

Planning Statement

Nab Hill House, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8EF

**Change of Use from Dwelling House (Class C3) to Residential Care Home
(Class C2)**

April 2021

Prepared on behalf of Compass Children's Homes Limited

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1.0 Introduction

1.01 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Tetra Tech Planning on behalf of Compass Children's Homes Limited in connection with a planning application seeking planning permission for the change of use of Nab Hill House, Leek, Staffordshire from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a residential care home (Class C2) for up to six residents.

1.02 This purpose of this statement is to describe the application proposal, set out the planning merits of the proposed development and draw conclusions on its overall suitability with regard to national and local planning policy.

1.03 The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** describes the application site, planning history and the application proposal
- **Section 3:** provides an overview of the relevant development plan policies and material considerations
- **Section 4:** provides our assessment of relevant planning matters comprising:
 - land use considerations
 - transport and parking;
 - amenities of adjacent occupiers; and
 - wider community and social benefits
- **Section 5:** sets out the overall conclusions

2.0 Application Site, Planning History and Proposal

Application Site

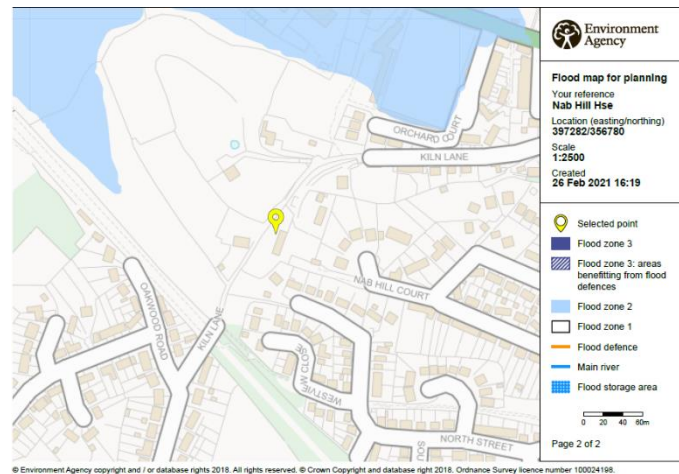
- 2.1.1 The application site is Nab Hill House located off Nab Hill Avenue, Leek. The site is located approximately 800 metres to the west of Leek Town Centre.
- 2.1.2 The site comprises a three-storey detached dwelling house (Class C3) which benefits from eight bedrooms, three en-suites, a bathroom, a separate toilet, a lounge, a kitchen, a dining room, a library and a utility room. To the east of the property is a large garden area, landscaping and a car parking area.
- 2.1.3 The site is bound by trees and other vegetation to the north, east and south and west which provide screening from wider views.
- 2.1.4 Vehicle and pedestrian access to the site is via a drive off Nab Hill Avenue.
- 2.1.5 The extent of the application site is approximately 0.36ha, as displayed by the red line on the plan below (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 2.1.6 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. Beyond the trees which surround the site, to the north-east, south and east are residential properties. To the west of the site beyond Kiln Lane is a standalone residential property and to the north-west, south-west are fields.
- 2.1.7 In terms of accessibility, the nearest bus stops are situated on both sides Westwood Heath Road located approximately 100 metres to the south-west of the site. They are served by the 109 and 96 bus services which connect to Macclesfield and Leek Town Centre. There are also bus stops along Mill street (400 metres to the north-east) where the 109 bus service also runs.
- 2.1.8 In accordance with the EA's Flood Map, the site is located in Flood Zone 1, so at low risk of flooding (See **Figure 2** below).

Figure 2: Environment Agency Flood Map



Planning History

2.1.9 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's website provides details of a single planning application in relation to the site.

2.1.10 In June 2008, an application for planning permission (ref. SMD/2008/0552) was submitted for a 3-storey dwelling at Nab Hill Avenue, Staffordshire Moorlands, Leek ST13 8EF. The property subject of this application is now Nab Hill House (application property). The application was granted planning permission on 26 August 2008.

Application Proposal

2.1.11 Planning permission is being sought for a change of use of the site from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a residential care home (Class C2) for a maximum of six young persons. No external works are proposed to the property or its curtilage, and internal alterations are limited to minor rearrangements to allow better flow between bedrooms and shared bathrooms which are more appropriate for young people sharing a family home environment.

