

Impact of Housing Developments on Primary Care in Fressingfield

Planning Applications 1648/17, 1449/17 , 1432/17

In local objections raised by residents to the three Planning Applications being considered by the Local Authority the ability of Primary Care services to cope with the increased population is cited as an area of major concern.

Currently primary care is delivered from the Fressingfield Medical Centre and a branch surgery at Stradbroke. The service is rated as "good " by the CQC and is highly thought of locally. An extended population is served with over 5500 patients currently on the lists.

50 houses for Fressingfield have recently been approved, but are not yet built and the Practice can absorb these assumed additional numbers. As the catchment area is large the impact of other potential developments at Weybread and other surrounding villages needs consideration as well as in Fressingfield itself.

There are three major problems:-

Firstly, the site at Fressingfield is very constrained and the site boundaries incapable of expansion. Limited expansion of the Centre is possible within the existing boundary, but there is insufficient space to increase the car park. Most people attend by car as there is no public transport on weekdays. There is a wide catchment area and as the surgery is a dispensing practise large numbers of people attend routinely to pick up medication. Currently the car park is too small. Attached are two recent pictures of the car park. Parking over spills onto New Street, which is already congested and is adjacent to Post Mill Lane (one of the proposed development areas)

Secondly, capital funding will be an issue. The CCG have not identified any source of money and as Fressingfield is not in a deprived area, nor has high morbidity it is very unlikely to be prioritised by the NHS. The Practice indicated that the Developers should fund the capital. No provision has been made for this in the Applications. The CIL funding indentified is insufficient to meet fully the extension needed to the primary school which is local priority. Therefore there are no funds available to increase the accommodation at the Fressingfield Medical Centre. If a new totally new Centre were needed an NHS Project Director has estimated the cost to be in excess of £10M.

Thirdly there is a recruitment crisis in the NHS in respect of Primary Care Staff. A recent recruitment drive by the NHS abroad for GPs resulted in only 38 appointments from a target of 500. (BMJ 22 August 2017)The CEO of the Local Commissioning Group describes the situation as "Challenging."

Whilst the service locally is extremely good waiting times for appointments have increased and there is a local perception that the service is under increasing pressure. This will get worse with increased demand.

In summary the provision of medical services locally is a high priority; if further developments are approved funding will be required for the extension to the Surgery and car park and importantly, it may just not be possible to recruit.

Pam Castro

20th October 2017

