that the low levels of additional parking demand generated by the proposed development (maximum of four patient vehicles at one time), coupled with existing parking demand for the wider healthcare facilities, will easily be accommodated by the existing car park and will not have an adverse impact on the operation of the car parking provision at Orsett Hospital.

Delivery, servicing and emergency vehicles and other vehicles will access the hospital site as per the existing arrangements.

The Transport Statement outlines that the proposed development is anticipated to generate a maximum of 32 patients per day, with a maximum of 4 patients being on site at any given time. Based on these figures, a worst-case assessment of the respective morning and evening peak hours (08:00-09:00 and 17:00-18:00) indicates that there will be circa four patient two-way trips per peak hour. In terms of staff trip generation, the information shared by the Trust shows that there will be 8 to 10 staff on site at one time. It is therefore anticipated the proposed development will generate a maximum of 20 two-way staff trips per day, comprising 10 arrivals and 10 departures.

The development proposals are expected to generate a total of up to four two-way person trips in both the typical morning and evening peak hours and 84 daily two-way trips. In terms of impact on highways, the assessments show that the proposals would result in a 0.15% increase in vehicles on the A13, which is minimal and within daily traffic flow variations. This increase in trips would not have a notable impact on the operation of the local highway network.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development trips would not have a notable impact on the operation of the local highway network if all trips were undertaken by vehicle.

In accordance with the NPPF, the proposals are accessible for the community as it is located within the grounds of the existing hospital and the proposals will not create any increased pressure or detrimental impacts on the local highways network.

It is therefore considered that the proposals comply with adopted planning policy and are acceptable from a highways, transport and parking perspective.

## **Application Scope**

The documents submitted with this planning application are as follows:

- This Planning Covering Letter, dated 8 February 2024;
- Planning Application Form and Certificates;
- CIL Form 1;
- Transport Statement, prepared by RPS dated February 2023; and
- Drawings, prepared by RPS:
  - Site Location Plan (Drawing no. 5002\_101 rev. A)
  - Existing Plan (Drawing no. 5002\_102)
  - Proposed Site Plan (Drawing no. 5002-110 rev. A)
  - Proposed Elevation A-B (Drawing no. 5002\_120 rev. A)
  - Proposed Elevation C-D (Drawing no. 5002\_121 rev. A)
  - Proposed Building Layout Plan (Drawing no. REMSDAH01 rev. A)

The statutory application fee of **£2312** (plus the £64.00 service charge) will be paid via the Planning Portal (ref: **PP-12772014**) using bacs transfer.

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## Conclusion

The health needs of a growing population must be addressed, requiring careful planning to assess future needs. The proposed siting of a mobile endoscopy unit at Orsett Hospital will provide additional healthcare services within the local area. The new service will deliver quicker and easier access to screening and greater convenience to patients and will ease the strain and allow urgent and acute services within the local area to operate at maximum capacity. Overall, the proposed development is in accordance with relevant planning policies and guidance and will not result in a detrimental impact to the surrounding area.

I trust that you have all the information you require to register this application. If, in the interim, you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact myself or Suzy Wilson ([suzy.wilson@rpsgroup.com](mailto:suzy.wilson@rpsgroup.com)) at this office. We look forward to your formal acknowledgment of this planning application.

Yours faithfully,  
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd

**Nasrin Sayyed**  
Senior Planner