Westcott NDP Hearing

23rd September 2026

In seeking to address the Examiner's Agenda Item 1, the Village Forum has the following comments to make:

1. The aim of the Village Forum and the broad purpose of the Westcott NDP is to safeguard the future of the village as a thriving, largely self-sufficient, community, and to minimise the threats to any further loss of facilities and services which has been evidenced over the last 40 years.
2. The WVF acknowledges that during the consultation stage an error was made by not including Standard Life (the registered owner of the Riverbank Surgery building) among the list of some 250 statutory consultees. Attempts to rectify that omission have floundered because of unfortunate misunderstandings.
3. The WVF acknowledges that the wording of Policy 7 regarding the safeguarding of Community assets does not distinguish clearly enough the safeguarding of the provision of Medical and Dispensing Services to the village from the physical property (Riverbank) from which those services are provided.
4. However, the "safeguarding" of those services is inextricably linked to the property from which they are provided. The intention of Policy 7 was, and is, intended to apply until such time as an alternative premises could be found. It is not, and never was, intended as a permanent restriction.
5. In two village surveys over the last 10 years and in the recent MVDC Focussed consultation, the DMP medical and dispensing services are seen as highly valued and extremely important to the (increasingly aging) population of the village and surrounding area.
6. The WVF believes that resolving the lease arrangements relating to the Riverbank property is a matter between the Guilder family and Standard Life, and Dorking Medical Practice and the NHS/Surrey and Sussex Integrated Care Board. The WVF does not have any interest other than to ensure that within the NDP, assets and services are safeguarded for the long-term future of the village as a thriving community.
7. More should be done to find an alternative premises (temporary or permanent) with easy access for the residents of the village and immediate surrounding areas.

The Westcott Village Forum is ready to answer any questions from Mr Stebbing to clarify any points in this statement.

Tim Way

Chairman, Westcott Village Forum

Friday 18th September 2026