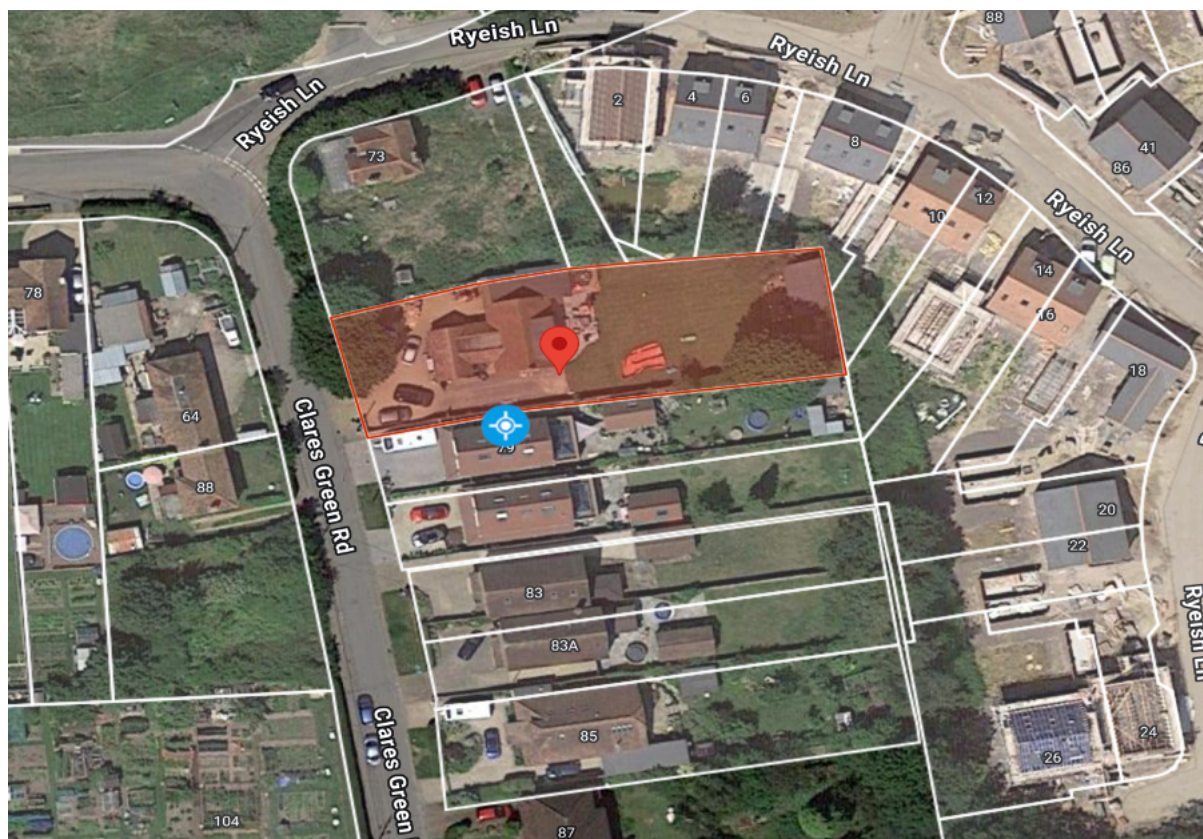


Planning Statement for Proposed Change of use from C3 use to C2 Children's care home (4 Children aged 7-18).

Site Address:

79 Clare Green Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, RG7 1DU

Client: Benneton Care Home



Nimbus Maps extract Site



Site Location

Site Information

Consultant

Visionary Planning Uk

Client

Benneton Care Home

Site Address	79 Clare Green Road, Spencers Wood Reading RG7 1DU
	Wokingham
Description of Development	Change of use from single dwelling C3(a) to small residential care home for children C2.
Pathway (PD/Application/Appeal)	Full

Constraints Review

Flood Risk Zone	Flood Zone 1
Contaminated Land	None known
Tree Preservation Order	None known
Heritage Assets	None
Noise Abatement Areas	None known
Explosive Hazard Areas	Unknown
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	No
Special Protection Area	No
Site of Special Scientific Interest	No
RAMSAR Convention Site	No
Site of Importance to Nature Conservation	No
Article 4(2) Directions	No

Local Policy Requirements

Local Plan/Core Strategy	Wokingham Core Strategy Wokingham Local Plan
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Effective Policies in Development Control

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) amended

Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking TB09 – Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Planning History

79 Clares Green Road Spencers Wood Reading RG7 1DU		
Year	Reference	Description
2011	111074 - Approve	Application for submission of details to comply with condition 6 of planning consent F/2010/2417 as follows: 6: Soft landscaping proposal. >
2010	100276 - Approve	Proposed erection of part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension including extension of first floor rear dormer, plus first floor front extension and single storey side extension to form garage. Demolition of existing side extension. >
	100854 - Refused	Proposed erection of part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension including extension of first floor rear dormer, plus first floor front extension and single storey side extension to form garage. Demolition of existing side extension. >

September 2024

1. Executive Summary

Background to Benneton Care Home

1.1 At our therapeutic children's residential home, we strive to provide a safe, nurturing, and holistic environment where children from various backgrounds can grow, heal, and thrive. Our mission is to understand and meet the unique range of needs each child brings to our home, recognising that every child is an individual with their own emotional, physical, and psychological needs.

