

PLANNING STATEMENT

Change of use from C3 (Dwellinghouse) to C2 (Residential Care Home) for the care of one child.

65 Highfields Road, Hinckley, LE10 1UT

Introduction

Yasini Mfunda has been instructed to prepare this Planning Statement in support of a planning application to change the use of the former dwelling class C3 into a residential care home class C2 for the care of one child.

This Planning Statement has been prepared to assist the Council in its determination of the planning application.

In terms of the structure of the report, Section 2 contains important background information about the site, including a description of the application site; a review of the planning history and details of designations affecting the site. Section 3 provides a statement of need for the change of use. Section 4 contains a description of the application proposals. Section 5 provides a summary of the planning policy context applicable to the site, with specific reference to national and local planning policies. Section 6 contains our conclusions.

Site and building description

The application site is in Hinckley De Montfort ward/electoral division, which is in the constituency of Bosworth.

The building is a two-storey dwelling house with 2 bedrooms and a bathroom on the upper level and a ground floor with a living room and kitchen.

The site is surrounded by residential units. It is conveniently located close to public transport and shops and recreational areas. The closest major supermarket is 0.38 miles away. The nearest bus stop is only 0.09 miles away, the train station is 0.74 miles away, and the closest school is 0.24 miles away from the site.

Statement of need

Information available online (via public domain and council website) showed that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has set out a series of actions to make sure that the council can provide placements for all children who need care.

These resources emphasize on the importance to provide with a long-term stability and minimise the number of times each child changes placement and the importance of creating residential placement located within the county to minimise the damaging effects of additional placement moves for already vulnerable children.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council population has risen steadily, and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is aiming to reduce the high portion of children placed out of the county.

Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008) places a general duty on local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area.

Application proposal

The application seeks to change the use of the former dwelling class C3 into a residential care home class C2 for the care of one child to offer an alternative housing accommodation in Hinckley and Bosworth. The aim is to provide a safe, nurturing environment for child/young person who is disadvantaged, to allow the child/young person to continue to live a normal life.

It is important to note, that the care home will be run as much as possible as a “normal” family home. The child will integrate with the local community and attend local school where possible. We do not anticipate there being any additional noise, parking requirements, frequency of visitors or disruption to the neighbourhood to what is currently there or would be expected from any normal family home.

The existing property has the facilities, layout, and services of a large 2 bedrooms dwellinghouse and provides an environment as close as possible to a traditional family home.

The property will be home for 1 child/young person in a 10 - 17 age range that is unable to live with natural parents for a wide variety of reasons and consequently is brought into care. Children/young people referrals will be subject to a through screening process to assess the suitability of the placement. The child/young person with low risk will then be offered placement.

The child/young person will be registered at the local school and will be taken to school by carers.

The exterior and interior of the building will remain unchanged with improvements to the external landscape areas.

The property is in a sustainable location, and we estimate that the trip volume will not be increased in comparison with a family home with 2 parents and 1 child/young person. We have compared the following scenarios comparison considering that the school is in a walking distance:

Time	Scenario 1 - Family home	Scenario 2 - Care home
8:00	Parents to work: 2 trips	Carer shift: 2 trips
18:00	Parent from work: 2 trips	Carer shift: 2 trips
Additional trips	Going out: 2 trips	Going out/ visits/ services: 2 trips
Total trips	6 trips	6 trips

Therefore, the proposal will not cause any noise or disturbance to the adjoining properties.

Planning History and Policy

A search of Hinckley and Bosworth borough council's website has identified the following planning applications relating to the site:

- Application ref: 76/01800/4M – erection of garage - granted on 11 Jan 1977.

There are no conditions attached to any of the above permissions that would preclude the dwelling from being used as proposed in this application.

The site is not within a greenbelt area or a conservation area and is not a listed building.

There are also no Tree Preservation Order's (TPO), or SSSI's in or around the curtilage of the proposal site.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") (July 2021) states in para.8 that there is a need for the planning system to perform several roles, including:

"a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being".

This proposal would provide a much-needed facility to meet a community need to protect and provide for children requiring a home. The proposed home is in an area which is appropriate for the proposed use and will provide a facility that will reflect a local community needs and which will support the health, social and cultural well-being of a more vulnerable section of the community.

At paragraph 60 sets out the objective of boosting not only the supply of homes but also accommodation to meet the needs of groups with specific housing requirements.

Section 8 of the Framework, Promoting Healthy Communities, sets out Government Policy regarding this form of proposal. Paragraph 92 states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.

This proposal will provide a vulnerable section of the community with a vital facility which will contribute to creating a healthy, inclusive community and play an invaluable role in providing these children with a life as close to the conventional family life that one can reasonably wish to expect.

Paragraph 11 establishes a presumption in favour of the grant of planning permission for sustainable development that accords with the development plan.

The development plan highlights in Paragraph 62 that "the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)."

Local Plan

The application site falls under the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan, adopted in February 2022. The vision and strategic objectives (7)

- 7.7 Bungalows should form part of the mix in appropriate circumstances where there is evidence of a local need. The type of circumstances where bungalows will be appropriate include locations where there is evidence of under-occupancy of large houses and rural locations where low-density housing suits the character. There is evidence in some Neighbourhood Plan areas that older people could be tempted to down-size and release larger houses to the market if smaller bungalows were available locally. Specialist accommodation for older people will not be expected to provide the full range of sizes of dwellings expected of other developments.
- 7.14 Evidence shows that in general, Hinckley & Bosworth has similar levels of disability compared with other areas, however an ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase substantially in the future, so new housing will have to meet required accessibility standards.
- 7.34 There may be instances where affordable accommodation is required to support the needs of specific groups in one location, such as cluster homes for people with learning disabilities or mental health issues. Where evidence of such a need exists, provision will be supported as part of the affordable housing offer where self-contained units can be delivered, which can be converted back to general needs housing if the specialist accommodation is no longer needed in the future. Information on the type of support to be delivered as part of the scheme should be identified as part of the request for the provision to be delivered in preference to general needs accommodation.
- 7.35 To help meet the identified affordable housing need, alongside affordable housing secured through developer contributions schemes for 100% affordable housing in the borough will be supported. It will be expected that any affordable housing scheme will provide a mix of affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership on site.

There is no specific policy within the saved policies of the Hinckley and Bosworth borough council Local Plan that apply to the specific development proposed, i.e., a change of use from C3 to C2, however, the fundamental policy, in this case, is BE3 Protection of residential amenity.

Policy BE3 and the associated text contained within the plan acknowledges that development may have some impact on its neighbours, but it is important to ensure that this impact is reasonable in relation to the benefits of the development. It has already been identified that the proposed development will have significant benefits for vulnerable members of the community and the policy advocates that these benefits must therefore be weighed in the planning balance against any effects of amenity. The proposed change of use however will have relatively little impact on its neighbours.

As stated previously, there will be no external changes to the property and internally the changes will be very limited. The property will continue to function as a dwelling as it has done since its initial construction.

Children Act

Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008) places a general duty on local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area.

Conclusions

The proposal is to change the use of the former dwelling class C3 into a residential care home class C2 for the care of 1 child/young person. This is a necessary community facility that will help to achieve the demand of care for vulnerable child/young person in a fostering manner in the county and provide an opportunity to positively emulate the normality of conventional family life for a child/young person without a home. The proposals are fully supported by the local policy, and it will become an asset to reduce the demand for children care homes in Hinckley and Bosworth borough council.

The proposal will not change the existing building and will not cause any adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Taking the above into account the applicants respectfully requests that planning permission is granted.