



Planning, Design and Access Statement

Ladysmith House, Cranmore Lane, Holbeach, Spalding PE12 7HU

Change of use from single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to residential care home (Use Class C2) for children and associated alterations

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the full planning application for a change of use of the existing property at Ladysmith House, Holbeach ('the Site').
- 1.2. The description of development for which full planning permission is sought from South Holland District Council ('SHDC') in its role as the Local Planning Authority ('LPA') is as follows:

'Change of use from single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to residential care home (Use Class C2) for children and associated alterations.'

- 1.3. The proposed development of the Site has been subject to discussions with relevant stakeholders.
- 1.4. The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate, having regard to national and local policy, and other material considerations, that the proposed development is acceptable.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1. The Site is located on the western side of Cranmore Lane. It accommodates a residential property in the Countryside. The immediate surrounding area is predominantly rural in character. However, the Site is located within easy walking distance to and from the settlement boundary of Holbeach (1 minute drive or 10 minutes walk) which begins from the northern end of Cranmore Lane. As such, the Site is reasonably located for convenient access to local amenities.
- 2.2. The Site is not located in a Conservation Area and the subject building is not a Listed Building.

3. Planning history

- 3.1. In August 2026, the LPA refused the certificate of lawfulness application (reference H09-0561-26) in relation to use of dwelling (Class C3a) as a children's home for up to three children, manager & two carers sleeping overnight working on a rota basis (C2). The LPA considered this proposal to be a material change of use that requires full planning permission.

4. Proposed development

- 4.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing property from a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential care home (Use Class C2) for children.
- 4.2. The premises would be operated by an Ofsted-regulated operator in the field of residential homes for children.
- 4.3. The details of the residential home at the Ladysmith House are as follows:
- Children capacity would be a maximum of 3 children;
 - Children age range would be up to 18 years;
 - Property would always (24/7) be supervised by staff;
 - During day shift (07:00-22:00), there would be a maximum of 2 staff;
 - During night shift (22:00-07:00), there would be a maximum of 2 staff;
 - There would be an office room available for staff, and the night shift staff would rotate the usage of the sleeping room to allow the supervision of the property through the night;
 - Children would be educated away from home and transported to/from their schools by car, approved taxi, public transport or on foot with a member of staff acting as a chaperone if needed; and
 - In the event of a child with additional needs, the local authority would transport the child to/from their school using their own vehicle.
- 4.4. The description of development for which full planning permission is sought is as follows:

‘Change of use from single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to residential care home (Use Class C2) for children and associated alterations.’

5. Planning policy

- 5.1. The key role of the planning system is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. At the heart of the planning framework are statutory Development Plans which seek to guide the decision-making process. Planning law requires that where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. In this case, the relevant Development Plan consists of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (2019).
- 5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') and the LPA's Supplementary Planning Guidance and/or Documents are also material considerations.

6. Assessment

- 6.1. The Written Ministerial Statement¹ on 23 May 2023 from the then Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Rachel Maclean MP, states that the planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society. It notes that local planning authorities should give due weight to and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs and all parties in the development process should work together closely to facilitate the timely delivery of such vital accommodation for children across the country. It goes on to state that the Government expects local planning authorities to support these vital developments where appropriate, to ensure that children in need of accommodation are provided for in their communities.
- 6.2. The Written Ministerial Statement followed the findings by the Competition and Markets Authority² that the planning process is a significant challenge for children's home providers seeking to create new supply to accommodate new placements.

Use

- 6.3. Policy 17 of the Local Plan (2019) supports the development of mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities including specialist care home provision. Policy 19 further supports specialist housing on sites situated outside the settlement boundaries where the need for specialist housing cannot be met within the settlement boundaries.
- 6.4. Government policy is to reduce the use of out-of-area placements and residential care. Under the Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, accommodation provided by local authorities for looked after children must be within the local authority's area unless this is not reasonably practicable. There is overwhelming evidence³ of concerns raised on looked after children who are put on 'out of the area' placements because of a lack of suitable provision closer to home. These children feel trauma and isolation, and often do not see loved ones often enough when placed out of area.
- 6.5. There is a need to provide more local placement opportunities for looked after children, rather than 'out of the area' placements. The priority is to have sufficient residential care accommodation within the area to meet the needs of the children in the area.

¹ UK Parliament (2023) Planning for accommodation for looked after children. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-05-23/hcws795>

² Competition and Markets Authority (2022) Children's social care market study. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6228726cd3bf7f158c844f65/Final_report.pdf

³ House of Commons (2021) Looked after children: out of area, unregulated and unregistered accommodation (England). <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7560/CBP-7560.pdf>

- 6.6. The Looked After Children Statistics for 2024/2025 by Department for Education⁴ show that c30% of new children placements (223 out of 805 children) for that year in Lincolnshire had to be placed outside of the area boundary. The proposed care home at the Site could therefore contribute to additional care provision for looked after children within the area.
- 6.7. Lincolnshire County Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027⁵ shows that there should be a strategic focus on increasing local placement sufficiency, and strengthening market relationships with independent care home providers for children. Indeed, paragraph 3.4.2 of the strategy notes that as much as 53% of independent residential care placements were not in Lincolnshire or adjacent and that this needs to be a real area of focus for market development.
- 6.8. It is evident that there is a significant shortage of residential care homes that can accommodate children within the area. The proposed care home would be a major community asset and a vital community infrastructure to the local communities and families struggling to find suitable local residential care facilities for their children.
- 6.9. The property is well equipped and laid out to provide a high standard of living arrangements that can provide the children with independence but at the same time the children have the safety net and benefits of staff care and support available 24/7 as needed within the property. The Site is also well located to provide the children with non-car means to local amenities. For example, the settlement boundary of Holbeach is 10 minutes away from the Site on foot.
- 6.10. The proposal would result in the loss of the existing Use Class C3 dwelling use. However, it is evident that there is a compelling case for the proposed residential care home which would offer significant benefits to the local communities and families. Such significant benefits would outweigh the limited harm caused by the loss of one Use Class C3 dwelling. This is an exceptional circumstance where the proposal would provide social infrastructure to meet an identified local need for in-area placement of children which could otherwise not exist.
- 6.11. In any event, the residential care home remains a legitimate form of housing that caters for a specific sector of the wider housing market for which there is an identified demand. Indeed, the residential care home would still function to house people, and the housing of children and young persons is better suited within a residential setting rather than being segregated in an institution. In this context, the proposal does not result in the loss of housing in real terms. As such, the loss of the existing Use Class C3 dwelling use is

⁴ Department for Education (2025) Children looked after in England including adoption: 2024 to 2025. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2025>

⁵ Lincolnshire County Council, Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027 [lincolnshire-children-in-care-sufficiency-strategy-2023-27](#)

justified and the proposed care home use of the Site is acceptable on balance.

- 6.12. Policy 30 of the Local Plan (2019) provides that development proposals should not result in a harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and surrounding area.
- 6.13. The nature of the care home is residential which is not a noise generating use and as such the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable noise or disturbance to neighbours. Indeed, the residential nature of the care home means that the use would not result in noise or disturbance above what would be anticipated within a residential setting.
- 6.14. The operation of the proposed care home would be carefully managed given its status as a children's care home and the number of children would be limited to a maximum of 3 in total. There would be a maximum of 2 staff during day shift and a maximum of 2 staff during night shift as detailed in Section 4 of this statement. Mostly the numbers of people at the Site would not be the maximums allowed, as the children are out during the day (at schools for example) or during the evening (at social or entertainment events for example). The staff members could also join the children to act as a chaperone. The number of people that actually stays in the property is therefore likely to be one or two at a given time through most of the day. This level of occupation is reasonably in line with what would be anticipated for a regular single family dwellinghouse, therefore noise and disturbance impacts to neighbouring occupiers would likely be negligible.
- 6.15. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Site has no immediate neighbours.
- 6.16. In this context, the proposed care home would successfully safeguard the residential amenities enjoyed by the neighbouring occupiers.

Access

- 6.17. A maximum of 2 staff would be present at the Site at one time. Sufficient vehicle parking spaces would be available for staff off-street as well as spaces for off-street cycle parking. The parking demand for the proposal would be similar to that from use of the Site as a single family dwellinghouse and there would therefore be little impact on parking congestion.
- 6.18. Therefore, it is anticipated that the additional trip generation associated with the proposal would be minimal as well as the impact on parking congestion.

Scale

- 6.19. The proposal does not seek to change the external scale of the property.

Appearance

- 6.20. The proposal does not seek to change the external appearance of the property.

Amount

6.21. The proposal seeks to change the use of the entirety of the premises.

Layout

6.22. The proposed layout is illustrated in the submitted drawings.

Landscaping

6.23. The proposal does not seek any changes to the existing landscaping arrangements.

7. Balancing exercise and conclusions

7.1. Full planning permission is sought for:

‘Change of use from single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to residential care home (Use Class C2) for children and associated alterations.’

- 7.2. The provision of such a facility will allow looked after children from the area to reside locally, and nearer to their social work teams and other support networks than might otherwise be possible.
- 7.3. The scheme represents a good opportunity to provide a community asset and a vital community infrastructure to the local communities and families struggling to find suitable local residential care facilities for their children. The care home would be located in a very sustainable and accessible location as it would be within an established residential setting with convenient access to amenities in Holbeach.
- 7.4. There is a significant shortage of residential care homes that can accommodate local placement of children from the area. The proposed development would make a valuable contribution to the care provision for looked after children in the area and would reduce the reliance on ‘out of the area’ placements.
- 7.5. The proposed care home would carefully manage its operation and there would not be any adverse implications arising from the proposal in terms of residential amenities and parking conditions.
- 7.6. The loss of one Use Class C3 dwelling use would not be detrimental to the Council’s housing supply and such loss would be overwhelmingly outweighed by the significant benefits of the proposed residential care home. This is an exceptional circumstance where the proposal would provide social infrastructure to meet an identified local need for in-area placement of children which could otherwise not exist. In any event, the residential care home remains a legitimate form of housing that caters for a specific sector of the wider housing market for which there is an identified demand. Indeed, the residential care home would still function to house people, and the housing of children and young persons is better suited within a residential setting rather than being segregated in an institution. In this context, the proposal does not result in the loss of housing in real terms.
- 7.7. As such, the proposed development as a whole is acceptable and in line with the aims and provisions of the Development Plan.
- 7.8. The proposal enjoys the clear support of the Government as expressed in the Written Ministerial Statement on 23 May 2023 from the then Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Rachel Maclean MP.
- 7.9. Therefore, we respectfully request that the LPA grants planning permission for the proposed development.