Our home is designed to offer comprehensive care and accommodation for children who special needs such as Autism or children that have faced challenging life experiences, such as neglect, abuse, family disruption, or other traumatic events.

1.2 Our approach is guided by the following core principles:

- **Holistic Development:** We are committed to fostering the overall development of each child, addressing their physical, emotional, educational, and social needs

through tailored care plans.

- **Safety and Security:** We prioritise creating a safe and secure environment where children feel protected and can express themselves openly, without fear or judgment.
- **Individualised Support:** Recognising that each child's journey is unique, our skilled team works closely with them to identify their strengths, challenges, and goals, ensuring our support is personalised to meet their needs.
- **Education and Skill-Building:** We provide access to quality educational resources and opportunities, helping children develop essential life skills and empowering them to build a brighter future.
- **Emotional Well-Being:** Our care philosophy places emotional well-being at the forefront. We offer therapeutic services to help children process their emotions, heal from past traumas, and develop resilience.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** We embrace diversity and strive to create an inclusive environment that respects and celebrates each child's cultural background, beliefs, and identity.
- **Family Connection:** Understanding the significance of family connections, we support maintaining and strengthening relationships with family members and support networks whenever possible.

- **Community Integration:** We encourage children to engage in community activities, fostering a sense of belonging and helping them develop social skills and a sense of integration beyond the home.

1.3 Current and Proposed Use of the Property

Currently the home is a spacious six bed dwelling. It is proposed to transition the property into a home providing care to children between the ages of 7-18 years old, preparing to return home to parents or family members, moving on to foster care or preparing to live alone in their own accommodation. This provision requires planning permission in order to change the property's use from C3(a) – a dwelling house where a group of people living together form a household to a C2 category of residential institution where the care of young people is required.

The property features a well-equipped kitchen, a dining room for communal meals, a common lounge area, a therapeutic hub, and a large garden that offers space for outdoor activities and relaxation.

1.4 Key Points about the Surrounding Area:

- **Proximity to Nature:** Spencer's Wood is surrounded by countryside, with numerous parks, green spaces, and nature trails, such as Dinton Pastures Country Park and the nearby Farley Hill, offering opportunities for outdoor activities and nature walks.
- **Accessibility:** The area is well-connected by public transport, with easy access to

nearby towns like Reading and Wokingham. Major roads like the M4 are nearby, providing convenient links to larger cities such as London.

- **Local Amenities:** The community enjoys a variety of local amenities, including shops, cafes, libraries, and community centres, making it a vibrant place for children to engage with their surroundings.
- **Community Events:** Spencer's Wood is known for its active community engagement, with regular local events, fairs, and markets that foster a sense of belonging and encourage children to participate in community life.

It is planned that 4 young people from the ages of 7-18 years will reside at the above address with adequate staffing levels with the likely 1:2 of support in line with their needs.

1.5 It is a requirement of our regulators (Ofsted) that this provision is to be regulated and registered through them and that they will have full oversight of the home's activities. As such the home will be run in accordance with Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2018. To gain registration with Ofsted the home must have gained full planning consent.

Therefore, it is proposed that this property has a change of use to provide care to children in the context of a Children's Home rather than its existing designation as a dwelling. The property will provide care and support for 4 young people supported by:

1.6 Staffing Rotas

Shifts are organised into day (8:00 AM - 20:00 PM) and night (20:00 PM - 8:00 AM) periods with a 10-minute overlap for handovers. This ensures smooth transitions and minimal disturbances.

1.7 Maximum Staff On-Site: We are focusing on low-risk children with a staff-to-child ratio of 1 staff member to 2 children. A maximum of three staff members will be present in the home: two full-time workers and a manager.

1.8 Staffing Rotas and Changeover Times:

Below outlines the basic daily staffing schedule.

The shifts are divided into day (8:00 AM - 20:00 PM) and night (20:00 PM - 8:00 AM) periods, with handover times between 8:00 AM - 8:00 AM and night 20:00 PM - 20:00 PM. This ensures a smooth transition between shifts, minimising any potential disturbances to neighbours.

