



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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Early Intervention & Prevention Unit
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Date: 3rd January 2025

Application: SMD/2024/0537

Location: 1 Woodlands Avenue, Cheddleton

Proposal: Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to care home for children (Use Class C2)

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, included within a wide range of factors that can contribute towards the successful operation of the home (or otherwise), a tremendous amount would likely 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, life experience and nature of the children;
- the placement of an appropriately risk-assessed children with suitable individual care plans in place, who get on sufficiently well with each other;
- 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's Planning Statement confirms will be the case) who are the appropriate regulatory authority and subsequently overseen by them with all the stringent checks and balances in place that they require to ensure the efficient running and management of the home, and quality of care is being provided for the benefit of those children who would be placed there.

A reasonable overview of the proposed nature and operation of the care home is provided by the applicant in their Planning Statement, and no doubt Ofsted will need to satisfy themselves in more detail as part of their registration process, as well as on an ongoing basis. 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, which is entirely unknown at present, but in some respects, this could be viewed as being little different to a conventional family setting. Expectations of behaviour placed upon children including in relation to neighbours/the neighbourhood, and effective supervision by staff will be important factors in this regard too.

The rear garden does look to be rather small, certainly when compared to the size of the property and will offer limited opportunities for outdoor play etc. However, the opportunity exists for the rear external area to be nicely 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. The location is also a little out on a limb with local facilities some distance away. The proposals suggest adequate off-road provision for staff vehicles and the occasional visitor would be available, which would be beneficial given the comparatively narrow road width and proximity to the bend in the road. Presumably some planning condition could be imposed to enforce off-road parking, if deemed appropriate at this location.

The view of the Local Policing Team has been sought in relation to this proposed change of use application. While the observations above are of potential relevance, as things stand, nothing of any substance has been identified by the Local Policing Team in terms of heightened crime risk or vulnerability in relation to the location that would substantiate any possible police objection to the granting of planning permission for this particular application.

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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