

Case Study

Securing a new form of planning for a surplus site, boosting its disposal value to deliver best value to the NHS.

ECCLESHILL CLINIC, BRADFORD

Background

Context:

Former clinic, declared surplus by local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Customers:

- Bradford District CCG
- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

NHSPS representatives:

- Evelyn Jones and Anna McComb, Town Planners
- Phil Scott, Transaction Manager

The Challenge

The site was declared surplus by the local CCG in July 2019, meaning NHS Property Services (NHSPS) teams were tasked with preparing the site to be sold, and ensuring we obtained best value for the NHS in this transaction.

The area typically has low property values, and the best way to increase the site's value would be to secure planning permission that would allow a buyer to change the use of the site, for example from healthcare to residential. However, planning policy often restricts this as local authorities dislike changing use of a former surgery or clinic, want to retain what they class as community asset for community use.

The Solution

The NHSPS Town Planning team – the only dedicated town planning team in the NHS – decided to pursue a Permission in Principle (PiP) route for planning. The benefits of PiP is the reduced application time of five weeks, lower application costs (compared to submitting a full or outline application) and fewer validation requirements saving time and money in due diligence. PiP is only applicable for residential schemes under 10 units and as such the team decided to utilise this route to establish the principle of residential on the site.

To further persuade the council, NHSPS teams highlighted how the release of this community facility would – in this instance – provide the opportunity for funds to feed back into the NHS and ultimately allowing for investment in future health facilities.

The Result

Stage 1 permission in principle has now been granted. Our Transactions team has taken the site to market as a lower risk purchase, boosting its value and opening it to a wider pool of potential buyers.

Despite PiP planning now being in its third year, it has so far seen minimal uptake in the planning world. To help drive usage of PiP across the NHS estate, the NHSPS Town Planning team have produced a **guide** for our customers and wider NHS partners, and are keen to discuss any opportunities you might have.