

# Installation of Self-Service Automated Pharmacy Collection Machine at 1 Alpin Road

## KEY INFORMATION

**Ward** Coldsid

**Address**

1 Alpin Road  
Dundee DD3 6HB

**Applicant**

Mr Mark Aggleton  
13 Winton Drive  
Glasgow G12 0PZ

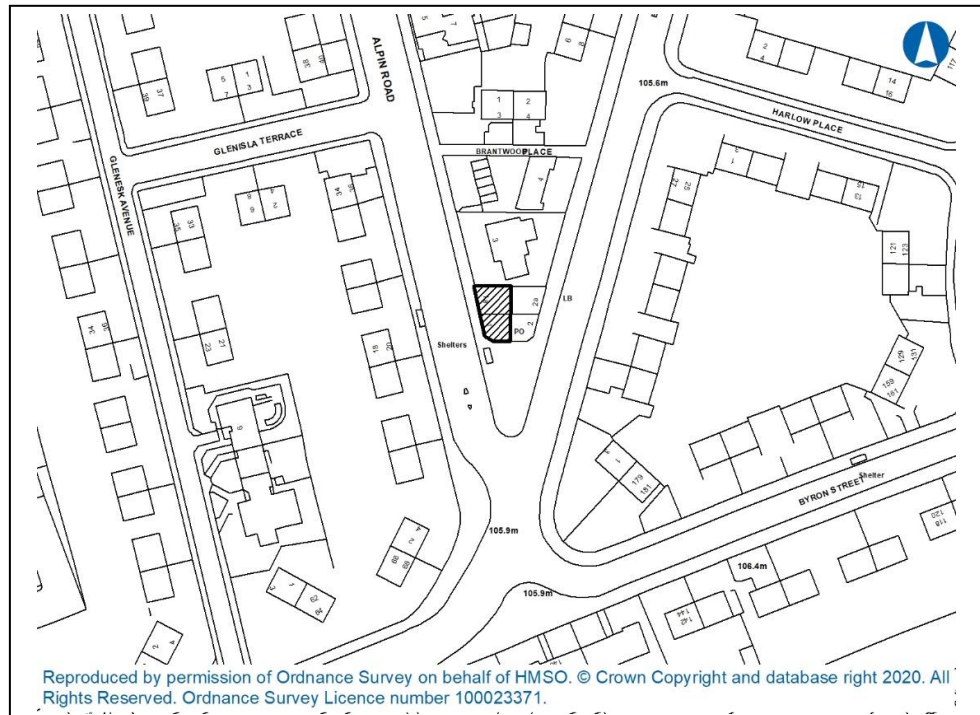
**Agent**

Mr Ian Hunter

**Registered** 9 Nov 2020

**Report by Head of Planning & Economic Development**

**Contact:** Siobhan Johnson



## SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Planning permission is sought for the installation of a self-service automated pharmacy collection machine with associated external alterations.
- The application is solely for planning permission for the external alterations to the pharmacy window. No change of use is required as the machine would operate as part of the existing pharmacy use.
- The collection machine would be mounted in the window of the existing pharmacy and enable the collection of medicines in a similar way to a parcel collection locker and offer additional flexibility for customers to collect pre-ordered prescriptions outwith normal operating hours.
- The application is in accordance with the Development Plan.
- The statutory neighbour notification process was undertaken and the application advertised in the local press. 11 letters of objection have been received.
- In accordance with Dundee City Council's scheme of delegation, this application is to be determined by the Planning Committee following a request by a local member and because 11 valid written objections have been received.
- More details can be found at <http://idoxwam.dundee.gov.uk/idoxpa-web/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QJJ5LSGCKZH00>

## RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to justify refusal of planning permission. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be **APPROVED**.

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## 1 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