1.9 Childcare Needs and Staff Ratios

The number of workers required is based on the assessed risk and needs of the children in our care. We are focusing on low-risk children, maintaining a staff-to-child ratio of 1:2. Our ideal composition would be 4 children with a 1:2 staff ratio

The staff attending the home at any one time will be a maximum of 4 staff members. We intend to always have two full-time staff members on-site, and the remaining positions will be filled by part-time team members or temporary/bank staff.

1.10 Employment and Transportation

We aim to employ local staff and encourage the use of public transport through company-provided rail cards, travel and transport loans, discount cards for use on rail and bus, and cycle-to-work schemes. Additionally, we promote carpooling incentives in our employment contracts that offer employees benefits such as fuel vouchers and a carpooling allowance. So far, all our full-time employees have signed up for the scheme. We will also offer interest-free loans to purchase bicycles and safety equipment for any staff wishing to cycle to work.

1.11 Staff Composition:

Day Shifts: 1 manager, 2 full-time. Night Shifts: 1 part-time member who will sleep in the fully equipped staff room and 1 full-time staff member who will be on waking nights.

1.12 Parking Plan:

A parking plan showing parking spaces will be attached, adhering to WBC Parking Standard requirements.

Please see attached Management Statement that should be read in conjunction with this application.

2.0 The Application

This application is for a change of use from a dwellinghouse (C3) to a children's care home (C2) to house a **maximum of 4 children** (Aged between 7-18years).

In summary the property comprises 179m2:

- Detached House
- 0.25 Acre Plot
- 6 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- 3/4 Reception Rooms
- Permission to Extend the First Floor
- Ample off Road Parking
- Kitchen/Dining/Family Room

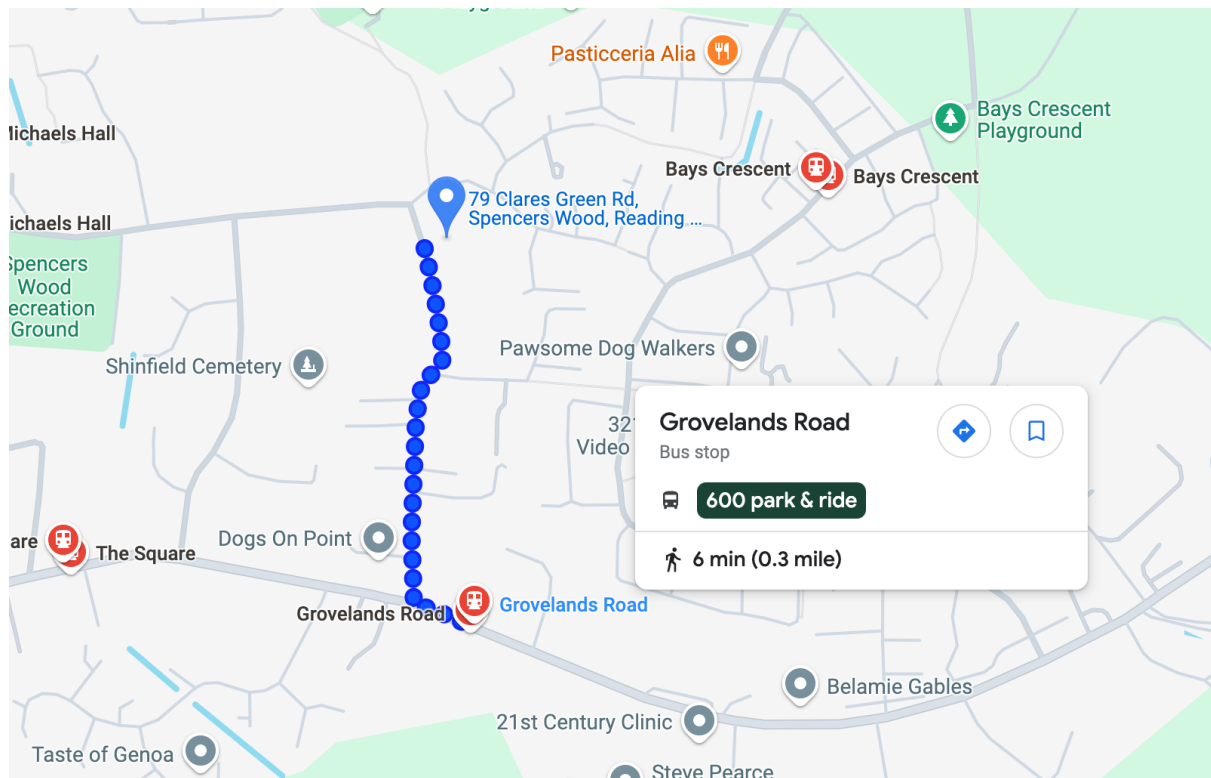
There is parking available within the curtilage of the dwelling.