2.1.12 The applicant has more than 20 existing children's homes around England, so is vastly experienced in providing such services. The applicant has excellent teams of staff who provide substitute parenting for young people who require a range of support and therapies. They pride themselves on the high-quality of their homes, as well as the high-quality support, care and education they provide.

2.1.13 The proposal is for a small children's home (Use Class C2) which will provide for young people requiring care and therapies to enable them to develop family living, independence and other social skills. They will be educated at one of the applicant's schools, where suitable education and training can be provided. Therefore, the character of this proposed use will be very much residential and akin to occupation by a large family.

2.1.14 Nab Hill House will be registered for up to six young people and the property will have a Registered Manager. The care home will be required to be registered with the regulatory body, OFSTED.

2.1.15 Two members of staff will be on site at all times. In addition, there could be another two or three on site at various times during the day only. These additional staff will only be on site at certain times, rather than being on site all of the time. Their role will be to support day to day activities such as cooking, transporting children to school, cleaning and planning activities. None of these additional staff will be present overnight.

2.1.16 The daily routine for the young persons residing at Nab Hill House will be similar to that of any child living in a family home – on weekdays they will attend full time education, complete homework, help clean or cook, attend after school clubs etc. At weekends they will engage in activities both at home and away from home (e.g. sports, visiting the cinema, shopping), with the objective of creating a stable and shared family living environment.

2.1.17 In effect, the daily operation of the home will be no different to that of a large dwelling house with the young persons coming and going for education purposes and the adults coming and going for work purposes, albeit the adults will be staff coming to and from the property in shifts.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

3.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purpose Act 2004 requires that planning application be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.1.2 This section of the Planning Statement considers the planning policy context relevant to the proposed development as contained in the development plan and other policy documents material to the consideration of the proposal's acceptability.

The Development Plan

3.1.3 The development plan for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council so far as it relates to the site and the proposal comprises:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020)

3.1.4 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan sets out a framework for delivering development for the period 2014-2033.

3.1.5 The site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Leek on the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan proposals map (see **Figure 3** below).

Figure 3: Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Proposals Map



3.1.6 The following development plan policies are of relevance to the current proposal:

- **Policy SS 1 – Development Principles:** expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Proposals will be considered in the context of the District-wide Spatial Strategy and with regard to both its direct and indirect cumulative impact over the long term. The policy also seeks for new development to make the most effective and

best use of previously developed land and buildings.

- **Policy SS2 – Settlement Hierarchy:** Identifies Leek as a town and seeks to focus future growth in the largest settlement to strengthen their role as service centres.
- **Policy SS 5 – Leek Area Strategy:** seeks to consolidate the role of Leek as a market town and support its regeneration through increasing and improving the provision of educational, health and community facilities and enabling further shared use of facilities.
- **Policy H1 – New Housing Development:** sets out that new housing development should provide appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future populations having regard to the area strategies. It goes on to state that housing for special groups should be of a scale and in a location which is appropriate to its needs. **Paragraph 7.49** of the supporting text states that housing for special groups will also be needed to meet the needs of those with a learning or physical disability through the form of extra care homes or supported housing.
- **Policy T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport:** seeks to ensure that proposals are located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development and supports development which reduces reliance on the private car travel journeys and facilitates walking and cycling within localities. Parking provision is to be provided on a case by case basis and points towards guidance set out within Appendix 2 of the Local Plan which suggests the ‘minimum’ provision of spaces.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1.7 National planning policy is set out within the NPPF, the most recent publication of which was adopted in February 2019. The following national policies are relevant to this proposal:

- Achieving Sustainable Development.
- Meeting the needs of different groups in the community

3.1.8 The NPPF sets out at its heart a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It identifies three facets of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, noting that they should not be considered in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

3.1.9 The NPPF confirms that the needs of different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies, including the needs of people with disabilities and other specialist needs.

3.1.10 The NPPF outlines that planning decisions are required to take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health for all sections of the community.