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- 1.2 Planning permission is sought for the installation of an automated prescription collection machine on the west façade of the existing pharmacy. The application is solely for the external alterations to the pharmacy's window. No change of use is required as the machine would operate as part of the existing pharmacy use.
- 1.3 Similar in appearance to an automated teller machine (ATM)/cash machine, this vandal proof, secure unit would replace one of the pharmacy's windows. It would measure 1.8 metres in height by 1 metre wide externally and would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It would be covered by the pharmacy's existing CCTV system.
- 1.4 The existing window adjacent to the entrance on the west elevation would be removed and the unit would be installed. It would be surrounded by a white coloured aluminium panel similar to an ATM. It would feature the business logo, a touch screen and collection flap. The collection flap would be automatically locked when customers are not collecting the prescriptions. The machine would have a capacity for 180 dispensing bags.
- 1.5 It would enable an automated prescription collection service allowing customers to pick up their medicines when it is convenient for them. The machine would function in a similar way to a parcel collection locker. Customers would be given a one-time code which they would use to access their prescription.
- 1.6 The machine is principally for the collection of repeat prescriptions. The machine would not be loaded with Schedule One or Schedule Two drugs (e.g. drugs not used medicinally, opiates and major stimulants). Customers who are taking medicines, such as controlled drugs, would still collect them from inside the pharmacy as this allows for customer-pharmacist interaction.
- 1.7 All of the existing methods of collecting prescriptions would remain as customers could still go into the pharmacy and speak to the staff or have their prescription delivered. For customers who work unsociable hours, shift workers, and commuters, the collection unit would provide the option of being able to collect prescriptions at a time convenient for them.
- 1.8 The applicant has submitted the following in support of the application:
  - Supporting Statement.

