

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

13 JUNE 2019

Application for consolidation of two pharmacies in Alnwick

Report of: Cath McEvoy-Carr, Director of Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education

Cabinet Member: Cllr Veronica Jones, Portfolio Holder Adult Wellbeing and Health

Purpose of report

To inform the Health and Wellbeing Board of the circumstances surrounding the application to consolidate two pharmacies in Alnwick, enabling the Board to make an appropriate decision

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board supports the application to consolidate the two Boots UK pharmacies in Alnwick.

Link to Corporate Plan

This paper links to the Living and Connecting components of the Corporate Plan.

Background

Alnwick is a thriving market town and tourism hub in the North of Northumberland with a population just over 8,000. It is surrounded by rural areas and is close to the coastal town of Alnmouth. It has reasonable transport links with the Newcastle conurbation via the A1 road, and by train. It also has an above average number of over 65s.

Alnwick Medical Group is a 10 doctor (6 partner) practice formed in Summer 2017 from the merging of The Bondgate Practice and Infirmary Drive Medical Group. It has a patient list of about 20,000 and has 3 branch surgeries. The practice covers a large geographical area of rural Northumberland, incorporating Bamburgh in the North to Warkworth in the South and from the coast stretching west to villages such as Glanton and Powburn.

There are currently three pharmacies in Alnwick, the two Boots stores in the town centre, and a Well pharmacy situated within the surgery premises. The Well Pharmacy has no retail floor space, and offers a very limited range of over the counter (OTC) medicines. There is also a branch of Superdrug adjacent to the Bondgate Pharmacy, which stocks an extensive range of general sales list medicines.

The current direction of travel of NHS England is to encourage consolidation of closely located community pharmacies, to reduce the number of surplus pharmacies in England, provided the consolidation does not produce a gap in pharmaceutical services.

Boots UK have applied to close their pharmacy at 10 Paikes Street and move services to their larger shop at 50-52 Bondgate, about 20 yards away. The premises at 50-52 Bondgate provide more services and longer opening hours including Sundays and Public Holidays. It also has an upper floor which it plans to convert to provide non-patient facing services and medication aids. Nursing home work would be transferred to another branch. The proposal indicates that all other services currently provided in both branches would be provided at Bondgate following the consolidation. There will be adequate space within the dispensary for sufficient work stations to dispense acute prescriptions, once the work on the upper floor has been completed, and the medication boxes are filled in the dedicated dispensing area upstairs. Staff currently employed at the Paikes Street branch have been offered alternative positions, mainly at Bondgate and therefore there should be adequate staffing to ensure delivery of the workload which is transferred.

Both branches are on a busy main road with no dedicated parking. Currently both branches provide home deliveries to the housebound and those with mobility issues. This would continue to be provided following the consolidation. Patients will still have access to other providers of pharmacy services within 1 mile, namely Well Pharmacy at the GP surgery.

The recommendation is that consolidating these two pharmacies onto a single site should not be opposed because:

- The two sites are very closely located (20 yards apart) and are served by the same car parks and bus stops.
- As the Bondgate pharmacy has longer opening hours, patients will not experience a reduction in opening hours.
- Boots UK has undertaken to provide all services currently provided by both sites.
- Patients will still have choice of pharmacies within 1.0 mile.
- Northumberland County Council PNA (2018) states that there is currently adequate provision of pharmaceutical services, with the scope for some mergers.

Consolidation of these two pharmacies would leave Alnwick with two pharmacies; one co-located with a GP surgery. Superdrug on Bondgate stock an extensive range of GSL medicines, but cannot stock Pharmacy Only over the counter medicines. The Paikes Street branch will close on 5th October 2019 as part of a planned reduction in branch numbers by Boots Head Office. In the current financial climate within community pharmacy it is unlikely that a town the size of Alnwick can support three pharmacies.

Implications

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| Policy | N/A |
| Finance and value for money | N/A |
| Legal | The HWB has a statutory requirement to consider mergers of community pharmacies and take a view as to whether this still provides sufficient services for the county or not. |
| Procurement | N/A |
| Human Resources | N/A |
| Property | N/A |
| Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Risk Assessment | N/A |
| Crime & Disorder | N/A |
| Customer Consideration | The needs of residents accessing community pharmacy services in Alnwick have been considered |
| Carbon reduction | N/A |
| Wards | Alnwick and surrounding wards |

Background papers:

None

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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| | initials |
| Monitoring Officer/Legal | N/A |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | N/A |
| Relevant Executive Director | CMC |
| Chief Executive | |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | VJ |

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