Amenity Space for Residential Care and Nursing Homes SPD (1996)

- 3.1.11 The SPD document seeks to help developers in preparing schemes to achieve the high standard of amenity space required for residential care homes.
- 3.1.12 The document sets out the proposals for the conversion of existing buildings into residential care homes should have a well-designed private amenity space, the access and egress of vehicles should be subject to a safe and practical design, car parking standards should be provided in line with the local plan.

4.0 Assessment of Proposals

Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section of the statement provides an assessment of the main planning considerations having due regard to the nature of the proposals and the relevant planning policy provisions.
- 4.1.2 The key planning considerations in this instance are whether the:
- the proposal is acceptable in land use terms
 - proposal would harm the amenities of nearby occupiers and provide an appropriate level of amenity for intended occupiers
 - proposals would give rise to any significant transport or parking concerns
 - proposals will result in community benefits
- 4.1.3 Each of the above matters is addressed below.

Land Use Considerations

- 4.1.4 The application relates to the change of use of an existing dwelling house (Class C3) to a residential care home (Class C2) for up to six residents. The residents of the care home will be young people who require a range of specialist support, training and therapies to overcome individual challenges. They will be supported by two members of staff on site at all times and a small number of additional staff as required dependent upon activities being undertaken. This will ensure the young people gain the various levels of assistance they require, and, for example, to assist with activities, travel to and from school, going to external clubs and activities and visits to entertainment venues. Given this, the proposal is in accordance with the requirements of Policy H1 which supports the provision of appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current population.
- 4.1.5 The application proposal constitutes the re-use of an existing building for the important use of providing residential care for young people. This will assist in ensuring that greenfield sites are protected and is an effective use of previously developed land. Therefore, according with the development principles set out in the adopted Local Plan policy SS 1. It is also noted that the adopted Local Plan does not seek to allocate sites for residential care uses in any other location.
- 4.1.6 It is pertinent to note that the proposed use is residential both in character and in planning terms. Care homes are residential uses by definition and, therefore, compatible in planning terms with other forms of residential use.

- 4.1.7 The site is situated in a location where residents and staff can access sustainable transport methods efficiently and reduce their reliance on a private car. Bus stops are located approximately 100 metres to the south-west of the site along Westwood Heath Road. Also, Leek Town Centre lies 800 metres to the east which comprises a range of public services and shops. Thus, the proposal is in line with Policy T1.
- 4.1.8 The change of use of the site will result in a daily operation which is practically indistinguishable to that of a dwellinghouse. When occupied by a large family, the existing dwelling house can be occupied by a similar number of residents as is being proposed.
- 4.1.9 In keeping with the movements within a traditional family home, the young people will attend full time education and return to the home to carry out activities such as homework. Similarly, the staff will come and go as would parents who travel to and from work within a family home. Therefore, the use of the site as a small residential care home for up to six residents will have little material impact when compared with the existing lawful use.
- 4.1.10 Furthermore, and a key consideration here in assessing the planning merits, the property can already be used as a small care home without the need for planning permission, as Use Class C3 provides for up to six residents living together as a single household and receiving care. It is only the specific nature of this provision that means that planning permission is required. However, there will be no more residents at the site receiving care than can already occur without planning permission.
- 4.1.11 In light of the above, the principle of the residential care home (Class C2) use at the application site is acceptable. The proposal is in accordance with adopted Local Plan Policies SS1, H1 and T1.

Amenities of Adjacent/Future Occupiers

- 4.1.12 The activity levels arising from the proposed use will be low-key and involve a maximum of six residents at the site at any one time.
- 4.1.13 The existing lawful use of the property as a dwelling house has the potential to generate the same level of activity (if not more) as that from the proposed use. The proposed use is for a care home of up to six residents. Furthermore, the site could be used as a six-person care home within Class C3 without the need for planning permission. Therefore, there will be no material change in the levels of activity at the site.
- 4.1.14 The exterior of the building will remain as existing. Therefore, there will be no privacy or overlooking impacts introduced.
- 4.1.15 The application site provides ample amenity space for future residents of the care home,

benefiting from a well enclosed garden area to the east of the property. The site is bounded by trees and vegetation from all directions which providing screening from wider views. The amenity space will be used in no different a manner than if occupied by a large family, so will not give rise to any impacts on neighbours beyond those that can already be generated under the existing lawful use.

