

Item 3H	15/00536/COU
Case Officer	Adele Hayes
Ward	Chorley North West
Proposal	Change of use from offices (Class B1) to health centre (Class D1)
Location	Chorley Community Housing 24 - 26 Gillibrand Street Chorley PR7 2EJ
Applicant	Doctor Lindsay Dickinson
Consultation expiry:	17 July 2015
Decision due by:	19 August 2015

Recommendation

It is recommended that this application is approved subject to no material representations being received before the expiry of the consultation period (17 July 2015) and that the decision is delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair in consultation with the Executive Director of Public Protection, Street Scene and Community.

Proposal

1. This application proposes the change of use of an existing office building to a health centre. The premises were previously occupied by Chorley Community Housing and have been vacant since November 2014.
2. It is understood that the proposed use is for a temporary facility to enable surgeries that are currently unable to expand, or cater for additional needs, to locate here until the proposed new Friday Street Health Centre is built.
3. It is proposed to create 7 consulting rooms and the existing car parking that has 24 spaces will be used by staff. No elevational alterations are proposed.

Representations

4. The application has been publicised by way of individual letters sent to the occupiers of neighbouring premises and a site notice has been displayed. As a result of this publicity no representations have been received.

Consultations

5. LCC Highways – Has no objection to the proposal in principle and has requested further information regarding the detail of the car parking arrangements. Any comments will be reported on the addendum. However,

Assessment

Principle of development

6. The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It highlights that there are three dimensions to sustainable development, which give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles. These are economic, social and environmental.
7. Class B1 offices can clearly perform an economic role by supporting local businesses, but they can also perform a social role when used to provide accessible local services that reflect the community's needs. These offices have fulfilled this role as in the past they were used as Chorley Council offices and more latterly as offices for Chorley Community Housing and The Probation Service.
8. The provision of a health centre will perform a clear social role and help to support a strong, vibrant and healthy community, by providing accessible health services for community needs to help support health and social well-being, which is full accordance with the Framework. Chorley is a local authority that is currently delivering significant numbers of houses and is experiencing population growth. It is important that facilities and services, such as health care facilities, are provided and enhanced to cater for the changing needs of the Borough.
9. Core Strategy Policy 23 is supportive of improvements to health care provision and states that the Central Lancashire authorities should work with health care commissioners to support health care infrastructure and to improve primary care access and facilities. It also highlights the importance of accessibility to facilities. This proposal is located in a sustainable and accessible location in Chorley Town Centre and accords with the principles set out in Policy 23.
10. The application site is located within the Chorley Town Centre boundary. The Framework states that local planning authorities should recognise town centres at the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality. This proposal does involve the loss of Class B1 offices, which are currently vacant, but as well as the provision of full and part-time jobs this proposal will encourage visits to Chorley Town Centre and it should help to support its vitality, which accords with the objectives of the Framework.
11. The application site lies within a secondary frontage area, as shown on the emerging Chorley Local Plan Inset Map and therefore should be assessed against policy EP6 of this Plan. This policy states that a combination of retail and town centre uses will be permitted where they maintain and enhance the vitality of this area. The policy then lists some types of development and changes of use that may be appropriate. A health centre is not a defined town centre use, but as with town centre uses there are significant advantages in locating them in sustainable, accessible locations, such as this. A health centre will attract visitors to the area and is a form of change of use that should help to support the daytime economy in this part of the town centre and therefore is in accordance with the objectives of Policy EP6 of the emerging Chorley Local Plan.
12. This proposal involves the loss of Class B1 offices, and as such should be assessed against Core Strategy Policy 10, which aims to protect employment premises and sites. It states that there will be a presumption that 'Best Urban' and 'Good Urban' sites will be retained for B use class employment use. These premises were not assessed under the Employment Land Review, so are not 'Best Urban' or 'Good Urban'. Policy 10 states that proposals on all employment sites or premises for re-use or redevelopment other than B use class employment will be assessed under a number of criteria and these are assessed below:

(a) there would not be an unacceptable reduction on the type, quality or quantity of employment land supply;

This proposal will result in the loss of town centre Class B1 offices, through their change of use. However, these offices have previously been used by organisations

that provide a service to the local community (Chorley Council and Chorley Community Housing) and this proposal will result in the provision of community services in the form of health care and there are benefits of co-locating surgeries in one building. In addition the offices are currently vacant and the proposal does not involve external changes, or the loss of the building. The proposed use will provide for skilled employment opportunities and the proposal will not result in an unacceptable reduction in the type, quality or quantity of the employment land supply.