There will be no changes to the appearance of the building and no changes to the internal layout. As such, there will be no impact on the visual amenity area.

Overall, the proposed scheme will provide a much-needed care facility which is not significantly different in nature to its former and potential current use as a dwellinghouse.

It will comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and National Planning Policy.

The site is considered to be in a sustainable location having only a six minute walk to the nearest bus stop.



There are several other bus stops all under an 8 minute walk.

The nearest supermarket is only 8 minutes walk away.

3.0. Introduction

3.1 This statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the change of use of a semi-detached dwelling from C3 to a small children's care home C2 to accommodate a maximum of 2 children between the ages of **8-15 years**.

4. Site Context

4.1 The site is located within the built-up area boundary of Spencers Wood, It comprises a detached dwelling with front and rear gardens and parking to the front of the dwelling along with a garage.

The surrounding development is predominantly residential comprising of a mix of residential housing and is in a C3 use.

The site is considered sustainable with bus stops within walking distance along with other amenities.

4.2 A C3 dwellinghouse is defined in the Use Classes Order as follows:

4.3 Class C3. Dwellinghouses

Use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by—

(a) a single person or by people to be regarded as forming a single household;

(b) not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents;

or

(c) not more than six residents living together as a single household where no care is provided to residents (other than a use within Class C4).

The has an authorised C3 use and could therefore be used for a C3(a), C3(b) or C3(c) use without the further need for planning permission as any change within C3

would not constitute development. The three bedroomed property is large enough that it could accommodate up to 6 adults residents under the C3(b)(small care home) or C3(c) other 6 person household definition.

4.4 Proposal

The proposal seeks to change the use of C3 to that of C2 to a Regulated residential children's home to accommodate up to 4 children between the ages **7 – 18 years old**.

4.5 The accompanying Supporting Statement sets out that the property would be **used for 4** children (7-18 years) who will be living together as a household and receiving care.

Additional supporting information sets out the following arrangements for care and can be found in the Staffing rota document which accompanies this application. The supporting statement sets out that at any one time, there will generally be up to a staff ratio of 1 staff to 2 children.

4.6 Maximum Staff On-Site: *We are focusing on low-risk children with a staff-to-child ratio of 1 staff member to 2 children. A maximum of four staff members will be present in the home: two full-time workers, one part-time worker, and a manager.*

4.7 Considerations for School Hours: *During school hours (approximately 8 AM to 4 PM on weekdays), only two full-time staff member will be present at the home as well as the manager.*

4.8 Staffing Rotas and Changeover Times:

Below outlines the basic daily staffing schedule.

Shifts are organised into day (8:00 AM - 20:00 PM) and night (20:00 PM - 8:00 AM) periods with a 10 minute overlap for handovers. This ensures smooth transitions and minimal disturbances.

4.9 Maximum Staff On-Site: We are focusing on low-risk children with a staff-to-child ratio of 1 staff member to 2 children. A maximum of three staff members will be present in the home: two full-time workers and a manager.

4.10 Staffing Rotas and Changeover Times:

Below outlines the basic daily staffing schedule.

The shifts are divided into day (8:00 AM - 20:00 PM) and night (20:00 PM - 8:00 AM) periods, with handover times between 8:00 AM - 8:00 AM and night 20:00 PM - 20:00 PM. This ensures a smooth transition between shifts, minimising any potential disturbances to neighbours

There are 6 parking spaces within the curtilage of the as indicated on the parking layout plan.

It should be stated that each home and staffing levels are tailored to the children in care and the staffing levels and shift patterns are indicated in the Management Plan.

5. National Planning Policy Framework

(All policies are in precis format where applicable)

5.1 Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development states that the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

There are 3 overarching objectives, which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, those being, economic, social and environmental.

5.2 Para 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For **plan-making** this means that:

a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

5.3 Tailoring planning controls to local circumstances

Paras 51 and 52 state:

51. Local planning authorities are encouraged to use Local Development Orders to set the planning framework for particular areas or categories of development where the impacts would be acceptable, and in particular where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains for the area.

52. Communities can use Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders to grant planning permission. These require the support of the local community through a referendum. Local planning authorities should take a proactive and positive approach to such proposals, working collaboratively with community organisations to resolve any issues before draft orders are submitted for examination.

