



*Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles & District*

16 September 2021

DDL Care Services
3Rowan Court Suite 3
Cavalry Park
Peebles
EH45 9BU

Dear Ms Bradley

Part change of use of ground floor to class 10 and alterations to form additional office space from attic floor
Ref. No: 21/00486/FUL

To Whom it May Concern
Support for applicant on appeal.

Peebles and District Community Council have been asked by DDL Care Services Limited to provide support for their appeal. This writer has reviewed the documentation provided on the SBC Planning Portal, reviewed documentation provided by DDL, researched the quality of provision provided to clients and clarified some aspects of the history and plans with staff. Consequently, we believe that DDL are worthy of support.

Setting aside the policies identified in the SBC Planning Officer's report (ED1 & PMD3) there appear significant weaknesses and anomalies in the officer's conclusions. Firstly, there is a statement that to support the proposal "would set an undesirable precedent". The precedent has already been set several times through past decisions. 2008: Training Centre approved, 2015: Beauty therapy approved, 2019: Gymnasium approved, 2015: Dental surgery approved, 2016: Nursery approved. None of the foregoing applications could have been considered industrial. The report states that there will be a loss of amenity for the future; this is manifestly wrong. There will be a conversion of presently unused space into usable space in the attic. Internal structure of the ground floor can always be converted back to any layout that any future business may require. However, it is important to recognise that DDL own the building and have no plans to move.

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Forward Planning would apparently have expected the applicant to search for alternative premises to take their plans forward, why? The business exists on the site and DDL own it, they like the site, and moving premises would be costly and disruptive. Common sense dictates that if an existing premises can be made to work, then that would seem to be the correct strategic direction to take. This is particularly true where the business owns the facility.

Returning to Policy ED1, the report identifies "that other commercial activities may be considered if they enhance the quality of the business park as an employment location". Discussions have identified that the plans going forward allow for the creation of approximately 10 additional staff. This is surely to be welcomed.

Policy PMD3 allows for "an alternative use that offers significant community benefits that are considered to outweigh the need to maintain the original proposed use". I doubt anyone could argue that DDL Care Services are not providing a vital service to their existing clients. The proposals are designed to expand this care provision and in so doing relieve pressure on NHS services and provide an alternative to those services historically provided by Scottish Borders Council and the NHS that have been withdrawn.

The Planning Officer in his conclusions, states: "The change of use would lead ultimately to the loss of allocated business and industrial land" and to reiterate, this is patently incorrect. There is no loss. The site is owned by the applicant and used as offices. There is no current industrial use to lose. The building is to be enhanced and put to additional use including an expected increase in employment of staff. In the unlikely event that DDL sold the building, any future business would wish to tailor the facility to their needs and would presumably, if required apply for consent to do so. Where then is there a loss?

Yours Faithfully



Peter Maudsley
Planning Convener