

07/1035

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Green Travel Plan Produced on behalf of Mercury Health Ltd

Site at Hurrans Garden Centre, Kidderminster Road, Hagley, Nr Stourbridge, DY9 0JB

Introduction

This Green Travel Plan (GTP) supports the planning application by Mercury Health Ltd for the additional use of land (in part) for Mobile Temporary Health Facilities (Temporary 7 year Permission) at Hurrans Garden Centre, Kidderminster Road, Hagley, Nr Stourbridge, DY9 0JB.

The aim of the GTP is to provide the framework for understanding and managing the transport requirements of the temporary mobile facility.

The Objectives of the GTP are to help:

- all staff, patients and visitors to easily access the facility by a range of transport modes; and
- reduce the dependency on the private car, other than by those who have no other means of travel;

The GTP has been prepared by Tribal MJP on behalf of Mercury Health Ltd.

Purpose & Content of the Green Travel Plan

The purpose of the GTP is to encourage staff and patients (where practicable) to use sustainable modes of travel on their journeys to and from the proposed mobile diagnostic facility.

The objectives will be achieved through a range of measures and strategies that Mercury Health Ltd will support.

Site Location

The subject site is located at the southern end of Kidderminster Road, within the South-West part of Hagley. The site lies in close proximity to the A456 which connects to both nearby Kidderminster and central Hagley / Stourbridge (via A491). These 'A' road connections are well connected to local roads feeding the smaller villages and towns in the vicinity.

Numerous bus services run near to the site including the 192 which travels from Kidderminster Road South to the centre of Hagley, Hagley Village and Blakedown. From these locations, interconnecting bus services exist.

Hagley rail station is located a short distance (0.90 miles) away from the site.

From Hagley rail station, there are connections to Stourbridge Junction and Great Malvern, Kidderminster and Birmingham Snow Hill/New Street. Connections can be made to destinations further afield from Birmingham New Street.

Travel Patterns

The facility is likely to be visited by approximately 29 patients each day that it is located on site. Due to the intrinsic nature of the facility, being mobile and therefore located within the community for which it is intended to serve, it is likely that travel distances will be kept to a minimum. With minimal distances to travel it is expected more likely that those patients who can adopt alternatives methods of travel will do so.

The facility will employ 10 members of staff. The staff being employed on the site are likely to be residing together in a communal residence whilst working with the mobile facility. Car sharing and the use of Public Transport will be promoted amongst staff.

Forward Strategy

The mobile nature of the facility means that it will be moving from site to site on a regular basis. Therefore, it is not practical to display site specific travel information within the unit. As an alternative Mercury Health Ltd will provide local travel details to its staff when they are first employed.

Due to the nature of the mobile diagnostics facility it is unlikely that patients will be making repeat of frequent visits to the facility. Therefore, the display of information relating to public transport within the unit, whilst being impractical on a mobile facility, is likely to be of little help to patients whom would only be exposed to the information once at the facility. Therefore, it is proposed that such information will be provided to patients at the time of their appointment being booked in order that they may make informed choices regarding their mode of transport to and from the facility (where practicable).

A Member of the staff team (whom travel from site to site with the facility) will be appointed as a 'Green Travel Plan Coordinator' and will be available to provide appropriate information regarding alternative modes of transport to both staff and patients as necessary.

Due to the mobile nature of the unit specific cycle parking is unable to be provided. However, the cycle parking facilities that already exist on the site will be available for use by both patients and staff.

Conclusion

The very nature of this facility encourages the use of alternative means of transport, being taken to the very community for which it is intended to serve. However, information regarding public transport and alternatives to the private car will be provided to both patients and staff in order to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Tribal MJP
August 2007

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Our Ref: 2068/BDC05/JTH
11th September 2007

Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
B60 1AA



07/1035

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Planning Application on behalf of Mercury Health Ltd for Additional Use of Land (in part) for Mobile Temporary Health Facilities (Temporary 7 year Permission) by Mercury Health Ltd at Hurrans Garden Centre, Kidderminster Road, South West Hagley, Nr Stourbridge, DY9 0JB

Introduction

Please find enclosed, on behalf of our client, Mercury Health Ltd, a planning application for the additional use of land to permit the parking of a temporary mobile diagnostic health facility. Please note that this application does not seek to remove the principal underlying use of this site for leisure purposes but rather will be in addition to the main use of the site.

The following paragraphs outline the details of the proposal;

Mercury Health

The proposed mobile temporary diagnostic facility will form part of the NHS initiative for independent sector diagnostic facilities. The proposal has been approved by Worcestershire Primary Care Trust and affords opportunities for the delivery of high quality, patient-focused health services to the people of Stourbridge and the surrounding areas directly, thus providing healthcare facilities within the heart of the Community.