5.4 The NPPF in Chapter 5 paras 60 & 67 – **Delivering a sufficient supply of homes** goes on to say:

60. To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

61. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

62. Within this context, 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).

5.5 Paragraph 96& 97 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should:

Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places

c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

And in para 97:

(a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

(b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

5.0 Local Planning Policy Framework (in precis format where applicable).

Core Strategy

5.1CP1 – Sustainable development

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- 1) Maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment;
- 4) Ensure the provision of adequate drainage;
- 5) Minimise the consumption and use of resources and provide for recycling;
- 8) Avoid areas where pollution (including noise) may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers;
- 10) Provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes;
- 11) Demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6;

5.1.2 This application is for a change of use only. It is in a highly sustainable location within walking distance of bus stops and local amenities.

5.1.3 The staff are encouraged to use public transport and there is bike storage at the property.

5.2 CP2 - Inclusive communities

To ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long

term needs, planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of:

- a) An ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing;
- b) Children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs;**
- c) People with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services; and**
- d) The specific identified needs of minority groups in the borough, including

The Council recognises that household size and associated needs varies across social and ethnic groups. The Council recognises that addressing the needs of young people includes those in the care of the authority due to their vulnerability.

5.2.1 The proposal fully accords with policy CP2. It ensures inclusivity of a minority, meeting children's needs and well-being that have special needs in a secure and family home environment. Furthermore, there is now a growing campaign by Government to ensure children's care homes form part of a community. Rachel Maclean the former Minister of State for Housing and Planning (23 may 2023) stated:

Statement

I, with the support of my Rt Hon colleague the Secretary of State for Education, wish to set out the Government's commitment to support the development of accommodation for looked after children, and its delivery through the planning system.

The planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society. When care is the best choice for a child, it is important that the care system provides stable, loving homes close to children's communities. These need to be the right homes, in the right places with access to good schools and community support. It is not acceptable that some children are living far from where they would call home (without a clear child protection reason for this), separated from the people they know and love.

Today we use this joint statement to remind Local Planning Authorities that, as set out in paragraph 62 of the National Planning Policy Framework, local planning authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and reflect this in planning policies and decisions. Local planning authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to include accommodation for children in need of social services care as part of that assessment.

Local planning authorities should give due weight to and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs and all parties in the development process should work together closely to facilitate the timely delivery of such vital accommodation for children across the country. It is important that prospective applicants talk to local planning authorities about whether their service is needed in that locality, using the location assessment (a regulatory requirement and part of the Ofsted registration process set out in paragraph 15.1 of the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations) to demonstrate this.

To support effective delivery, unitary authorities should work with commissioners to assess local need and closely engage to support applications, where appropriate, for accommodation for looked after children as part of the authority's statutory duties for looked after children. In two tier authorities, we expect local planning authorities to support these vital developments where appropriate, to ensure that children in need of accommodation are provided for in their communities.

Children's homes developments

Planning permission will not be required in all cases of development of children's homes, including for changes of use from dwelling houses in Class C3 of the Use Classes Order 1987 where the children's home remains within Class C3 or there is no material change of use to Class C2. An application to the local planning authority can be made for a lawful development certificate to confirm whether, on the facts of the case, the specific use is or would be lawful. Where a Certificate is issued, a planning application would not be required for the matters specified in the certificate.

5.2.2 It should also be noted that *Rectory Homes Limited v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government* [2020] EWHC 2098 makes it clear that C2 can be a residential use. So, even if there has been a change of use to C2, it is not necessarily a material change because the property would still have a residential use.

5.3 CP3 - **General Principles for development**

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life;
- i) Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land;

5.3.1 There are no external changes to the property and therefore there is no change to the view to the public realm.

5.3.2 There is no net loss of a residential dwelling as the property will perform exactly the same function as it has previously. Whilst the occupancy changes ie it is not a nuclear family the form and function remain the same.

5.4 **CP6 - Managing Travel Demand**

Planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

- a) Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
- b) Are located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel;
- g) Do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

5.4.1 The staff will be encouraged to use public transport to the property as the location is on a well-connected public service route along with shops within a reasonable walking distance.

5.4.2 Bike storage will be provided as another means of transportation. There is on site parking at the property and it is not envisaged that there will be any adverse harm to the highway or flow of traffic along Clares Green Road.

Wokingham Borough Development Plan February 2014

5.5 Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

1. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
2. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
 - a. Any adverse impacts of planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) taken as a whole

5.5.1 The proposal accords with Policy CC01. The property is in sustainable location and accords with policy requirements.

5.6 Policy CC06: Noise

1. Proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts to protect noise sensitive receptors (both existing and proposed) from noise impacts in line with Appendix 1 of the MDD.
2. Noise impact of the development must be assessed. Where there is no adverse impact (No Observed Effect Level) then noise will not be a material consideration.
3. Where there is an adverse effect (Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level to Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level).