4.1.16 During weekdays, the young persons will be educated off-site and will be taken to and from school as would occur in a traditional dwelling house. Therefore, on most days between 8am and 5pm activity levels at the site will be minimal. Out of school hours, the young persons who have gained the requisite independence skills will be taken to and from activities such as a sports centre. All children will have differing levels of independence which is continually assessed. In general, most children are supported most of the time when away from home or school.

4.1.17 In light of the above, the proposed change of use will not harm the amenities of adjacent occupiers.

Traffic Generation and Car Parking

4.1.18 In terms of vehicle activity, the small-scale and low key nature of the proposed care home means that vehicular movements at the site will not be significant and, when compared with the existing lawful use, will be very similar. The site was selected in part because it has a large area for parking off road.

4.1.19 The limited number of members of staff will come and go similarly to a parent travelling to and from work daily and the children will have daily routines just like children living in more traditional family settings. It is noteworthy that the existing property is an eight-bedroom dwelling house, and therefore, the number of vehicle movements could be higher than the proposed use which is for a care home for up to six residents. Furthermore, and as noted above, the site can already be used as a care home for up to six residents without the need for planning permission. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

4.1.20 The site is located within walking distance of Leek town centre which provides many local facilities and services. Also, within 200 metres proximity of the site to the south-west are bus stops which connect to Macclesfield and Leek Town centre. This provides accessible and sustainable travel for members of staff and residents to key destinations and reduces reliance on private car journeys.

4.1.21 Vehicular access to the property is via a drive, located off Nab Hill Avenue, and this will remain unchanged. As noted above, the volume of traffic associated with the proposed use will not be materially different to that generated by the existing lawful use of the property. The residents (being children) will not have their own private vehicles.

- 4.1.22 Given that the proposal will not result in any material change in terms of vehicular activity than the existing lawful use of the property, there will not be any material effect on the operation of the local highway network.
- 4.1.23 Appendix 2 of the Local Plan contains parking guidance for Class C2 residential institutions and states there should be 1 garage or parking space per resident staff, plus 1 space per non-resident staff present at peak working times, plus 1 space per 3 bed spaces for visitors. It also suggests an ambulance space should be provided close to the main entrance. It is important to note that the foregoing is solely 'guidance.' The application property comprises a vehicle parking area on hardstanding land to the east which provides spaces for 8 vehicles. Thus, the proposal would be in line with the parking guidance found within Appendix 2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan in any event.
- 4.1.24 Overall, the proposed development will not give rise to any material transport or parking impacts. Indeed, it is unlikely to result in any impacts that are materially different to those potentially generated by the existing lawful use of the site. This is in accordance with adopted local plan policy T1.

Community Benefits

- 4.1.25 The focus of the care home will be to provide a stable home for young people who require a range of therapies, support and training to allow them to develop social, independence and daily living skills. The care home will deliver a programme dedicated to therapeutic intervention that can be delivered to children and young people who have experienced complex trauma in early life.
- 4.1.26 Compass Children's Homes has over 20 other care homes and comprises excellent teams of staff who provide substitute parenting for young people. The applicant prides themselves on their high-quality homes and delivering outcomes and achievements for their service users. This is also supported by a number of Outstanding and Good OFSTED ratings.
- 4.1.27 As such, services such as the proposed use provide significant social and community benefits.
- 4.1.28 The proposed use is likely to also provide some limited employment opportunities for local people.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Tetra Tech Planning to support an application seeking planning permission for the change of use of Nab Hill House, Nab Hill Avenue, Leek from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a residential care home for up to six residents (Class C2). The residential care home is to be utilised as a children's home for those young persons who require a range of therapies, support and training to allow them to develop social, independence and daily living skills.

5.1.2 When assessed against relevant planning policy provisions, it is clear that the application proposal is acceptable. In summary, the statement concludes that the application proposal:

- is acceptable in land use planning terms;
- will not give rise to any transport and accessibility concerns;
- will not harm the amenities of nearby occupiers; and
- will give rise to wider community and social benefits.

5.1.3 In light of the above, we trust that the Council will be readily able to grant planning permission for this policy compliant proposal.