The White Paper "Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services" was published in January 2006 and sets a new direction for the whole health and social care system. It proposes a radical and sustained shift in the way in which services are delivered – ensuring that they are more personalised and that they fit into people's busy lives.

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- It aims to achieve four main goals:
- Better prevention and earlier intervention
- More choice and a louder voice for patients
- Tackling inequalities and improving access to community services
- More support for people with long term needs

A statement from Mercury Health Ltd outlining the focus and Government vision behind these facilities is included as part of this application.

The Proposals – Operational Overview

Mobile Diagnostic Facilities

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The subject site will form one of some 52 sites across the West Midlands from which essential additional mobile diagnostic facilities will operate. This application seeks temporary planning permission on a 7 year basis. A fleet of mobile diagnostic units will rotate continually around the selected sites, staying at each location for varying periods, based upon need and pre-determined appointment arrangements (the length of stay at each site will vary based on this rotating schedule of need).

Due to the mobile nature of these facilities it may not be possible for the units to be positioned in the same location within the site on every visit. Therefore, it has not been possible to provide location plans for the proposed units. However, on every visit to the site the units will be located in an area which lies within the red line application boundary shown on the site location plan submitted with this application. The hatched area shown on the red line plan indicates an approximate area of mobile unit coverage on the site.

These mobile facilities will be provided on specialist, purpose built vehicles (see details enclosed) creating modern, hygienic facilities in comfortable surroundings. Once on site the Endoscopy unit has a 'pop-out' facility which expands the floor area of the unit. It contracts again when leaving the site in order to aid manoeuvrability and to fall within the UK legal limit for road going vehicles.

Siting and Programming

There will be a maximum of 4 trailers on the site at any one time. When the mobile units are not on site the area which is occupied will be available for the normal day to day functioning of the existing use. Great care has been taken to ensure that the programming of the units on the site does not interfere with the underlying use of the site. The scheduling of the units on the site has been undertaken in consideration of the diagnostic health requirements of the local community and with the agreement of the Centre to ensure that its usual running is not inhibited by the presence of the mobile units on the site.

No on site works are proposed with the unit/s being positioned on the existing site surface. In order not to damage the existing surface it is usual practice for spreader plates to be used on the base of the unit stabilisers which prevent indentation of the surface by the stabilisers.

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Staffing

The facility will be staffed by 6 no clinical staff (Endoscopy) and 4 No. clinical staff (MRI) – 10 clinical staff in total as is the case at a fixed health facility.

Staff will be allocated to a particular unit and follow that unit to its various locations across the West Midlands utilising car sharing where possible (please see attached Green Travel Plan).

Parking

Due to the nature of the facility it is likely that some patients will be unable to travel on public transport and will therefore rely on the private car. In order to accommodate the private cars of both patients and staff, the facility will have the use of the substantial car parking area surrounding the site during its stay.

Staff/Patient Facilities

Patient visits are likely to be short term lasting between 30 minutes and 2 hours. Therefore, it has not been necessary to provide any canteen/café facility for patients. However, water will be provided in the waiting area for use by patients, relatives/chaperones and also staff. Staff will be provided with a microwave oven and kitchenette facilities within the staff room.

Utilities & Servicing

The facility will incorporate internal power and water supplies and waste water storage facilities. The waste water storage facilities will be emptied at least once a day by a 'dirty' service vehicle which will also remove dirty laundry, utensils and general waste from the facility. Clean laundry, utensils and other supplies will be delivered on a separate 'clean' service vehicle once per day.

No substantive maintenance or repairs of the units will be undertaken on site. Should a unit require any emergency repairs or planned maintenance this will be undertaken by a contractor off site.

Security

When the unit is required to be on site on consecutive days the facility will remain on site overnight only being removed from the site at the end of its stay when it is due to move to the next location. To supplement facilities on site the units will utilise their own on board external CCTV surveillance cameras and external lighting in order to ensure the safety and security of both staff and patients.

The nature of the use of some units requires basic drugs to be stored on the units. However, in order to increase the security of the facility these drugs will be stored in a locked cabinet out of sight of the general public. No money will be kept on the units at any time during their presence on site.

Clinical Safety

With any clinical service there is always a risk of an emergency situation developing requiring more complex intervention. The risk in a mobile situation is no different to any other clinical environment where it is not located on a main hospital site. Local transfer policies are in place to transfer patients to a pre-agreed local NHS health facility.

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Hours of Operation & Procedures

The facility will be open from 7.30am until 8.30 pm on the relevant days (No Sundays or Bank Holidays). The proposed facility will deal with diagnostic procedures only. All procedures at the units will require patients to attend for a pre-arranged appointment of up to two hours in duration and will not involve any overnight stays or drop-in facilities. Should a patient unexpectedly fall ill or require overnight care at the post procedure stage then the patient will be transferred to a NHS general hospital. However, it is anticipated that this action would rarely be necessary, although necessary contingencies have been put into place.

Town Planning

The Need for Planning Permission

No alterations are proposed to the existing hard surfacing (no engineering operations) and the proposal does not constitute development as it is not fixed, but the proposal is subject to planning permission as it does not fall within the exemptions afforded by the General Permitted Development Order. The facility proposed for the subject site will consist of CT and MRI facilities and are proposed to be present on site for between 1-3 continuous days per week which equates to a total of between 52 and 156 days per year. Consequently, although the facility is a mobile temporary facility, being on site for a total of between 52 and 156 days per year, it falls outside the remit of a '28 day' temporary use as stipulated by Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, Part 4, Class B), hence, the need for the subject planning application.

Planning Policy

The subject site falls within the Green Belt. PPG2 "*Green Belts*" states that "***the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open***" and continues to state that:

There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- ii) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns ; and
- v) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

I will take each of the above points in turn:

- i) Not only is the proposed development mobile and temporary in its nature but it is located on a site which is already developed on. As the units are mobile in nature the likelihood is that an individual unit would only be for no more than 2 days in a week. The supporting information already refers to the fact that the use is required for 3 days a week or 156 days in a calendar year with no permanent development being proposed on the site. No additional urban sprawl will result in the application, as the proposals are entirely contained within an existing car park.

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- ii) As no permanent development is being proposed and that the application site is located on an existing care park where there is no risk of neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- iii) The application site is located on a car park, upon which as it currently stands, vehicles are able to park without restriction other than at the discretion of the landlord. There is nothing which would restrict a similar type of vehicle to be able to park on the site for an unrestricted length of time. No further encroachment upon the green belt will result from the proposed development as it is entirely restricted to the existing carpark.
- iv) The proposed intensity of use of the units on the site will result in there being negligible effect upon the special character of the area. As stated at point iii) the existing use of the site is a car park which could be used unrestricted by similar vehicles.
- v) A number of sites have been considered when assessing where would be the best site for the units, however due to the complex requirements of the units to enable them to be used a number of sites have been discounted. The major requirements for the units to be able to function correctly are access, space for the units to be sited, a flat/level site and one which doesn't interfere with the day to day running of the existing site. The proposed site is the only available site which was found within the defied area (defined by the Department of Health), hence making this a very important and strategic site. If other urban sites were available then these sites which fulfil these requirements then an application would have been submitted on those sites.

PPG 2 states that ***"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted."*** As has been demonstrated within the previous paragraphs the development is not considered to be ***"harmful to the Green Belt"*** when considered in relation to national policy.

Policy DS1 of the adopted local plan gives regard to green belt designations in accordance with Structure Plan Policy. The post-text of the policy continues to state that:

The relevance of the Green Belt to Bromsgrove District is threefold:

- to prevent the further growth of the West Midlands conurbation into the countryside;
- to limit the expansion of built-up areas in the Green Belt area in order that neighbouring towns and villages will not merge with one another;
- to safeguard the open countryside having regard for the interests of agriculture and for the informal recreation needs of people who wish to visit the countryside.

As previously discussed within this letter due to the mobile and temporary nature of the proposed units, it is considered that the use does not contradict the above mentioned points.

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Policy DS2 gives regard to Green Belt Development Criteria. The proposed development does not fall into any of the development criteria due to the unusual nature of the proposals. However as previously stated it is considered that the mobile nature of the units being onsite for a maximum of 3 days a week and then moving to another site, would not compromise the sites green belt designation.

These new, additional facilities are designed to carry out thousands of diagnostic tests over the next five years. This contract has been drawn up with the full participation of the Department of Health, West Midlands Strategic Health Authority, Local Primary Care Trusts and local NHS trusts to ensure that safe provision of diagnostic health care can be provided as locally as possible within each community.

The success of this project will ensure that patients are rapidly diagnosed and offered rapid treatment through the NHS within the local community. Such tests will include MRI, CT scans, X-ray, endoscopy and the fitting of hearing aids for these essential additional healthcare services to commence across the West Midlands, to the benefit of the members of the local community.