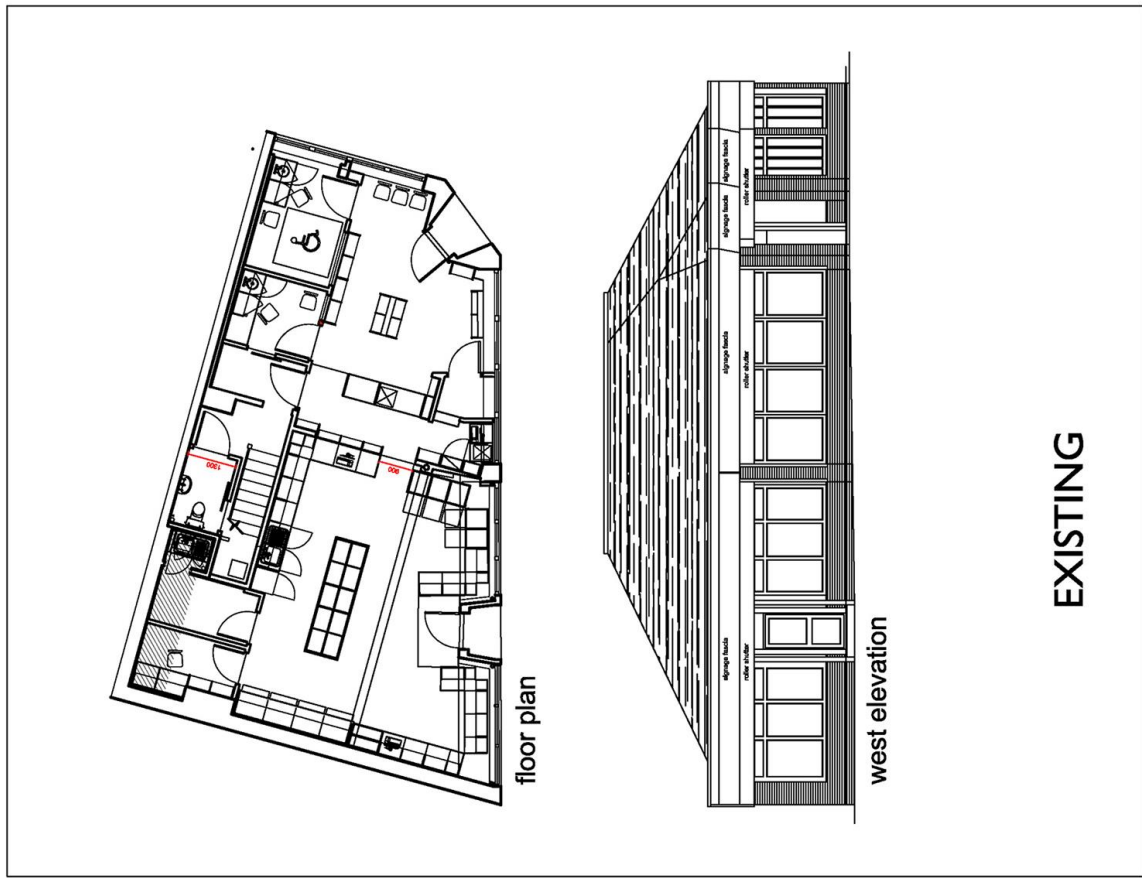
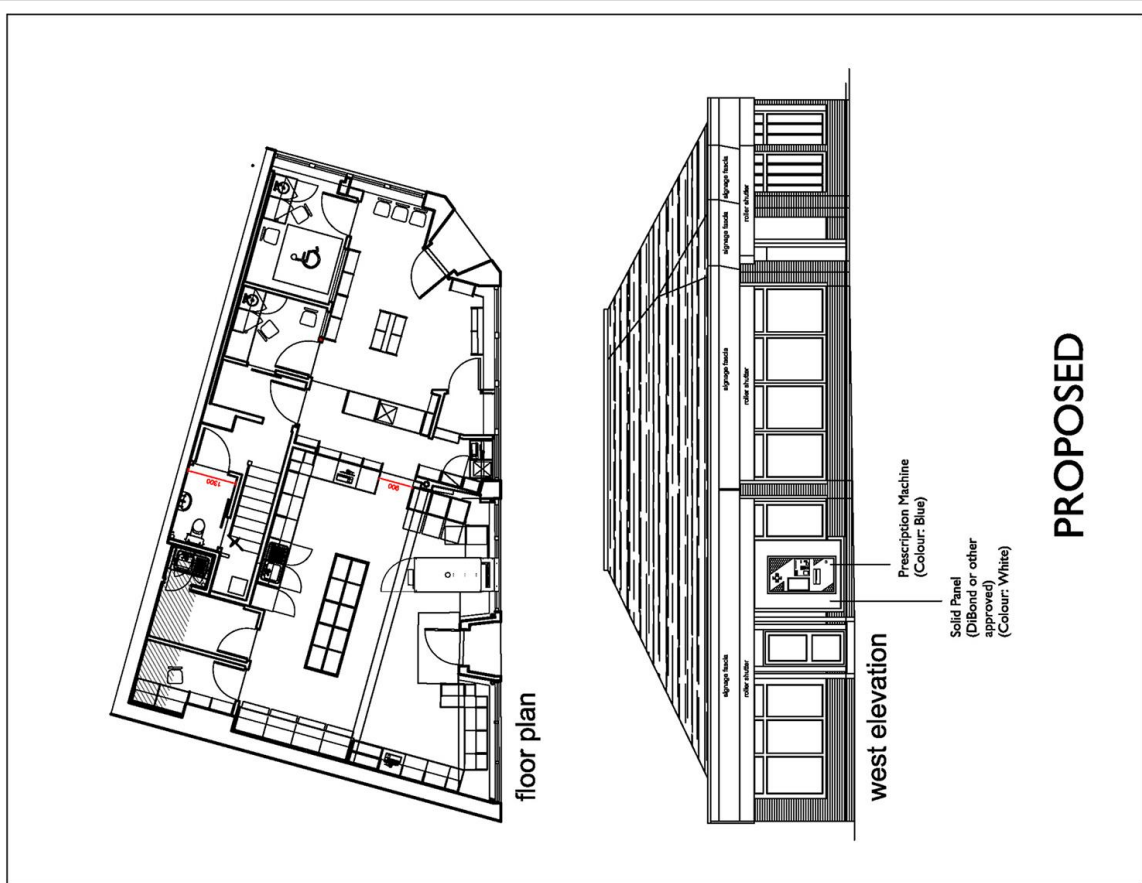
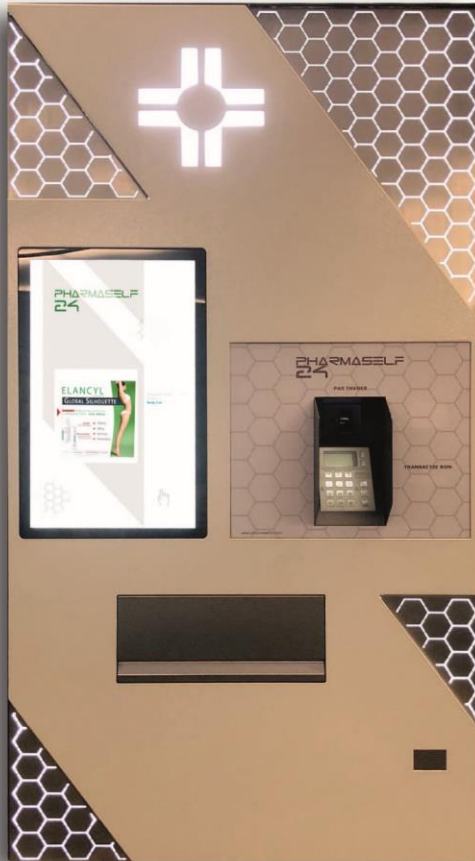


Figure 1 – Existing and Proposed Plans



### Technical information MULTI



- 24 Touch screen
- Receipt printer
- Credit card reader
- Scanner: max. A4 format, 350 mm/sec (optional)

#### Electrical Consumption

- 140 Watt

#### Weight

- 590 kg

#### Storage Configuration

Box	130x100x175 mm	110 pcs.
Box	150x100x275 mm	55 pcs.
Box	250x140x275 mm	16 pcs.