5.6.1 The property is a six-bed house that could accommodate 2 adults and 4 or 5 children. Or indeed, up to 6 persons living as a family without any noise control whatsoever. There will be less occupants and therefore less noise in the proposed use than there could be if it were to remain as a single dwelling.

5.6.2 The children in care are subject to far more rigorous controls than those not in care and, this is a detached property. It is not considered that this residential use will cause any additional noise than any other residential property where there are no such restrictions so there is no adverse nuisance to mitigate.

5.7 Policy CC07: Parking

1. Planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates the following:
 - a) How the proposed parking provision meets the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD

b) That the new scheme retains an appropriate overall level of off-street parking.

5.7.1 There is a parking space on the existing driveway which will remain. Covered bike storage is also provided. Given the amount of on-site parking this will not give rise to any adverse harm when there is a staff changeover. The amount of car movements will be much less than a family home occupied by adults where all occupants could be car owners.

5.8 Policy TB09: Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups

1. The Council will in principle support proposals which provide for the following types of accommodation to provide for peoples' needs over a lifetime:

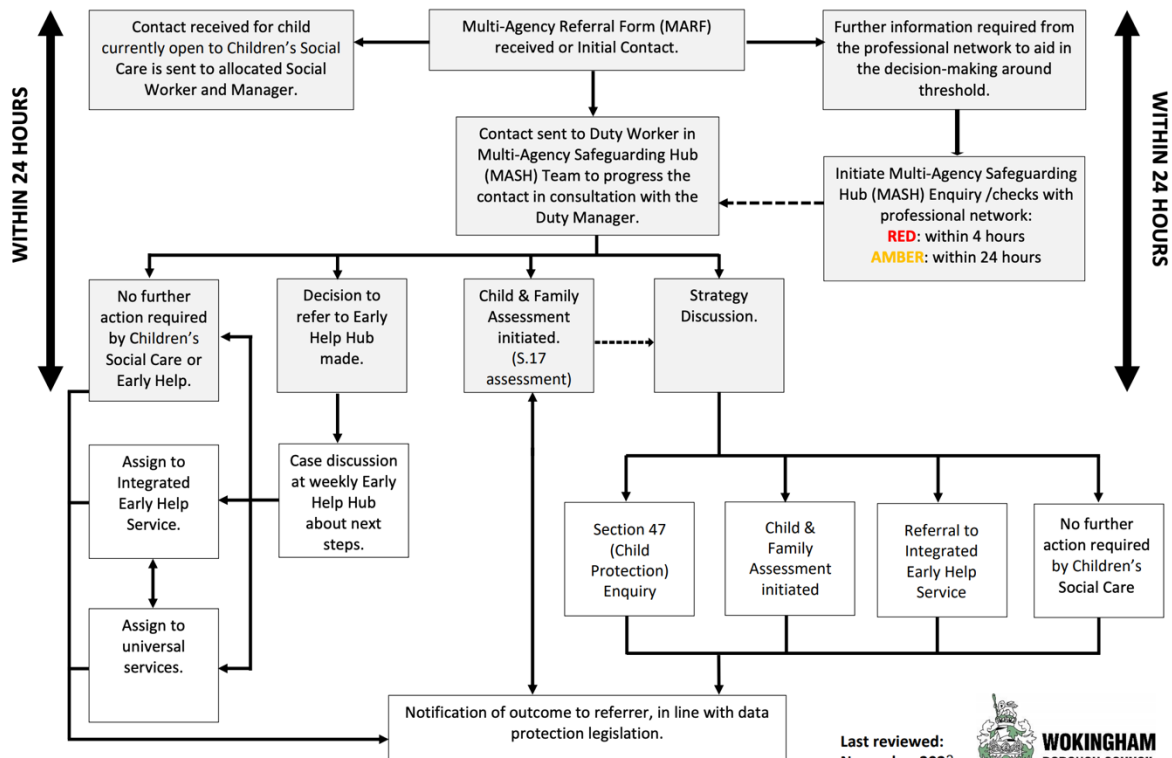
- a) Extra care homes
- b) Dementia extra care units
- c) Enhanced sheltered schemes
- d) Proposals that allow the elderly and those with disabilities to remain in their own homes or purpose-built accommodation.

2. Applications for small group homes for vulnerable adults, children and young adults leaving care will be considered on a site-by site basis. The Council will have regard to the specific requirements of these groups, including the location of the development.

5.8.1 Wokingham Council has considerable and comprehensive advice on it's website with regards to Children's Services Strategy and aims to provide children's care to a very high standard.

