



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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Date: 3rd July 2024

Application: SMD/2024/0241

Location: 4 Millers View, Cheadle

Proposal: Change of use application to convert a C3 dwelling into a use class C2 Residential Institution for care of children including conversion of existing detached garage into 2-bedroom bungalow as already approved on application SMD/2023/0139

The proposal has been reviewed with particular reference to Police CPI's Secured by Design guidance and in accordance with the recognised principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

The following comments should be considered in the light of the following:

- Under the heading Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities, Para 96(b) of the NPPF 2023 states "Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion ...";
- Under the heading Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places, Para 135(f) of the NPPF 2023 states "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe ... and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience"
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Design Consideration, Spatial Objective SO10 – "To deliver sustainable, inclusive, healthy and safe communities";
- The statutory obligation placed on local authorities to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The 2006 CABI document entitled 'Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them', which states "Statements should demonstrate how development can create accessible and safe environments, including addressing crime and disorder and fear of crime".

As with all residential care homes for children, amongst other factors that contribute towards the successful operation of the home (or otherwise), a tremendous amount would depend upon:

- the professionalism, care and experience of the staff;
- how well they bond/engage with and relate to the children in their care;
- effective management oversight of the home;
- the historical context, experience and nature of the children;
- the placement of an appropriately risk-assessed children who get on sufficiently well with each other, each with a suitable individual care plans in place;
- all underpinned by adherence to robust and effective staff policies (including in-house conflict resolution) and operating procedures.

There are also standard requirements on the part of care home operators to adhere to the 'Children Missing from Home and Care' Joint Protocol between Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local

Authorities & Staffordshire Police and they will need to be registered with Ofsted (which the applicant indicates will be the case) who are the appropriate regulatory authority and subsequently overseen by them with all the necessary checks and balances in place that they require to ensure the efficient running and management of the home for the benefit of those children who would be placed there.

A basic overview of the proposed nature and operation of the care home is provided within the Children Care Home Questionnaire, and no doubt Ofsted will need to satisfy themselves in more detail as part of their registration process. In terms of any potential adverse impact upon neighbours, much would be likely to depend upon the nature of the children who would be placed there, but in some ways, this could be viewed as being little different to a conventional family setting. Expectations of behaviour placed upon children and effective supervision by staff will be important factors in this regard too. The detached nature of the dwelling coupled with a small number of immediate neighbours possibly has an advantage over terraced or semi-detached properties in terms of reducing possible noise impact. The rear garden appears to be enclosed, which is important, as it is for any residential property. A good level of enclosure can allow for greater supervision and less opportunity for missing episodes. Consequently, the applicant should ensure that this is suitably addressed.

The view of the Local Policing Team has been sought in relation to this proposed change of use application. A thorough internal response has been received from a local officer, which places the proposed home as a low to medium risk. In terms of low risk, there is nothing to suggest that community tensions are heightened or are likely to be heightened with the introduction of a residential care home. Similarly, there are no known ongoing or planned police operations that would place the care home or residents at risk, nor is there anything to suggest that the establishment of a residential care home at the location is likely to put any current or future police operations in jeopardy. In terms of local crime statistics, in broad terms, Cheadle compares favourably with the rest of the county, with an overall crime rate 16% lower. However, of concern is the fact that the most common crime offences are violence against the person and sexual offences. Historically, there have been issues with younger persons becoming involved in disputes between one another and also larger groups/gangs. These factors consequently suggest a low to medium risk in terms of local crime.

In terms of vulnerable addresses or others of note in the immediate vicinity, this would be classed as medium risk. There are two other residential care homes for young persons within the near vicinity of the application location. Of particular concern, one of the care homes has children who regular going missing and who are deemed to be at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation. There is a concern given the close proximity of the care homes to one another that interaction between respective children could encourage behaviour that places them at increased risk of exploitation and harm. There is also a vulnerable address a relatively short distance away from the proposed site of the residential care home, where the occupant has significant alcohol issues and historically has been linked to looked-after persons frequenting the address, albeit the resident is not currently residing at that address.

The proximity to Tean Road recreation ground also sits within the medium risk category as it relates to a proposed care home setting. For a number of years, this has been the location for the vast majority of anti-social behaviour reports around the Cheadle area and clearly provides ample opportunity and an ideal location for vulnerable persons to frequent and associate with one another. There is also limited CCTV at this location. The relative proximity to large rural expanses to the proposed site, which would prevent unique challenges for any reported missing episode for the occupants given the nature of the search site would be a concern. Local knowledge would suggest that the relatively isolated location, including the small size of Cheadle would increase the risk of the propensity of the residents to seek modes of transport to visit the city/further afield.

Clearly there are a number of aspects in relation to the vicinity and locality, which raise some general and more specific police concerns around their potential adverse impact upon children placed at the proposed care home, albeit it is noted in the Children Care Homes Questionnaire states that the home would be for low risk children. Consequently, these risks that looked-after children may be subject to should be given due consideration in the Local Authority's determination of the suitability of the location for such a home. They would undoubtedly be risks that any care home operator would need to be aware of, and from which, they would need to assiduously endeavour to protect those in their care.

Crime Prevention advice is given freely without the intention of creating a contract, and all comments and recommendations are site specific. Staffordshire Police and the Home Office do not accept any legal responsibility for the advice given.

David Elkington
Designing Out Crime Officer

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