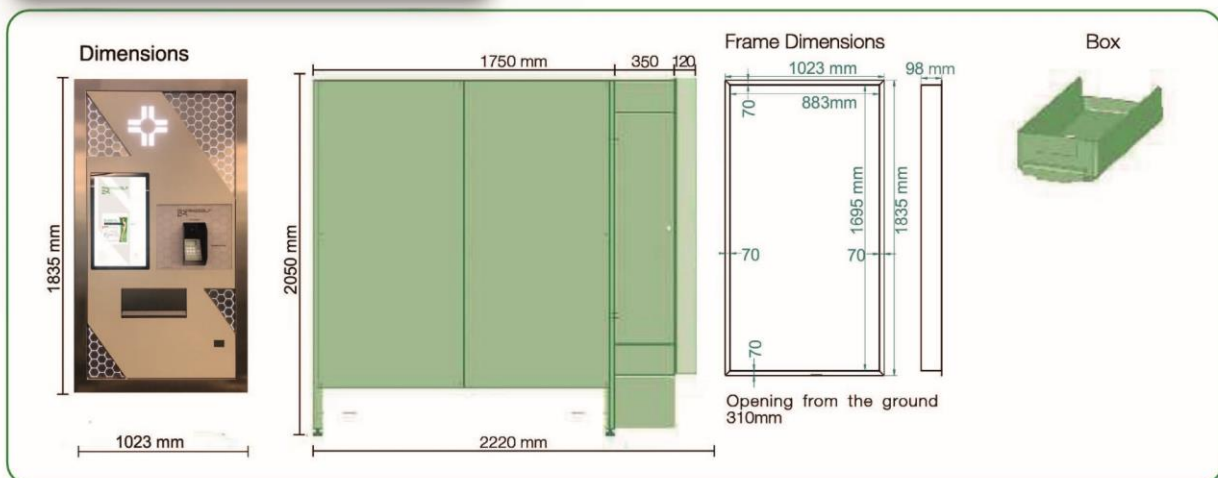


Figure 2 – Proposed Dispensing Machine

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## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

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- 2.1 The application site is located to the east of Alpin Road and west of Brantwood Avenue. It is a single storey corner commercial unit with large areas of glazing on both the east and west elevations. The unit currently operates as a pharmacy.
- 2.2 The site is adjacent to a main post office accessed from Brantwood Avenue. There are bus stops directly to the south and west of the pharmacy. On street parking is available within the immediate area. This is predominantly a residential area with a variety of house types and designs.



Figure 3 – Alpin Road elevation

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### 3 POLICY BACKGROUND

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3.1 The following plans and policies are considered to be of direct relevance:

**TAYPlan 2016-2036**

The application raises no issues of relevance.

**DUNDEE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019**

Policy 1: High Quality Design and Placemaking

Policy 39: Environmental Protection

3.2 There are no other plans, policies and non-statutory statements that are considered to be of direct relevance.

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### 4 SITE HISTORY

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4.1 There is no relevant planning history.

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### 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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5.1 The statutory neighbour notification procedure has been undertaken and the application advertised in the local press.

5.2 11 objections have been received raising the following valid material grounds:

- this is a residential area and as such is not an appropriate location;
- increase in traffic, noise, pollution and associated health issues;
- increase in anti-social behaviour;
- no evidence of benefits to the local residents;
- closure of pharmacy;
- 24/7 facility; and
- no meeting and unreasonable timescales due to Covid.

5.3 These matters are considered in the material considerations section of this report.

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### 6 CONSULTATIONS

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6.1 No consultations were received.

## 7 DETERMINING ISSUES

- 7.1 **Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1997 as amended provides that an application for planning permission (other than for a national development) shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.**

### THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The provisions of the Development Plan relevant to the determination of this application are specified in the Policy Background section above.

#### TAYPLAN 2016 – 2036

- 7.2 The application raises no issues of relevance.