Wokingham Children's Services Strategy (2021-24)					
Our Vision	Wokingham is a great place to live, learn and grow and a great place to do business				
	Wokingham is a Borough in which all children and young people are safe and cared for, enjoy and achieve, are healthy and resilient, grow up ready for adulthood, and feel happy, hopeful and loved.				
Community outcomes	Enriching Lives Safe, Strong Communities A Clean and Green Borough Right Homes, Right Places Keeping the Borough Moving Changing the Way We Work For You				
Outcomes for CYP	1. Safe and cared for 2. Enjoy and Achieve 3. Healthy and resilient 4. Ready for adulthood 5. Happy, hopeful and loved				
Our Values	We focus on making a difference.	We aim high.	We are strategic, efficient and effective.	We value our people.	We drive partnership, collaboration and coproduction.
	We support children, young people and families on their journey and measure our success in terms of impact on outcomes.	We have high aspirations for every child and young person. We are ambitious for our services, and strive for excellence in everything we do.	We manage all our resources efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of our children, young people and families.	We highly value and support our children's workforce. We support our people to excel, grow, and love their work.	We work in strategic partnership with professionals, children, young people and families to achieve our shared goal to improve outcomes.
Our Strategic Priorities	SP1. Ensure we are designed to deliver excellent outcomes for all children, young people & families in Wokingham	SP2. Excel in our practice, be known for the quality of our work, and perform to the highest standards	SP3. Develop effective strategies which improve outcomes and deliver them in the most efficient way	SP4. Recruit, develop and retain a high-performing children's workforce	SP5. Strengthen our partnerships, drive system leadership & put children at the heart of everything Wokingham does
	SP1.1) Develop a sustainable future model and design of children's service SP1.2) Embed our models of early intervention and prevention, including Early Help, Edge of Care and Emotional Wellbeing SP1.3) Continue to develop and embed an effective approach to tackling exploitation SP1.4) Embed innovative models of support for CYP, SEND and inclusion	SP2.1) Continue to drive improvements in performance & practice standards SP2.2) Set challenging goals for all our services, and continually challenge ourselves to be the best we can be SP2.3) Target our business change and continuous improvement activities	SP3.1) Ensure our strategies have impact and focus on delivering better outcomes SP3.2) Continuously improve our ways of working, pathways & processes SP3.3) Strengthen our data and information management SP3.4) Work in an agile and flexible way to help manage demand SP3.5) Make intelligent decisions about how we best manage risks & financial resources	SP4.1) Refresh and reinvigorate our approach to recruitment SP4.2) Invest in and support our staff to grow in their roles and capabilities, and accelerate in their careers SP4.3) Strengthen retention & succession planning SP4.4) Responding successfully to prevailing and forecast changes in the job market SP4.5) Build effective and successful leaders	SP5.1) Strengthen the strategic focus and nature of our partnership working SP5.2) Deliver genuine coproduction at the strategic and individual level SP5.3) Drive a "one Wokingham" approach to improved outcomes for children, young people and families, across the council and the Wokingham area SP5.4) Strengthen our relationship with Schools to collectively improve outcomes for children and young people
Our Business Areas driving delivery	Children's Social Care and Early Help				
	- Providing the right type and amount of help at the right time, to support the most vulnerable children, young people and families - Driving an early intervention and prevention approach to anticipating and addressing needs - Strengthening resilience and well-being - Strengthening our support for vulnerable adolescents in the community - Strengthen our partnership arrangements to ensure children are safeguarded in their homes and in the wider community				
	Learning, Achievement and Partnerships				
	- Supporting children and young people to enjoy life and achieve their potential - Supporting the most vulnerable to achieve - Narrowing the gap in attainment outcomes - Supporting schools and building partnerships to drive attainment and independence - Driving inclusion and an inclusive approach to delivering better outcomes for all children and young people				
	Quality Assurance and Safeguarding				
	- To develop self-knowledge through quantitative and qualitative analysis - To put in place standards, systems and processes which provide a strong framework for continuous improvement - To produce accurate targeted data, effective analysis and evaluation of performance which supports management and practice across services for children - To embed a culture of challenge and improvement, where quality assurance is everyone's business - To provide opportunities for learning and development to enable staff to make the most of their abilities and abilities (SMART) - Managed - To promote excellence of practice which results in the best possible outcomes for children and young people - To advance and enhance practice through the development of the Practice Model				
	Strategic and Operational Delivery				
	- Driving cross-council working to put children and young people at the heart of everything Wokingham does - Developing strategies and programmes to drive excellence & continuous improvement - Driving commercial excellence, effective financial management & Value for Money - Engaging strategically and proactively with peers, networks and regulators				

MASH and Referral & Assessment Flow Chart



Last reviewed:
November 2023



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sufficiency Statement Looked After Children A Borough where all children and young people feel and are safe and cared for, enjoy, and achieve, are healthy and resilient, grow up ready for adulthood, and feel happy, hopeful and loved. - Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy, 2021-23 November 2021

The stability of placements for children is very important for their emotional wellbeing. Moving can be particularly challenging for children in care as their lives may have been unstable before going into care. Most children (82%) had less than three placement moves, but the number of children with more than 3



placement moves (18%) increased in 2020. Ensuring a child is matched appropriately and that there is a range of provision to meet the needs of children increases stability of placements for children. Placement Stability meetings are held every four weeks to ensure that placement stability is central to supporting outcomes for children in care. Well-planned placements reduce the need for placement changes and emergency placements.