It is therefore, considered that the subject proposals, being temporary and completely mobile in nature will have a very limited impact upon the Green Belt and they represent very special circumstances and should therefore be allowed within the Green Belt.

Alternative Sites

The alternate sites that were considered prior to the subject site being chosen included:

1. **Bromsgrove Rovers FC** - an application was submitted but withdrawn after a full survey had been completed of the site as it was ascertained that the access to the site was unable to physically accommodate the units.
2. **Bromsgrove School** were approached, however the landlord was not interested.
3. **Worcester Youth Works** - the land was found to have to steep a gradient which would prevent the units the attaching correctly and working safely and efficiently.
4. **New College Bromsgrove** were approached, however the landlord was not interested.
5. **Catshill Social Club**, an application was submitted but due to the Officer indicating that the application was going to be refused due to the car parks close proximity to residential properties the application was duly withdrawn by the applicants.
6. **Charford Road Primary School**, the site was too small to sufficiently accommodate the units.
7. **Charford Road** – Site soon to be under development

8. **Bromsgrove RFC**, site was considered to be too remote with inadequate access not able to accommodate the units.
9. **Aston Fields Industrial Area** – No sufficiently sized area was available that would not have a detrimental impact upon the on going use of the area for industry.
10. **Ruberry Industrial Area** – No sufficiently sized area was available that would not have a detrimental impact upon the ongoing use of the area for Industry.
11. **Stoke Prior Leisure Centre**– Site Considered suitable - Planning Application currently being considered by the Council
12. **Bromsgrove Hotel** – Site considered suitable - Planning Application currently being considered by the Council

The proposed site (along with Stoke Prior Leisure Centre and Bromsgrove Hotel) is the only physically suitable and available site which was found within the defined area (defined by the Department of Health), hence making this a very important and strategic site. It is considered that the subject application is the only site that fulfils the requirements for the provision of these additional healthcare facilities to the people of Bromsgrove and surrounding area.

Sustainability

The subject site is located close to the Ryemarket Shopping centre on a site which is already developed. The site is well served by local public transport facilities therefore reducing the need for the use of the private car by both staff and patients. Where it is necessary for staff to utilise a private car to access the site car sharing will be actively encouraged.

The use of temporary mobile units for the provision of essential additional diagnostics procedures allows the facilities to be taken into the community to directly meet demand. This mobile solution offers patients more choice and is likely to reduce the travelling time and distance to the facility for patients making the facility more sustainable, user friendly and accessible (especially to the elderly and more vulnerable groups of patients who often form a large proportion of the patients' requiring diagnostics procedures).

Design and Access Statement

As a mobile facility the design of the diagnostics unit is driven by its functional purpose. The facility is to be provided within an area of existing car parking and is of low sensitivity. Due to the temporary nature of the facility and its location within an existing car park it is considered that the siting of the temporary mobile facility will have no detrimental amenity impact upon the surrounding area.

The site does not fall within a Conservation area and is not afforded any specific protection in terms of amenity. The subject facility is fit for its medical function and purpose and is fully accessible to both wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility. It incorporates a guarded tailgate lift with a protection canopy, 1 metre wide doors, assisted WCs and an induction loop system at reception.

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Summary & Conclusions

Being a temporary, mobile facility the underlying use of the site will be able to continue largely unhindered by the subject proposals. A planning application is only necessary for the facility due to its presence on site in excess of a total of 28 days per calendar year. As a totally mobile facility, when off-site the centre will operate as at present. Great care has been taken to ensure there is no overlap between ongoing activities at the site and the presence of the facility.

The proposal forms part of the Governments National initiative for the provision of independent sector diagnostic facilities and is in accordance with the policies contained within the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.

The site is well served by public transport although adequate car parking will be available for those who have to rely upon the private car or staff who will be encouraged to car share.

The subject proposal forms part of a larger programme of mobile diagnostic facilities across the whole of the West Midlands. The facility will provide much needed diagnostic services 'to the local community within the community' making the facility convenient, accessible, user friendly and sustainable.

In support of this planning application the following documents are enclosed:

- ◆ 6 x copies of the planning application forms duly completed;
- ◆ 6 x copies of 1:1250 site location plan
- ◆ 6 x copies of unit plans
- ◆ 6 x copies of illustrative external unit details
- ◆ 6 x copies of the Mercury Health Need Statement
- ◆ 6 x copies of this covering letter (including Design & Access Statement)

I trust the details provided to you are adequate to enable the planning application to be considered in full. However, should you require any additional information or need further clarification as to the details of the proposals please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Helen Chambers
Planner

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Enc.