#### DUNDEE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019

- 7.3 **Policy 1: High Quality Design and Placemaking** - seeks to ensure that all development proposals follow a design-led approach to sustainable, high quality place making. Appendix 1 of the Local Development Plan seeks to ensure the implementation of the six qualities of successful place in the design and layout of new developments. New development should respect the character and amenity of a place, create a sense of community and identity, enhance connectivity and incorporate creative approaches to urban design, landscaping and green infrastructure which are appropriate to the local context and scale and nature of the development.
- 7.4 The application is solely for planning permission for the external alterations to the pharmacy window. No change of use is required as the machine would operate as part of the existing pharmacy use.
- 7.5 It is proposed to remove an area of glazing on the west elevation and to install the prescription collection machine. It would be surrounded with a white aluminium panel. The machine would be installed through the existing building façade with an outer steel frame, which would be attached and bolted directly onto the frame of the unit. This outer frame would create a secure fit into the building with the frame, or machine, having no visible fixings on the outside.
- 7.6 The collection machine would be of a contemporary appearance, using coloured metal to reflect the pharmacy's branding. It would appear similar to an ATM cash machine which are found on many convenience stores across the city. The proposed collection machine is of a design, scale and finish that is in keeping with the existing commercial units.
- 7.7 The operation of the collection machine would be similar to internet retailer collection points, which provide a secure environment for customers to collect parcels. These are also widely available across the city.
- 7.8 **The proposal is in accordance with Policy 1.**
- 7.9 **Policy 39: Environmental Protection** requires that new development in close proximity to existing sources of noise, vibration or light pollution will need to demonstrate that it can achieve a satisfactory level of amenity without impacting on the viability of existing businesses or uses.
- 7.10 The application is solely for planning permission for the external alterations to the pharmacy window. Similar to an ATM cash machine, the collection machine would have a colour

touchscreen. A small light sensor would be fitted on the front of the unit which would monitor the ambient light. As dusk falls, the front screen gets less bright. During the day it would emit 1,000 lumens (so people - especially the elderly can clearly see the screen in bright daylight) but at night, the brightness would reduce to 600 lumens (which is sufficient for use on darker evenings). This level of illumination is considered to be acceptable in this location.

- 7.11 The pharmacy is located within a mixed-use area containing post office, shops, takeaways, schools and housing. There is a bus stop located immediately adjacent the pharmacy.
- 7.12 Whilst it is recognised that the proposal would result in some additional members of the public visiting the premises at different times of the day, the applicant has advised that where these units have been installed elsewhere, the vast majority of customers collect from the collection unit during the pharmacy's normal opening hours.
- 7.13 It is also noted that the availability of the collection unit outwith normal opening hours may actually spread customer use out over a longer period of time, potentially reducing customer traffic at normal peak times.
- 7.14 The use of the machine outwith normal opening hours is not considered to create noise and disturbance that would be significantly detrimental to the amenity of this mixed-use area.
- 7.15 Due to the nature of the proposal, it is considered that it would not result in significant detrimental noise, vibration, odour, emissions to air, dust or light pollution.
- 7.16 The proposal is in accordance with Policy 39.**
- 7.17 It is concluded that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan.**

## **MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.18 The material considerations to be considered are as follows:

### **A - SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 7.19 The applicant has provided a supporting statement which states the principle of the prescription collection is to allow the collection of regular repeat medicines for people on long term stable conditions, such as inhalers, who are comfortable with managing their treatments. The unit automates the manual 'handing out process' and the pharmacy team is still able to talk to customers if required.
- 7.20 The benefits to the existing pharmacy are that this is more efficient, reducing queuing time and staff resources while offering more convenience to customers. This allows pharmacists to spend more time with customers who need it and delivering new services, to the benefit of the community. The benefits to the customers are reduced waiting times, negating wasted journeys and allowing the convenience to collect medicines when they want (for example, on their way to or from work, shift workers, carers and on Sundays etc). This is particularly useful for repeat prescriptions and working customers who are unable to collect prescriptions during opening hours.
- 7.21 The applicant has stated that the machine would not be loaded with Schedule One or Schedule Two drugs (eg drugs not used medicinally, opiates and major stimulants). In addition, medicines that fall under the safe custody requirements would also not be loaded into the collection machine as they require to be dispensed face to face.



