

# Supporting Planning Statement

(including the Design and Access Statement, Statement of Community Involvement)

## Installation and Operation of Prescription Collection Automated Dispenser and Associated Works

At: Doddington Medical Centre  
Doddington, Cambs

March 2024

Prepared by :INNOV8PLANNING: for:



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## Statement of Community Involvement

Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that "*early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.*" The NPPF also highlights that "*good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.*"

Government guidance and the Council's SCI encourages pre-application discussions and community involvement. As a result, the public consultation programme had a number of key objectives, including:

- To encourage as much input as possible from the local community, including residents, interest groups, councillors and businesses;
- To provide the community with a genuine opportunity to provide feedback on the plans;
- To identify and consider any issues raised by the local community and stakeholders.

The applicant considered the advice above but concluded that this application is of such a minor nature it was not considered necessary to undertake any formal consultation work as no local stakeholders would be directly or indirectly affected by the scheme.

# Design and Access Statement

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (MIDI)

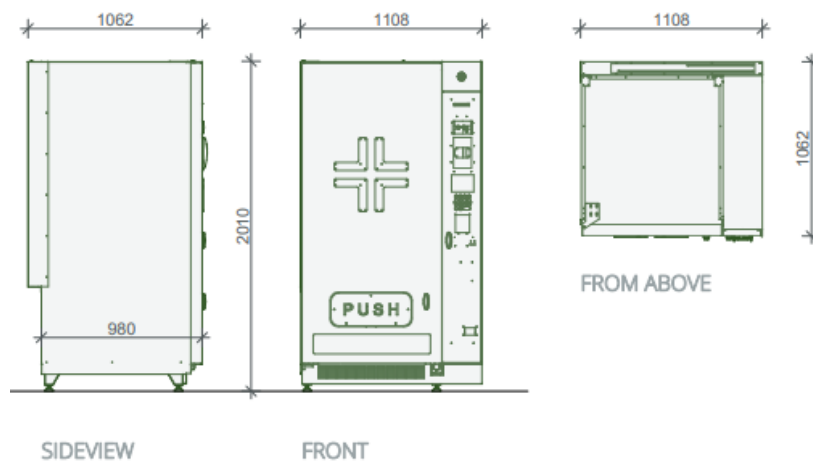
Introduction - This Design and Access Statement ('DAS') is submitted in support on a planning application made by Pharmabox24 for a Prescription Collection Automated Dispenser ('PCAD') at Doddington Medical Centre.

The Pharmabox24 MIDI is a self-contained, secure, vandal-resistant, machine, measuring approximately 2.01 m tall, 1.108m wide and 1.062m deep externally, fitted securely into the elevation of the Surgery featuring the business logo, a monitor screen, credit card reader and collection flap. The collection flap is automatically locked when patients are not collecting the prescriptions. The machines have a capacity of up to 90 dispensing bags.



USE/AMOUNT - The Pharmabox24 is a self-contained, secure, vandal-resistant, machine, measuring approximately 2.01 m tall, 1.108m deep and 1.062m wide externally, fitted in this instance securely under the front entrance canopy of the Surgery, featuring a touch screen, credit card reader and collection flap. The collection flap is automatically locked when patients are not collecting the prescriptions. The machines have a capacity of up to 90 dispensing bags.

LAYOUT/DESIGN/APPEARANCE – As the PCAD is designed to be accessed during the night as well as during the day it is self-illuminated. The unit can be lit in a choice of colours.



**Dimensions:**  
 Width: 1108 mm  
 Height: 2010 mm  
 Depth: 980 mm

**Colours:**  
 Available in every RAL  
 colour

**TECHNICAL  
 INFORMATION**

ACCESS - Experience has shown that, in the vast majority of instances, patients will collect from the Pharmabox24 during the Surgery's normal opening hours, but it also provides patients, who cannot get to the Surgery during opening hours the opportunity to collect their prescriptions at their own convenience, meaning patients do not miss out taking their medicines.

It also allows patients who would only be able to visit the surgery at peak times to come at off peak times thus having a positive impact on the local infrastructure. The Pharmabox24 may have other benefits such as reducing emergency requests for medicines – reducing pressure on out of hours medical services and A&E.

The PCAD also allows for a more efficient use of the Surgery, reducing queuing time and increasing staff resource by allowing staff more time to spend with patients who need it and delivering new services, benefitting the whole the community. In addition, the collection point also allows the Surgery to reduce the need for home deliveries which leads to a reduction in its carbon emissions.

The benefits to the customers are reduced waiting times and allowing patients the convenience to collect medicines at their own convenience. The PCAD particularly useful for repeat prescriptions and busy patients who are unable to collect prescriptions during opening hours.

The proposed works make no alterations to the existing access and there will be no material increase in vehicle or pedestrian movements into and out of the Surgery. The unit enjoys the same level of physical accessibility as the Surgery.





## Context

Doddington Medical Practice is a dispensing practice and they dispense medication to nearly all of their patients.

Having a Pharmabox24 PCAD will ensure that they can continue to dispense to as many people as possible, by giving them 24 hours a day 7 days a week option to collect their medication. By ensuring as many patients acquire their medication from the practice will keep the provision of rural GP services in a stronger position.

Installation of PCAD will future-proof the provision of medication at the premises even through another pandemic, allowing medicines to be collected with little interaction.

The PCAD is an automated medicine collection point which is available 24/7 - meaning patients can collect their prescription items at their convenience. A Pharmabox24 Collection Point can help a dispensing practice retain customers by providing a safe and secure collection point for a patient's medication.

The PCAD will allow patients of the practice to access their prescribed medication outside of the normal opening hours of the Surgery. Those wishing to utilise this service will notify the Practice and their medications (which are checked and dispensed on the usual manner) will be loaded into the PCAD for collection at a time of their convenience. Patients will be able to access their medication by using a one-off pin code.

There are a number benefits that result from the installation these machines, including:

- Patient journeys and journey time – patients will no longer need to travel to the surgery during opening hours to collect their medication. Potentially reducing peak time traffic
- Patient convenience – patients can collect their dispensed medication at a time convenient to them – especially if their convenient time is outside of normal opening hours.
- Linked journeys – the added flexibility of increased collection time availability will increase the opportunity for linked journeys (journeys to similar destinations for more than one reason) this will help reduce car journeys, traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions.
- Reduce queuing times within the surgery – reduce patient waiting times, reduce wasted journeys.
- Reduce traffic congestion associated with car parking during surgery opening hours.

- Reduce transmission of contagious diseases – a particularly pertinent and relevant in these post-pandemic times.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Synopsis

The aim of the development is to improve accessibility to prescription medicines. The provision of an PCAD will allow those who can't access their dispensing surgery during opening hours or in busy periods.

Doddington Medical Practice is a dispensing practice and they dispense medication to nearly all of their patients.

Having a Pharmabox24 PCAD will ensure that they can continue to dispense to as many people as possible, by giving them 24 hours a day 7 days a week option to collect their medication.

The Pharmabox24 is a self-contained, secure, vandal-resistant, machine, measuring approximately 2.01 m tall, 1.108m deep and 1.062m wide externally, fitted securely under the front entrance canopy of the Surgery featuring, a touch screen, credit card reader and collection flap. The collection flap is automatically locked when patients are not collecting the prescriptions. The machines have a capacity of up to 90 dispensing bags.

The machine in this location will be filled from the front by qualified staff.

## 1.2 Background

This planning statement is submitted in support of a full application submitted under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

## 1.4 The Planning Application

The planning application comprises:

- Covering Letter
- This Supporting Planning Statement ('SPS')
- Drawing PB24-06-01

## 2 The Site and its Surroundings

### 2.1 The Site

The Doddington Medical Centre lies proximate to the grounds of Doddington Hospital of the western edge of the village of Doddington.



Access to the site is taken from Benwick Road.

### 2.2 The Surroundings

The hospital borders the application site to the north and west. A residential property lies to the east of the site with agricultural land to the south.

### 2.3 Designations

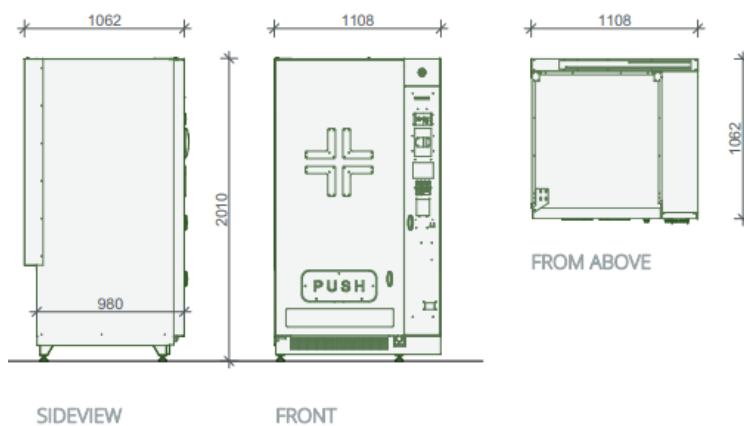
A number of Listed Buildings are situated to the south east of the site as shown on the figure below but will be unaffected by the proposed development.



### 3 The Proposed Development

#### 3.1 Design, Scale and Layout

The Pharmabox24 is a self-contained, secure, vandal-resistant, machine, measuring approximately 2.01 m tall, 1.108m deep and 1.062m wide externally, fitted securely under the entrance canopy of the Surgery featuring the business logo, a touch screen, credit card reader and collection flap. The collection flap is automatically locked when patients are not collecting the prescriptions. The machines have a capacity of up to 90 dispensing bags.



**Dimensions:**  
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Depth: 980 mm

**Colours:**  
Available in every RAL colour

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

#### 3.2 Construction Impacts

The PCAD can be installed within a few hours and involves minimal construction and building works. In this instance a level concrete plinth will be constructed under the entrance canopy to which the Pharmabox24 will be secured to.

## 4 Policy Context

### 4.1 The Development Plan

This section sets out the local and national planning policies as well as material considerations which are relevant, both to the application site, and the type of development proposed. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Sub Section 5 of Section 38 of the 2004 Act also states that, “*if to any extent a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflict with another policy in the development plan the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published (as the case may be)*”

This principle has been developed and clarified by subsequent case law, which has confirmed that a particular proposal does not need to accord with each and every policy in a development plan; the key issue is that it accords with the overall thrust of Development Plan policies taken as a whole. Accordingly, policy and plans play an important role in determining any planning application.

#### Adopted Policy

The most relevant development plan document for this type of development in March is the Fenland Local Plan 2014. The Local Plan puts significant emphasis on the health of local residents. Paragraph 2.1.3. states that *‘Poor health is a key issue for Fenland. The following health indicators are significantly worse in Fenland compared to the England average:*

- *Life expectancy for men*
- *Levels of obesity amongst children.*
- *Levels of adult smoking*
- *Levels of physical activity amongst adults*
- *Levels of people diagnosed with diabetes*
- *Rates of road injuries and deaths*
- *Numbers of hospital stays for alcohol related harm’*

Paragraph 2.2.1 continues *‘The Fenland Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2009-20122 sets out how the public, private, community and voluntary services will work together to make Fenland an even better place to live and work. It recognises that there*

*are some big challenges to overcome, but emphasises that the Fenland Strategic Partnership, who produce and monitor progress of the SCS, are dedicated to tackling them together. The strategy is structured around the following themes:*

- *Health and Social Well-being'*

Healthy, Inclusive and Accessible Communities:

6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities (e.g. health, transport, education, training, leisure opportunities and community activities); and ensure all groups thrive in safe environments and decent, affordable homes

3.3.6 It is essential therefore that this Local Plan makes provision for appropriate housing, improved access to quality local services, healthy transport choices such as cycling and walking, access to our green infrastructure and active recreation, good place making

Policy LP2 'Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents Development' states that *'Proposals should contribute to the Council's goal of Fenland's residents achieving the highest attainable standard of health, irrespective of their race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition, sex or age. Development proposals should positively contribute to creating a healthy, safe and equitable living environment by:*

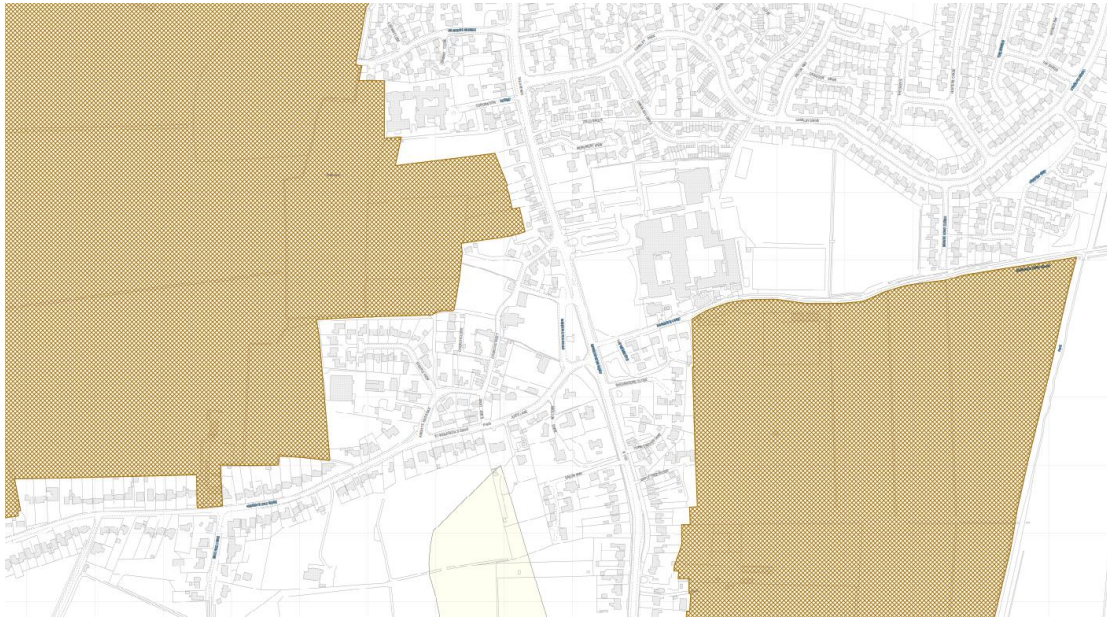
- *providing good access to health, leisure and recreation facilities'*

Policy LP6 – 'Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail' states that:

*Development of an appropriate scale that enhances the retail offer of March and Wisbech as the primary centres in the district will be supported. Linked to the Settlement Hierarchy as set out in Policy LP3, the scale of provision in the District Centres and the remaining smaller settlements should be proportionate and strengthen their roles in providing mainly convenience shopping to meet local needs and local services.*

With regard to the town itself the Local Plan states that *'March is an historic market town at the heart of Fenland with a population of around 20,000. It is relatively well connected by road and benefits from a railway station situated on the Stansted -Cambridge-Leicester-Birmingham line. Like Wisbech, March has an established legacy as a trading centre. Today it benefits from a relatively healthy town centre which has an historic urban form and attractive riverside setting. However, there is a need to refresh the range and scope of its offer to maintain its function as a service centre serving the wider hinterland and more generally boost its vibrancy and vitality'.*





An assessment confirms that the proposed development conforms to the development plan and there are no policies that fall contrary to the proposals.

#### 4.2 National Policy

The UK Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021 which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It recognises the contribution the planning system makes to the achievement of sustainable development, identifying that sustainable development consists of economic, social and environmental roles.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019 and 20 July 2021 and, most recently, December 2023. This sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, Paragraph 8 states that:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):



- *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure*
- *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- *an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

Paragraph 97 states:

*'To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

*(a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments'*

It is clear that the proposed development will improve the accessibility of an existing and vital, community service and therefore help achieve the social objection of the NPPF.

## 5 Summary of Other Considerations

Under the provision of 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (which states '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') supportive planning policy should prevail unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance there would be no detrimental environmental impacts accruing from the proposed development (it does not create any noise or pollution) so it is respectfully suggested that the following issues would be 'material' to the consideration of the application.

### a) Design

The PCAD will be installed within the front elevation of modern building and replace an existing window. The design of the PCAD would not introduce a incongruous feature that would be detrimental to the appearance of the existing building.

### b) Access

The site already benefits from suitable access and parking arrangements associated with the medical centre.

### c) Security

Security measures will include bollards, soffit lighting and CCTV.

### d) Noise

The machine does not generate a noise. There is no 'beep' associated with pressing buttons on the machine. The PCAD is therefore not considered to be a source of noise.

**This summary demonstrates the benign nature of the changes and no neighbouring properties will be affected by the proposal.**

## 6 Planning Balance and Conclusions

### 6.1 Introduction

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan - unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 38 of the NPPF also states that *'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'*.

### 6.2 Concluding Statement

The proposed development improves patients access to their prescriptions.

The Installation of the PCAD will enhance and existing community asset and provide convenience for patients. In conclusion will not have an adverse impact on the character, appearance or setting of the area or indeed the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Moreover, the PCAD is considered sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (which is a material consideration in the determination of this application) as it will contribute towards viability of the local economy, reducing the need to travel (especially in peak times) – thus reducing carbon emissions and the use of finite fossil fuels.

It is respectfully concluded that any minor adverse impacts (if identified during the application determination process) will be suitably outweighed by the benefits as identified above and it can also be concluded that there are no development plan policies which would fall contrary to the scheme as proposed.

