

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 16 July 2018 17:24:52

Application Reference No. : SMD/2018/0144 Site Address: Croft House Station Road Alton Staffordshire
ST10 4BY Stoke-on-trent

Comments by: Linda Clowes

From:

Shirley Drive
Alton
Alton

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: 1.1 I hereby formerly object to the above planning application by Ms Lesley Hearne, Vitality Care, 15 Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, SK8 5EG.

The application is for a change of use from a residential property to a residential institution providing care for up to 3 children with ages ranging from 8 to 18 years of age who present social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and for children with complex needs, including sexualised behaviour and mental health (issues). It is stated that staffing will be a minimum of 1:1 or 2:1 where necessary. My reasoning from this statement is that it could be possible that six members of staff may be needed on site at any one time throughout a 24 hour period and for as many days, weeks, months, years as this may be necessary. Therefore the planning committee decision that two staff must be present at all times does not seem at all adequate. Clearly, this would mean that accommodation and appropriate parking would be needed for staff and other visitors to the premises far in excess of the two staff stipulated in the planning officers report to the planning committee.

1.2 The location is not safe for vulnerable young people whom staff would not be able to contain within the confines of the premises as the children would be able to walk out into the community or passing vehicles should they so decide as this is their basic human right which staff have to uphold. Also consideration should be given to the fact that this application will not apply to just three children but to years of different children and also staff who will be accommodated in this institution. There is an adjacent bridge over the river churnet, a railway line, hundreds of private and support utility vehicles, taxis, coaches driving past within a few yards on a daily basis. There is also a licensed beer garden where children can enter freely and can mingle with anyone. And easy access to Alton Towers premises. Not just locals. All of these facilities within 50 yards of the institution

1.3 Police in their objection to this application have highlighted the numbers of times they have to attend such properties when children abscond and this site provides many opportunities for children to abscond. Staff are not allowed to offer realistic measures to physically restrict a child or young person who has made up their mind to leave. The police do not make objections lightly but they have raised concerns regarding this application which have been ignored by Farley Parish Council, the Planning Officer and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Planning Committee. In doing so they have not protected the endless numbers of children who may be placed in this institution or the or the children in the wider community. I apologise for going into minute detail but I am concerned that no one within the planning forum appears to have taken into account the highly relevant and informed comments from professionals.

1.4 The police objection also highlighted their experience of such institutions having a detrimental affect on immediate and the wider community with regards to anti-social behaviour. They have stated as evidence that in one local institution they have had to attend 15 times within a six week period. It is their contention that there is a sufficiently high concentration of such institutions in the Staffordshire Moorlands which do produce problems for them and the local community. I do not think increasing numbers of these institutions within small rural communities within the Staffordshire Moorlands, and particularly the small village of Alton is a desirable outcome for anyone involved. In spite of these objections based on experience by professionals, the planning officer states "the home is considered to bring with it positive social benefits". He does not state to who he thinks will receive positive social benefits.

1.5 The planning officer also states that the site would "see up to 3x children reside at the property with accommodation present for up to 2x members of staff. He does not appear to have understood fully the implications of the ongoing turnover in numbers of children and staff that will use such an institution and has chosen to disregard comments from professionals who do have experince and knowledge. I object to this situation as it does not afford any protection to local

local children and the local community as a whole. I object that consideration does not appear to have been given to anyone outside this property and that the applicants word has been accepted. The applicants have given no indication how they will protect the local community only provided policies and procedures to the planning officer that consider the children and staf within the institution. This seems to have satisfied the planning authority.I object as I consider this institution has the potential to have a detrimental affect on the local community which appears to have been totally ignored in the planning process

1.6 I object that there appears to be little consideration or reassurance regarding the impact on local schools and facilities.

1.7 From the information available there does not appear to have been any consultation about the application with the local community. This is an issue that the community of Alton ought to consider and has no relevance to Farley Parish Council.

I must apologise for this rushed response to this planning application. I was only aware of it this weekend. I spoke to the Planning Officer who told me that there was nothing I could do as the application had been approved. He also told me that he could not listen to me as he was busy and needed to talk to other people.Further checking with Alton Parish Council told me they knew nothing about the application but one of their councillors checked and found the application had not yet been fully approved. I am, therefore, hurriedly sending my objections to this application as in my own professional career I have personal experience of these institutions.

I must support the view of the police that this institution is not an appropriate facility for the village of Alton. The fact that it is just in the Farley boundary is irrelevant.

Linda Clowes