- 7.22 The machine would be covered by the pharmacy's existing CCTV system. CCTV signage will also be installed as a further deterrent. The applicant advises that numerous machines have been installed across several countries and they are not aware of any break-ins.
- 7.23 The machines have operated in numerous premises throughout the current pandemic and have proved invaluable in providing a contact-free and continuous service, supporting the NHS services and providing an invaluable community benefit while negating footfall inside buildings and reducing face-to-face meetings.
- 7.24 To date, there have been over 400 such units installed in the Netherlands and approaching 50 currently in the UK.
- 7.25 The collection machine would free up additional time for staff to speak with customers in an already busy environment. This is in line with Scottish Government initiatives like the NHS Pharmacy First. This initiative will allow detail consultations and enhanced interactions with customers leading to referrals, advice and pharmacy prescribing for a multitude of minor ailments. The thrust of this initiative is to encourage customers, where appropriate, to attend pharmacies before other health services eg GPs. Freeing up time for pharmacy staff is a key component to make this work. From the data provided by Pharmaself24 on the machines previously installed, around 80% of prescriptions, collected from the machine, are collected when the pharmacy is open.
- 7.26 Having considered the information provided in the Supporting Statement, it is agreed that the installation of the prescription collection machine would allow greater flexibility for those customers who are unable to attend the pharmacy during normal business hours which takes pressure from other services. The reduction in customers entering the pharmacy if they so wish is beneficial during the current Covid situation. In addition, the fact that the pharmacy would still offer all the existing services is welcomed.

#### **A – REPRESENTATIONS**

- 7.27 11 objections have been received raising the following valid material grounds.
- this is a residential area and as such is not an appropriate location;
  - increase in traffic, noise, pollution and associated health issues;
  - increase in anti-social behaviour;
  - no evidence of benefits to the local residents;
  - 24/7 facility; and
  - no meeting and unreasonable timescales due to covid.

The grounds of objection were considered and assessed as follows.

- 7.28 **Objection** - this is a residential area and as such is not an appropriate location
- 7.29 **Response** – the pharmacy is located within a mixed-use area containing post office, shops, takeaways, schools and housing. As discussed in the assessment of the proposal in terms of Policy 1 and Policy 39, this proposal is similar to both an ATM and a parcel collection locker. Both of these types of developments are located at a variety of locations throughout the City, including residential areas. The proposed collection machine is considered to be an appropriate development in this mixed-use location. In addition, the existing pharmacy is

located adjacent to a post office. As such, this is a complementary use which would encourage sustainable journeys at this location.

7.30 **Objection** - increase in traffic, noise, pollution and associated health issues.

7.31 **Response** – as discussed in the assessment of the proposal in terms of Policy 39, due to the nature of the proposal and the manner in which it would be used the collection machine is not considered to create noise and disturbance that would be significantly detrimental to the amenity of this mixed-use area.

7.32 **Objection** - increase in anti-social behaviour.

7.33 **Response** – the application is solely for planning permission for the external alterations to the pharmacy window. The proposal would operate in a similar way to a parcel collection locker where a variety of different products are left to be collected. A number of these collection lockers have been permitted at a variety of locations throughout the city. There is no evidence that the collection machine itself would lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour.

7.34 **Objection** - no evidence of benefits to the local residents.

7.35 **Response** – it is intended the proposed collection unit would serve those customers who are unable to access the pharmacy during normal business hours or who do not wish to queue within the pharmacy. It would benefit a wide variety of people as there would be a reduction of queues within the pharmacy and people would be able to collect their prescriptions at their convenience.

7.36 **Objection** – omission of 24/7 facility (from the description of development)

7.37 **Response** – the supporting information provided by the applicant clearly states that the proposal would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

7.38 **Objection** – no tenants meeting and unreasonable timescales due to Covid

7.39 **Response** - whilst many services have been affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic, Scottish Government guidance is to maintain as much of an operating planning system as possible, to publish documents and information online, and enable third parties to submit representations electronically. The Scottish Government also advised that authorities may wish to consider allowing additional flexibility with timescales.

7.40 In accordance with that guidance, Dundee City Council has published all details of the application online, accepted both electronic and written objections and allowed additional time for parties to submit representations.

7.41 The issues raised in the representations have been considered and addressed in the report and the grounds raised are not of sufficient weight to justify refusal of planning permission.

7.42 **It is concluded that there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to justify refusal of planning permission.**

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## 8 CONCLUSION

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8.1 The application for the installation of a self-service automated pharmacy collection machine with associated elevation amendments is in accordance with the Development Plan and would have no significant adverse impact on the character or amenity of the surrounding area. There

are no material considerations of sufficient weight that would justify refusal of planning permission. Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

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## **9 RECOMMENDATION**

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9.1 It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED.