

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261254
Site Address:	98 Elm Road, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 5TD
Expiry Date:	7 August 2026
Proposal: Application to vary condition 3 of planning consent 241370 for the proposed change of use from use Class C3 (Dwelling house) to C2 (Residential institution) with no alterations to the property. Condition 3 refers to the restriction of change of use and the variation is to amend the wording of the condition with regards to the 'short term care'.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking TB05 – Housing Mix TB21 – Landscape Character
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging H1 – Housing mix, density and standards H2 – Presumption against residential losses H7 – Specialist accommodation NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
182047	Householder application for the proposed erection of front canopy.	Approved 31/08/2018
241370	Full application for the proposed change of use from use Class C3 (Dwelling house) to C2 (Residential institution) with no alterations to the property.	Approved 23/09/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objection

External

None

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	One neighbour has commented on this application, and their concerns are summarised and responded to below: - There is no reference as to whether or not the parking provision is adequate. <i>Officer comments: This application is not seeking to vary staffing or occupancy levels, and as such it is deemed that the proposed variation poses no harm to the parking provision. Additionally, the Council's Highways Officer has confirmed that they have no objection to the proposal.</i> - This application refers to five staff, the previous approval referred to three staff. <i>Officer comments: Staffing numbers were not conditioned as part of the previous application, and the proposed variation is not deemed to significantly impact upon the expected staffing levels.</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located within a predominantly residential area of Earley. The site features a two-storey residential property that has plenty of space for off-street parking and it also features a rear garden.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission to vary Condition 3 of planning consent 241370. Condition 3 relates to the restriction of the change of use, and the proposed variation is to amend the wording of the condition with regards to the 'short term care' to instead allow long term care.

The applicant has clarified that whilst the previously approved use related to short-term respite care, where service users would typically stay at the property for short periods of a few days to provide temporary relief for their primary carers, the proposed use would provide longer-term residential care for children. The applicant advises that children could be accommodated for up to 10 years from the age of 7 through to 17, with the property operating as their home for the duration of their placement and providing a stable residential environment prior to transitioning to independent living. The proposal therefore seeks to alter the duration and nature of the care provided whilst retaining the lawful C2 Residential Institution use of the property.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

Character of the Area:

The application seeks to vary Condition 3 of planning permission 241370 to amend the restriction relating to the provision of short-term care. No external alterations to the dwelling, extensions, engineering works or changes to the site's layout are proposed as part of this application. Furthermore, the proposal would not materially alter the visual relationship of the site with neighbouring properties or affect the established residential character of the area.

The property would remain in residential use as a Class C2 Residential Institution and would continue to operate from the existing dwellinghouse. Whilst the proposal would alter the nature of the care provided from short-term respite accommodation to longer-term residential care for children, this would not give rise to any visual or physical changes that would affect the character or appearance of the locality. The proposal is therefore considered to maintain the existing character of the area and accords with the relevant design and character objectives of the development plan.

As the principle of a C2 use at the site has already been established under planning permission 241370, the primary consideration is whether the proposed variation would result in materially different impacts. In this case, the proposal would not alter the

appearance of the site and is not considered to result in any adverse effect on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The application seeks to vary Condition 3 attached to planning permission 241370 to allow the property to operate as a children's residential home providing longer-term residential care rather than short-term respite care. No physical alterations to the property are proposed as part of the application.

The applicant has confirmed that the home would accommodate a maximum of three children and would operate with a staffing ratio of one member of staff per child, together with management oversight. The submitted management plan confirms that visits by social workers, family members and other professionals would be managed and generally pre-arranged, with meetings undertaken remotely where practicable.

Whilst the proposal would change the nature of the care provided at the property, the site would remain in C2 use and would continue to function in a manner that is broadly residential in character. The scale of occupation proposed, comprising a maximum of three children within an existing dwelling, is not considered materially different from the level of activity that could reasonably be expected from the previously approved use.

The proposal would not result in any physical changes that would give rise to overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overbearing impacts or other visual amenity concerns. Furthermore, there is no evidence before the Local Planning Authority to suggest that the proposed long-term residential care use would generate levels of noise, disturbance or activity that would materially harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Having regard to the scale of the operation, the occupancy levels proposed and the management measures put forward by the applicant, it is considered that the proposed variation of condition would not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on the revised management plan submitted in support of the application. Following review of this information, the Highway Authority advised that the proposed variation would be unlikely to result in any material change to staff numbers, shift arrangements, resident occupancy or trip generation, other than the fact that children would be accommodated for longer periods. The Highway Authority therefore confirmed that no additional highway impacts are anticipated and raised no objection to the proposal.

The application does not propose any physical alterations to the site or changes to the existing parking provision. Furthermore, the variation relates to the duration of care provided rather than the establishment of a new use. The information submitted by the applicant indicates that the previous respite care model may have generated a greater degree of movement associated with resident arrivals and departures, whereas the proposed long-term residential arrangement would not be expected to increase vehicle movements.

Having regard to the submitted information and the comments of the Highway Authority, the proposed variation of condition is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable impacts on highway safety, traffic generation or parking demand. The proposal is therefore acceptable in highways terms.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for approval.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	5 August 2026
Earliest date for decision:	7 July 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	06/08/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS
Insert where relevant