

From: [Lesley Hackney](#)
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: SMD/2024/0076 E&E Care 50 Coleridge Drive, Cheadle
Date: 27 March 2024 23:23:06

I refer to your letter dated 8/3/2023 concerning the above matter.

I wish to object to the application for a Lawful Development and change of use of the property

I have a number of concerns with the application, the property and its situation which I believe make the proposal untenable as a residential children's home.

Material inconsistencies - The application contains material inconsistencies and inaccuracies too many of which to list here but some have been articulated in other people's objections. I am sure that the Planning Officer assigned to the case will have read the application and supporting documents and will be aware of the inaccuracies. I would hope that all councillors responsible for making decisions on this case will also read all documents. It's been evident thus far that councillors have not read the documents and have formed opinions based on other more comprehensive applications. Whilst I have been advised that the applicants will have merely copied and pasted from other documents, this approach is lazy and misjudged and does not meet the council's own requirement of accurate applications. This application should have been rejected on this basis alone. There are inconsistencies within the document over fundamental issues eg number of occupants. If the applicant cannot spare the time and effort to submit an accurate and truthful application how can the council (or residents) rely on anything within the application or have trust in the company moving forward

Due diligence - the company in its present form have been in existence for only a short period of time. There is a limited track record with evidence of at least one application in another part of the UK being declined. I have asked several councillors what due diligence has or will be performed and I've been advised none. This seems to be a grey area but whilst this may not necessarily be a planning matter I would expect the council to perform some degree of vetting and due diligence. Tax payers money will be used to pay this firm. The government have announced via the last budget that they intend to bring forward measures to stop profiteering in the child residential care space. A company with total disregard for accuracy and limited track record should raise red flags and should be investigated and checked thoroughly.

The property - the property in question is situated on a residential street in a quiet location. It has been extensively extended and is very different than its original design. The overall plot however is still the same and thus the garden is small for the size of property. The drive does have space for 3 vehicles however, there is no dropped kerb across all of the drive. I believe that even as a purely residential property (none business) there is a minimum number of parking spaces required as per the council local plan and guidelines. Given the nature of the application and change of use to a business then additional vehicles will need to attend the property. The application does not clearly reflect the full useage that this type of property would require - 3 carers vehicles (poor public transport so unless carers arrived on foot they would need cars and the council must not accept that carers will car share as they will

come from other areas), pool car for transporting the children, home tutors, social workers, visitors, health care workers, therapists, Ofsted, management visits, emergency vehicles etc. In addition at shift changeover there will be double the staff on site. A recent local application of similar size has stipulations regarding the number of parking spaces required (6). This number plus emergency vehicles can not be accommodated on site. The application states that they will not street park and my highway concerns are detailed below

Highways - the house is situated on a residential street which is fairly narrow and on a bend. The camber of the road is quite sharp and I've experienced the drag into the road if approaching at anything other than a very low speed. Local residents are aware. There are multiple residents surrounding the property who already park on the road/pavement increasing the danger of the road and what is in effect a blind bend. Whilst this is not a major road it is actually quite dangerous. Added to the issue of the bend is the junction with Dryden Way which is just yards from the property. Again with local residents already street parking plus visitors this junction is difficult and dangerous. In bad weather Coleridge and Dryden are treacherous and this is recognised by the Highways Department with a grit bin situated on the junction. I believe that the road is difficult enough without any additional pressures. On a daily basis I see parents with prams and people with difficulties (visually impaired, walking difficulties etc) walking in the road to avoid vehicles. Any additional vehicles would exasperate the problem. Other similar sites have either been requested to provide additional parking spaces (Harplow Lane) or already have ample parking having previously been B&B's, public houses etc.

Impact on the existing community - I need to be perfectly clear that I have no issue with children, special needs children etc which residents have been accused of. Any application of this nature must look at all residents and not just the vulnerable children to be housed. The government guidance actually stipulates that whilst children are a priority other vulnerable groups must be considered. Surrounding the property there are several vulnerable residents who are very concerned about the application and the effects on them. They are frightened to speak out due to the manner that this application has been dealt with and the trial of objectors via social media. All residents deserve peace of mind and when I hear a very vulnerable, elderly resident stating that they won't be safe and won't go out (whether that is an over reaction or not that is how they feel) then they need to be reassured, protected etc. The residents found out about the application by accident, were told that there was no need to be consulted, then told that there would be a consultation, some letters went out, some not received until 10 days later. All in all this has been an extremely disappointing, error filled experience with the local authority and the applicant firm and lessons must be learned moving forward.

Local resources - Cheadle is a small town with limited resources. Despite what is incorrectly stated in the application (excluding the fantasy beach and static caravan park which they believe to be a play park), facilities and resources are limited. There are no NHS dentists with availability in the area, doctor waiting times vary per practise but some are long and leisure facilities are limited especially for teenagers with public transport to nearby towns offering better facilities eg bowling, cinema etc sporadic at best. The police commissioner for Staffordshire confirmed at a recent town meeting that response times for police were running at 45 minutes for Cheadle. There is no

longer an ambulance or retained fire fighter unit in town. This is bad enough for local residents and a petition to resolve the inadequacies is evidence of local feelings but bringing in even more vulnerable children who may be more prone to using these services puts more strain on services and puts these children at risk. Anecdotal evidence from serving police officers, firefighters and medics confirms that resources are too stretched, stressed and call-outs to these types of property are a regular occurrence. They may not be recorded in official figures as absconding, setting off alarms etc are not crimes and not included in figures but take up valuable resources and potentially put other lives at risk. Cheadle has a limited police presence with a reliance (as confirmed at the recent police meeting) on PCSOs. Crime and anti social behaviour is increasing with local social media groups being established due to little/no law enforcement resource. Apathy in the local community due to little or no response from law enforcement results in many minor incidents and anti social behaviour not being reported.

The property backs on to a play area which is poorly maintained by the land owner. Despite requests by residents the land has never been signed over to the council. The grass surrounding it has reached 4/5 feet tall in the height of summer with small children not being able to access it and local councillors supporting residents to lobby the landowners to improve the area. If there is a reliance on this area due to the small garden then the applicants and ultimately the children will be disappointed. When the grass is cut then this area is used by small children. The application states that 4 children up to the age of 17 or in another section it states 18 will be in occupation. Teenagers will naturally crave and need freedom and may use this area to meet friends etc thus leading to young families being intimidated and not wanting to use this facility. There has been issues previously with anti social behaviour in that vicinity and other nearby open spaces. Whilst it's acknowledged that other local youths could and have used these areas, the introduction of up to four older teenagers could cause a repeat of or escalation of previous issues

In summary, the application is poor quality and at best the firm have been uninterested or negligent in their approach to completing the application or at worst plainly trying to mislead. The property is unsuitable for the intended use and the public highway not safe to introduce additional pressures and risk.

I would hope that the planning officer assigned will perform additional checks and recommend refusal.

Due to the already hostile response from social media users outside the immediate area I would appreciate some anonymity. I am aware that some of the community are intimidated and reluctant to speak out and put their objections in. This is clearly unacceptable and people must be protected.

Before publishing please confirm how residents will be protected.

Thank you

L Hackney