5.8.2 The proposal will assist in the choice of properties available to provide a caring environment for children requiring special assistance and care.

5.9 Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development

1. Sites of national or international importance are shown and sites of local importance are defined on the Policies Map.
2. Planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 – Biodiversity of the Core Strategy and also demonstrate how they:
 - a) Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing
 - b) Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation
 - c) Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network.

5.9.1 The proposal is exempt from any Biodiversity requirement as there is no increase in the footprint of 25m².

Material Considerations

6.0 Design and Impact on the surrounding area

6.0 There are no design implications as the property will remain as it is currently.

6.1 The site is located in an area identified as being at the lowest risk of flooding as it is in flood zone 1.

6.2 The proposal respects the amenity of neighbours and it has the adequate level of amenity for its future occupants in relation to nearby uses;

6.3 Paragraph 135f of the revised NPPF (2023) seeks to ensure decisions “*create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future user*”.

Highway Safety

6.3 It is not considered that the proposal will have any detrimental effect to other highway users. A covered bike storage will be provided to the rear of the site. There are six parking spaces within the curtilage of the property.

6.4 There will be no more traffic generated at this property operating as a small children's care home, and in fact considerably less as potentially, there could be with a C3 residential use of 2 adults both with cars and four children over 17 with a car each.

6.5 Moreover, visitors are asked to visit by prearrangement only.

6.6 It is highly unlikely that there will be more than 4 staff in attendance at any one time. (See Staffing Rota's statement). Benneton Care Homes has stated that most of the staff will use public transport. *It should also be considered that there could potentially be 5 cars parked there and all owned by different family members.*

6.7 Waste and Recycling

6.8 The type and amount of waste will be similar to that of any like sized residential property. Waste/recycling bins will be provided for on-site to ensure all waste requirements are adequately catered for as per existing arrangements.

7.0 Identification of Need

7.1 According to a Press Release on Gov.uk, Each LA in England has a 'sufficiency duty' to ensure, as far as is 'reasonably practicable', that there is sufficient

accommodation within its area to meet the needs of its children in care. The lack of suitable accommodation for children and the uneven distribution of children's homes across the country is well documented. This is alongside an increasing need for homes and carers that can meet the diverse and complex needs of children. Across the country, there are children who are living outside of their LA, particularly in children's homes. (For some children, this may be by choice and be a positive outcome for them.)

7.2 According to, "What types of needs do children's homes often care for?", an Ofsted article published on 8 July 2022 sufficiency of places in children's homes is an ongoing area of concern in children's social care. In large part, this is related to the uneven distribution of homes across the country, which means that a child may be moved a long way from their family and friends when they go to live in a children's home. Alongside this is a concern about the availability of nearby homes that can accommodate children with particular needs. Homes were not evenly distributed across the regions of England, and there were no close relationships between the children's needs, where the homes were situated and what needs those homes met.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The proposal is for the change of use of the existing dwelling house to a Small children's care home for a maximum of 4 children between the ages of 7-18 years.

8.2 A Management Statement has been provided with the application which sets out how the home will operate.

8.3 The property is a 6 bed dwellinghouse, if reverted to a C3 dwelling could accommodate 8 persons living together as a family, including potential use under C3(b) for six people receiving care or under C3(c) for 6 people.

8.4 The home will continue to provide high quality carefully managed care for its residents and as such it will not have an adverse impact on the neighbourhood or on parking and highways.

8.5 It is within the powers of the Local Planning Authority to condition the number of children residing there at any one time should they be minded to impose such a condition.

8.6 The proposed children's care home use meets a national need identified in the evidence in this application.

The proposed use would not incorporate any external or internal alterations. The number of residents would not exceed those stated as a result of the proposed change of use. Hence, no additional amenity impact and noise disturbance would be generated.

8.7 The proposed use will provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of future residents. It preserves the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties as well as the character and appearance of the individual property

while being sympathetic to the existing structure and its surroundings. The new function of the property will not only create a positive impact on the surrounding neighbourhood but also provide the children/young people with support for personal development and growth.

8.8 Having regard to the information as set out in this application, it is contended that planning permission for this conversion from Dwelling (Class C3) to a Children's Care Home (Class C2) should be granted.