



PLANNING STATEMENT

4 The Nook, Markfield, Leicestershire LE67 9WE

Proposed Change of Use to Childrens' Residential Care Home

Introduction

This statement accompanies a planning application for a proposed Childrens' Residential Care Home at the above address, and has been written to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Proposal

The proposal would provide medium to long term accommodation for just one child aged between 8-17 years of age. This range is broad as it enables the applicant to look at the individual young person and make an assessment of their needs and whether they can help them in one of their homes. They typically take children that have been removed from the care of their parents due to them being abused/neglected and the applicant provides therapeutic services to help them get over the traumas of their earlier childhood. This longer-term arrangement provides stability to the residents and enables them to integrate properly into the community and build strong relationships with their carers -the resident children would be those who have been removed from care from their families.

The running of this care home would be undertaken as close as possible to that of a normal dwellinghouse. Any staff training or meetings would generally take place off-site and the children would also visit healthcare professionals off-site as per a normal family operation (i.e. doctors, dentists, etc.). As well as the children being placed in the local schools in the catchment area, they would also utilise services and facilities in the surrounding area.

It is important to note that the suitability of the property would be fully assessed in order to match the types of residents that could reside there. Factors would include nature of the surrounding community, proximity to other residential care homes etc.

Planning Policy Background

The provision of residential childcare for children is largely delivered in the UK through homes of six or less children. Indeed, Ofsted (the regulator) who identified in their report entitled 'Children's Social Care in England 2019' that the demand for care homes has not kept pace with demand and that children's homes providing care for between 3 - 4 children were the most common form of children's home in England as of March 2019 however care homes for between 1 – 2 children are the third most common type of care home (behind care homes for 5 – 6 children) and therefore small home for 1-2 children provide a substantial contribution to the overall care home provision.

On this basis, the proposal complies with paragraph 92 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that ***“planning ... decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction ... are safe and accessible ... [and] enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs”***.

A review of similar planning applications and applied policy within the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth has found that previous decisions (including appeal finding **APP/K2420/X/11/2155849**) have concluded that even if a change of use is deemed to occur, the proposal would only constitute a material change needing planning permission if the staffing and therefore vehicle movement patterns deviated from that of a 'normal' C3 residential dwelling.

The applicant acknowledges change of use from C3 to C2 would occur as the child placed at the property will require care by non-resident staff members on a shift pattern. However the question of whether the development constitutes a 'development' and a material change requiring planning permission is a separate 'matter of fact and degree', as discussed in the case of *North Devon DC v FSS and Southern Childcare Ltd [2003]*. This is further enacted in HBBC approval ref: 15/00201/CLUP.

Given that the proposal is for a single child with up to a maximum of two staff members, the number of persons at the property and the movements ('comings and goings') would not be materially different to the property's current use as a two-bedroomed house, where two parents and a child might reside. Staff shifts would last 48 hours and handovers (15-30 minutes at a time) would be staggered, resulting in on average one arrival and one departure of a staff member per 24 hour period. All other staff movements would be to accompany and transport the child, whether this be to school, social activities, dentist/doctor visits etc. There would also be occasional visits to the property from the house manager (who would also oversee additional properties) as well as Ofsted and 'regulation 44' visits (monthly). This level of visits from non-residents would not be unusual for C3 dwelling of this size and Children's homes of this type generally do not have social gatherings or visitors.

Other relevant standing policies for Hinckley and Bosworth include:

- Adopted Core Strategy – The community Strategic objective 5: Housing for Everyone