(b) the provision and need for the proposed use;

The applicants have not provided evidence about the need for a health centre, but the provision of such facilities is supported by the Framework and Core Strategy, and such facilities are an essential component of sustainable development and are needed to support growth. Therefore, the proposed use should provide extra capacity and significant health benefits.

(c) the relative suitability of the site for employment and for the alternative use;

The site is in a sustainable location, which is accessible by a variety of means, and is suitable for both the existing and proposed use.

(d) the location of the site and its relationship to other uses;

The proposal involves the re-use of premises within a mixed area on the edge of the town centre and is considered suitable in this location in principle.

(e) whether the ability to accommodate smaller scale requirements would be compromised;

This proposal involves a loss of Class B1 employment premises through a change of use, but no external changes are proposed and the building is not being redeveloped. Therefore, it would not preclude use for smaller scale requirements at a later date, if circumstances change, or if less space is required for the health centre.

(f) there would be a net improvement in amenity.

This proposal does not involve external changes, but involves the re-use of a currently vacant building, which should result in a net improvement in amenity.

13. There is no requirement to market this building as it is not proposed for residential use.

14. Whilst the proposal will result in the loss of some Class B1 offices, through change of use, it is considered that this is outweighed by the fact that this scheme should provide significant benefits that accord with the objectives and policies of the Framework, Central Lancashire Core and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Impact on neighbour amenity

15. There are residential properties in proximity to the application site. However, taking into account the distance to neighbouring residential properties and the nature of surrounding land uses, it is not considered that neighbouring residents are likely to experience any undue noise or disturbance as a result of the proposal.

Highway safety

16. There is an existing car park and the proposal will allow for a continuation of the use of this by staff. Whilst no car parking is proposed for patients and visitors, the application site is in a highly sustainable location and accessible to a large number of people via a range of different transport modes. Furthermore, there are a number of car parks within close proximity. In this instance it is considered that the level of parking proposed is acceptable.

Overall Conclusion

17. Although the proposal would result in the loss of an employment use, taking into consideration the level of employment that would be generated by the proposed use and the limited impact of the proposals, the application is accordingly recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Planning Policies

In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposals has had regard to guidance contained with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the development plan and the emerging Local Plan 2012-2026.

Note on the Emerging Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026

In October 2013, the Local Plan Inspector issued her partial report on the findings into the soundness of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 which is a material consideration in the consideration of any planning application. In summary, the plan is considered to be legally compliant. In relation to soundness, the plan is considered sound, with the exception of matters relating to Gypsies and Travellers.

Paragraph 18 of the Partial Report states: *“For the avoidance of doubt, the Plan may not be adopted until it has been changed in accordance with all the main modifications set out in the Appendix to this partial report and any which may be specified in the Appendix of my forthcoming supplementary report. However because of the very advanced stage in the examination process that the main modifications set out in the Appendix have reached, significant weight should be attached to all policies and proposals of the Plan that are amended accordingly, where necessary, except for matters relating to Gypsies and Travellers.”*

The Council accepted the Local Plan Inspector’s modifications for Development Management purposes at its Executive Committee on 21st November 2013. It is therefore considered that significant weight can be given to her report, and to the policies and proposals of the emerging Local Plan, as amended by the main modifications.

Further consideration has been given to matters relating to Gypsies and Travellers, and the Local Plan Inspector’s Supplementary Report on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople was issued (8 May 2015) and it concludes that the part of the Chorley Local Plan dealing with Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople policy and site allocation is also sound, providing a number of main modifications are made.

Suggested Conditions

No.	Condition
1.	The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission. <i>Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</i>
2.	The approved plans are: Plan Ref. Received On: Title: N/A 1 June 2015 Site of 24 – 26 Gillibrand Street <i>Reason: To define the permission and in the interests of the proper development of the site.</i>

Planning History

The site history of the property is as follows:

Ref: 78/00538/FUL Description:	Decision: DEEMED Conversion of photographer's studio to offices	Decision Date: 3 July 1978
Ref: 81/00719/FUL 1981 Description:	Decision: PERFPP Change of use of dwelling to offices	Decision Date: 18 August
Ref: 07/00231/ADV Description:	Decision: REFADV Erection of various non-illuminated signs,	Decision Date: 13 April 2007
Ref: 10/00619/ADV 2010 Description:	Decision: PERADV Erection of notice board to display information for residents	Decision Date: 5 October
Ref: 12/00046/FUL Description: Road, Anderton	Decision: PERFPP Change of use of land to create 12 car parking spaces at Rothwell	Decision Date: 17 April 2012
Ref: 15/00536/COU Description:	Decision: PCO Change of use from offices (Class B1) to health centre (Class D1)	Decision Date: