

The Hamlets, West Street, Prescott, L34 1LE

Prepared by



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Written By	AJ	Assistant Planner
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this planning statement is to demonstrate that a change of use at The Hamlets, West Street, Prescot, L34 1LE from eight C3 (Dwelling Houses) to a Childrens care home under the use class C2 (Care Home) is acceptable from a planning policy and planning balance perspective.
- 1.2 The Hamlet's Avenues ('the applicant') is an organisation that is passionate about creating inclusive environments, and to ensure those most vulnerable in society have equal opportunities in the form of suitable and safe homes that provide educational, social and leisure opportunities. Further details of the organisation and its purpose will be explained in Section 3 of this statement.
- 1.3 The site consists of Woodcroft House and 7 detached homes, consisting of 4 and 5 bedrooms. The properties are in a small cul-de-sac within a walled environment and also are situated in a conservation area. The properties are well located close to the M57 and Prescot town centre with shops and amenities.
- 1.4 Whilst not a material planning consideration, due to changes in the care policies nationally there is now an established demand for C2 properties of this nature and this application will help to meet this need whilst providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment for children with additional needs. These children need extra assistance with their day to day living due to their lifelong learning disabilities. These homes will provide 24-hour care and support for individuals, providing them a home which meets their needs and allows them to reach their maximum potential.
- 1.5 This statement comprises of a description of the site and surrounding area; an overview of the Applicants experiences in this field; the proposed development and operation of the site; the relevant policy frameworks; the pre-application feedback; the planning justification; and a planning summary to conclude.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site, previously known by the council as The Land at Woodcroft, and now currently referred to as The Hamlets, is situated to the west of Prescot Town Centre, within the Prescot Conservation Area. It is approximately 200m from the town centre and associated amenities.



(Figure 1: Site Location www.google.co.uk/maps)

2.2 At the time of writing the site has been vacant since completion, with the exception of a permanent security officer who lives on the site to protect the properties whilst this application has been prepared and submitted.

2.3 The proposal site comprises of a large, extensively refurbished, detached 19th century Victorian villa and seven two-storey dwellings (as detailed in application ref: 18/00785/FUL) within its walled former grounds, with associated access ways and parking provisions (can be seen below in Figure 1).



(Figure 1: Site Plan – Architect Julien Denis)

2.4 The site falls within an area designated as Primary Residential Area within the Knowsley Council Local Plan (adopted 2016). None of the buildings are listed however the Victorian villa is considered to be of heritage value and forms a distinctive feature within the site.

2.5 The application site was advertised for tender by the council in 2017 and it was stated by the council's planning department in the corresponding land disposal document for this site that '*Residential or mixed residential / office development is considered to be the most appropriate use for this site*'. This therefore led to the current development being approved on the site as the residential principle was encouraged but a commercial element was not discounted in this residential location.

2.6 The Hamlets is accessed via West Street which adjoins onto Liverpool Road with access to the M57 and A58.

2.7 The site lies within Flood Risk Zone 1 as identified on the Flood Map for Planning website (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>).

Planning History

Application Number	Proposal	Date of Decision	Decision Type
22/00556/FUL	Application to vary condition No.4 (Approved plans) attached to planning permission 18/00785/FUL to allow for replacement windows in Woodcroft (Plot 1) to be retained (as opposed to retention of original windows)	19/12/2022	Approved with conditions.
18/00785/FUL	Demolition of 2 storey building, timber clad building, reception building and pre-fabricated office building, conversion of victorian building to form 1 no. Five bed dwelling and erection of 7 no. Two storey dwellings, together with vehicular/pedestrian accesses, landscaping and associated works.	19/06/2022	Approved.
15/00335/FUL	change of use of office space situated within former Victoria dwelling & annexe building to children's day nursery (use class d1) together	13/08/2015	Approved.

	with construction of external play area, boundary treatments & associated works.		
97/00322/APP	Installation of 2 No. Entrance Gates to Existing Vehicular.	22/08/1997	Approved.
74/12284/HIST	Erection of 2 storey office block with single storey link to existing building of refurbishments conditions.	12/02/1990	Approved with conditions.
03/00718/TWA	Trim back 1 No. Tree		

Table 2.1 Planning history for the site

2.8 The site has been previously approved as a children's day care nursery (Ref 15/00335/FUL). The information available online does not state the maximum number of children that the nursery could accommodate, however the information does show that a maximum of 30 children ages 1-4 could be in the outside play area at any one time. It also included the provision of 45 parking spaces. No part of the officer assessment or highways comments made an assessment relating to vehicle movements or wider residential amenity impacts as a result of this permission becoming operational, however the nature of the use would be that pick up and drop offs would occur throughout the day from 7.30 - 18.00 Monday to Friday, with deliveries, bin collections and staff movements outside of these core nursery hours.

2.9 The application as approved in 2022 led to the renovation of the detached Victorian villa and the erection of 7 detached properties with private gardens and garages. This application proposes to retain entirely the appearance of this approved application and there are only internal changes proposed to allow a safe environment to be created for the children.

3.0 THE APPLICANT

- 3.1 The Hamlet's Avenues is an organisation who specialise in providing residential care for children and young people who are in need of extra assistance. The senior management team have over 50 years' combined experience of managing Ofsted and Care Quality Commission-regulated care homes and have a proven track record of successfully ensuring that vulnerable young people's needs are upheld and safeguarded as required by Ofsted and Social Work England.
- 3.2 The Hamlets Avenues will play a vital role in providing the social care for children with identified residential housing needs across Merseyside as they seek to establish a calm, relaxing environment that maximises in Prescott that enhances the resident's abilities to grow independently, whilst providing the highest quality of care.
- 3.3 The residential properties within this care facility will be family homes for the residents placed in the care of The Hamlet's Avenues, with them attending educational services in the daytime. At weekends and in school holidays the residents will live as they would in any family home with the residents playing in and outside of the properties and going on day trips, doing leisure activities such as swimming, visiting the park and being taken on holidays as a family unit.
- 3.4 The applicant supports people with learning disabilities to realise their potential. The Hamlet's Avenue help to develop the skills of their residents and build friendships to form social networks. A one-to-one mentoring service is offered to residents, as well as social trips, and training courses such as cookery, literacy, and gardening. They also will help to develop functional skills and improve their quality of day to day life as they move towards adulthood.
- 3.5 The residents, wherever possible, will maintain their relationships with parents or wider family members, and this is something The Hamlet's Avenues is dedicated to. All social and leisure plans will be rigorously assessed prior to any community activity taking place. Staff ratios will also be assessed dependent on the residents individual needs at the time of the activity. Due to their vulnerability, each resident will always have full supervision.

- 3.6 The people who will become the new residents of the The Hamlet's Avenues have specific, identifiable, and diagnosed medical conditions that requires a level of care that the parents and guardians are unable to provide on a continuous basis to them.
- 3.7 These children and young people have a range of learning disabilities which can be mild, moderate, or severe but in all cases, this is always lifelong. Those with a diagnosed learning disability will need more care and support with mobility, personal care, communication and developing those key life skills. The Hamlet's Avenues aim to provide long term stable placements to enable the correct support to reach their full potential.
- 3.8 The senior management team at The Hamlets Auenues have over 50 years of combined experience in managing Ofsted and CQC care homes and adhering to statutory legalisation, ensuring those vulnerable young people's needs are upheld and always safeguarded. Therefore, all senior teams are extremely experienced and continue to be OFSTED and or CQC /Social Work England registered. The site also has a designated Responsible Individual which is an OFSTED and CQC requirement. The Responsible Individual must undertake a full assessment by OFSTED to demonstrate that they are deemed suitable to manage care homes, in terms of leadership and management skills within the residential childcare sector. The team has been carefully and rigorously selected to establish the new company and bring their amalgamated experience into this new business.
- 3.9 Whilst operating as a residential care home facility, concerns were raised at the community consultation event that there was a perception that there would be a detrimental impact on the residents of the area. Whilst the business has a regulated requirement to maintain the highest standards for the residents it is important that there is full and transparent line of communication between staff and local residents and the routes to this will be clearly set out in the Operational Management Plan which forms part of this application.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 We are seeking permission for the following proposed development:

The change of use of 8 residential dwellings from use class C3 to use a singular use class C2 Children and Young Persons Residential Care Facility with the addition of an electric gate to main entrance. Application to also include retrospective planning permission for a 2.2 metre high close boarded fence to the southern perimeter.

4.2 The site will exist and operate as a single care facility, with the respective properties fulfilling the relevant role within this as indicated below.

4.3 The breakdown below sets out the proposed children numbers and staffing levels of each property:

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WEST STREET DWELLING (drawing ref: 2433-02-03-002 - Existing site plan)	NUMBER OF CHILDREN/YOUNG ADULTS	NUMBER OF STAFF PER ROTA FOR EACH PROPERTY & ESTIMATED SHIFT PATTERN	FUNCTION OF THE PROPERTY (MAINLY THE OLD HOUSE)
Plot 01 - Woodcroft House 1 Counseling Room 3 Offices 2 Shower Rooms 1 Teaching Room 1 Sensory Room 2 Store Rooms 1 Kitchen 1 TV Room/ Breakout Space 1 WC	N/A	N/A	This property will be used predominantly by staff and include staff rooms. It will also provide social and mentoring spaces for service users and their families.
Plot 02 - The Hamlets 5 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 En-suite 1 Ground floor WC	2	3 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift.	Long term placement for both children/ young people.
Plot 03 - The Hamlets 5 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 En-suite 1 Ground floor WC	2	3 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift.	Long term placement for both children/ young people.
Plot 04 - The Hamlets 5 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 En-suite 1 Ground floor WC	3	3 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift.	Long term placement for both children/ young people.
Plot 05 -The Hamlets 4 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 En-suite 1 Ground floor WC	2	3 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift.	Long term placement for both children/ young people.
Plot 06 - The Hamlets 4 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 Ensuite 1 Ground floor WC	1	2 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift. See attached rota pattern based on one child on a 2:1 staffing regime for one child.	Solo placement for both children/ young people.
Plot 07 - The Hamlets 4 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 Ensuite 1 Ground floor WC	1	2 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift. See attached rota pattern based on one child on a 2:1 staffing regime for one child.	Solo placement for both children/ young people.

Plot 08 - The Hamlets 4 Bedroom 1 Bathroom 1 Ensuite 1 Ground floor WC	1	2 staff members on during the day with an additional staff member attending for a waking night shift. See attached rota pattern based on one child on a 2:1 staffing regime for one child.	Solo placement for both children/ young people.
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4.4 The proposal is to provide residential care homes for up to 12 children with specific physical, emotional and learning disabilities. These children require additional care and an environment which is tailored to their needs. The company The Hamlets Avenues who propose this project, seek to establish a calm, relaxing environment that maximises the children's abilities to grow independently, whilst providing the highest quality of care.

4.5 The application also includes a conservation style wrought iron electrically operated gate and a separate pedestrian access gate to the entrance of the site. The importance of this is explained in Section 7 of this statement and further iterated and justified in need through the Crime Impact Assessment which forms part of this application.

4.6 As can be seen in the table above 24 hour supervision will be provided by a range of specialists and qualified carers for the 12 children/young adults on the site. These are children who will have additional care needs relating to their disability and who require extra facilities and care to give them a suitable long term home environment. Therefore, changes to the internal layout of the properties will include the provision of sensory rooms, including additional provision in Woodcroft offering a therapeutic environments when they are needed.

4.7 The change of use will have no greater effect on the residential nature of this area as it remains within the C use class which by its very classification indicates that the use is appropriate in residential areas. It is the Hamlets Avenues care ethos to ensure a family environment within the home, with the resident's pattern of living reflecting the expected schedule of any child and young person. This property has the added benefit of the Woodcroft property to operate as a operational community hub for the residents and employees of the facilitiy.

- 4.8 The residential care premises will have a designated Responsible Individual which is an OFSTED requirement for care homes of this type. The Responsible Individual is a senior management role and this person must undertake a full assessment by OFSTED to demonstrate that they are deemed suitable to manage children's care homes, in terms of leadership and management skills within the residential childcare sector.
- 4.9 As previously stated the methods and procedures for communication between staff and residents of West Street and surrounding area will be clearly set out in the Operational Management Plan and when operational; The Hamlet's Avenues will be obligated to adhere to the plan and procedures as set out in the document.

5.0 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework advises that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. In accordance with this best practice approach, the applicant sought pre-application advice from the Council requesting consideration of the fundamental elements of the scheme to ensure a strong planning application could be curated under the guidance of the Council's feedback.

5.2 Overall, the pre-application advice had no concerns with the use of this site changing to C2 in principle. The feedback raised concerns relating to perceived operational challenges for the concentration of the use of this type which we do not consider to be a material planning consideration as this is out of the scope of policy. Additionally, in relation to the concentration of the C2 properties, this application is made as one C2 use with a comprehensive single business that covers the entire site so the assessment should not relate to merits of the individual properties but the use of the site for one care home for up to 12 children with shared facilities.

5.3 The case officer also referenced that Knowsley Housing did not have a demand for this need. Again, this is not a material planning consideration and there is no policy that would control the number of C2 care home operations in the Borough. The information given relating to the wider community issues are also not considered to be relevant or a material planning consideration and this will be further explained below.

Principle of Development

5.4 The pre application advice placed great emphasis on the crime levels in the local area and considered this of significance when discussing the proposal at this address. Relevance to this feedback therefore is to be taken accordingly as prejudice against the end user of the proposed development cannot be taken into the decision making process and the resultant 'fear of crime' must relate to the use in terms of land rather than assumptions "not supported by evidence as to the character of future occupiers" (Smith v FSS [2005] EWCA Civ 859).

5.5 In summary, the case officer stated that *it is considered that the placing of 13 children/ young people in such close proximity to each other in what is proposed to be a gated children's home community would be likely to result in :-*

- *The **potential** risk of exploitation from criminal gangs placing the children and community at risk due the children's vulnerabilities – This is a perception without justification or evidence and as the children are constantly under adult supervision.*
- *The **potential** for an increase in anti- social behaviour – This is a perception and could apply to any new residential use where the behaviour and actions of residents cannot be controlled.*
- *There would be no community cohesion by placing all 8 Children's homes together in one small residential estate. This would not be beneficial to either the children/young people or the wider community – It has to be iterated that the function of the business is that The Hamlets would operate as one care home facility and not 8 individual businesses – in addition the definition of community is :- the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality.*

Therefore, it could be put forward that the community of Prescot is a transient and changeable perception dependent on a number of physical, social and environmental factors and cannot be forced, controlled or assessed by planning.

The perceived impact of this C2 use class and its negative impact on the community is refuted as a tangible and measurable planning policy consideration.

- *There would be an increased potential for missing persons (i.e children not returning on time/running away) placing increasing pressures on the local police limited resources – Again, this is not a material planning consideration and is a perception. The children are never left unattended at any time and the gates at the entrance of the home will add to the security of the site.*
- *The children's homes would lend themselves to becoming any easy target for blame should there be any incidents in the surrounding area – Not a material planning consideration and is a prejudice against children with additional care needs.*
- *Given the proximity of the proposed homes to adjacent residential dwellings the comings and goings and general noise and disturbance associated with 8 such Children's homes (if the homes are not managed effectively and if suitable matches are not made with the statement of purpose as noted above) would, have an adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents - This is a C2 use which falls under the residential use classification and therefore is acceptable in this residential area. Again, this site will be operating as one care facility and the levels of noise and disturbance would be only potentially on par with that of a normal*

residential development. In theory, an alternate use of the site could actually be more impactful on the residential area than that of this application as each property could be changed into a C4 HMO use without requiring any planning permission.

- It is important to highlight the number of service users on this site is being decreased to 12 children, further reducing the speculative risk associated with this proposal.

Highway Safety

5.6 Regarding Highways, no concerns were raised and the proposal satisfies the necessary provisions for related matters.

5.7 The gates as proposed to be installed are deemed appropriate, with clarity on their function and positioning being specified, for example, inward opening gates and a minimum of 5 metres from the edge of the highway's boundary.

Heritage Issues

5.8 The gates were raised as a consideration of this application to ensure its suitability to the site's context. The previous approach under permission ref 18/00785/FUL is recommended as ideal for this application given the way in which it mirrored the historic positioning. The advice highlights the Victorian character of the site and suggests design should respond positively to this element.

5.9 The design of the electric gates will fully consider this context and uphold the Victorian character of the site, although the gates are to be functional to support the security of the site for its proposed use. A pedestrian gate will also be included in this design.

Pre-Application Conclusion

5.10 The pre-application advice concluded: *The proposal would give rise to several concerns relating to the housing of 13 children and young adults in such close proximity and occupying the entire 8 properties in a small residential development. This is considered to increase the potential of putting the children at risk of being exploited into criminal/anti-social activities and potentially increasing crime/ anti-social behaviour or the fear of crime in the surrounding areas of Prescott which are already suffering from one of the highest crime rates in Knowsley.*

The proposed cumulative impact of 8 children's homes could if not effectively managed or suitable matches are not made would have an adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby adjacent dwellings.

5.11 Since the Pre-Application Advice, the proposal has changed to accommodate 12 children on site, downscaling the initial scale of the application.

5.12 Further to this, their consideration was based primarily on the judgement of character of the future occupiers and issues that already exist in the wider area and around a commercial retail area that is fully detached from the site, and we do not consider that this can be used as a material planning consideration. Even if the Council disagree with the above reasoning, the supporting management plan that will be fully adhered to and implemented consistently across the site. This will ensure a high level of operations on this site and the procedures and measures that have been arranged for if any instances do occur are stated within the Good Neighbour Policy document that accompanies this application.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The planning system is plan-led. Planning law requires applications for planning permission and must be determined in accordance with the development plan, (when taken as a whole) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy

6.2 The content of the NPPF (December 2024) is a material consideration.

6.3 The NPPF requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to approach decision-making in a positive way to encourage growth and it places it very clear presumption in favour of approving applications which comprise sustainable development. In this regard it specifically states: “Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.” (Paragraph 39) “So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. (Paragraph 10).

6.4 The Planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. The NPPF adds that developments should be safe and accessible.

6.5 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.6 Section 5 of the NPPF focuses on the sufficient supply of homes and states ‘Within this context of establishing need, the, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include....people with disabilities’

Development Plan Policies

6.7 The Knowsley Local Plan consists of the adopted Local Plan: Core Strategy (January 2016) and Saved Policies within the Local Plan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (June 2006).

The Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy

The Hamlets, West Street, Prescott, L34 1LE

- Policy CS16 - Specialist and Supported Accommodation
- Policy CS2 - Development Principles
- CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
- CS20 – Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan

- Policy DQ5 - Development in Conservation Areas
- Policy H5 – Development in Primarily Residential Areas
- Policy H7 – Provision of Flats, Nursing and Residential Homes, Hostels and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

7.0 PLANNING JUSTIFICATION

7.1 The main consideration in assessing this planning application is:

Principle of development

Impact on residential amenity

Impact on the highway network

7.2 The above considerations will be assessed against the relevant local and national policies and our assessment will demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable.

7.3 It is worth noting from the outset that there are no policies within the Knowsley Local Plan that seek to prevent single care homes of this type nor are there any limitations on size.

Principle of development

7.4 The layout of the dwellings on this site were secured under the planning application ref: 18/00785/FUL. The use class of this proposal remains residential, and therefore it is not contravening of the overarching national planning policy framework and any local planning policies that the previous application was approved in accordance to.

7.5 The site previously secured planning permission in 2015 as a children's Day Care Nursery ref 15/00335/FUL and proposed the change of the site to Use Class D1 (Non-residential institution). The sites prior approved change of use class, in our professional opinion, would have had significantly greater impact if implemented than our proposal will have. This can be determined due to our proposal not materially differing from a dwelling, as children will be living within the residential properties with carers, replicating a family unit. Therefore, although the earlier application paves the way for the care of children on this site, our proposal maintains the integrity of the area as residential.

7.6 The principle of this development considers Policy CS16: Special and Supported Accommodation from the Knowsley Local Plan. The policy outlines a shortage of specialist or supported accommodation in Knowsley. Specialist and Supported Accommodation is defined accommodation specifically designed/designated to meet the needs of vulnerable people. This includes those with learning disabilities, physical or sensory disabilities, young people at risk and young people leaving care, as

defined by Knowsley Council. In addition, the council will support residential accommodation which is appropriate in terms of environment with ease of access for those with disabilities, which complies with Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development. Therefore, this property is appropriate in terms of its principle as it is suitable in location and meets the local demand for specialist Accommodation.

7.7 The proposal aligns with policy CS19: as the dwellings on site were considered acceptable in the application ref 18/00785/FUL. This application seeks no major changes to the external design to these approved properties and site. Therefore, the design and the site layout of the property will maintain suitability, as previously decided upon in the application. The only changes that will occur will be small minor internal/external changes to the property to meet the additional needs of the children including ease of access for wheelchairs and sensory rooms.

7.8 The development is located within the Prescott Town Conservation area. There is no change to the existing layout or any further development on site. Therefore, the compliance with policy DQ5, CS19 and CS20 in the application ref 18/0075/FUL, still stands and is upheld by this proposal.

7.9 The location of this development is key to the quality of life for the residents. The Prescott Town conservation area is well a connected area with integrated public transport routes. This is key for the ease in access of staff and visitors. The site is also within a quiet leafy suburb on the edge of Prescott Town, with lined trees and open space.

Impact on residential amenity

7.10 The Hamlet Avenues is passionate about creating residential homes for those who are in need of extra support. Therefore, the environment they are passionate about creating is nurturing, calm and safe. The idea is to create homes for vulnerable children, who depend on the care from others.

7.11 These houses will function as a typical family home, creating an environment with occupiers living as a household. These small-scale care homes will therefore be no different to their current use as 4-5 bed family homes. In addition, this proposal will reduce the potential number of children within these properties from numbers upwards of 4 to the reduced number of 3 children per dwelling.

7.12 This site is split into several residential properties and has been selected as a site for this use to avoid an institutional appearance, which was a major criticism of previous care homes for children. This home will sit comfortably within a residential area that benefit from a private road, parking and gardens. The private gardens will be used like any other family home. In addition, they will be vital for the enhanced quality of life, for the children who reside there. Woodcroft House borders No 7 West Street, however, has a boundary of a 2.6 metre wall. Other neighbouring properties in proximity include those at Wood Green. The properties have previously been considered to have satisfactory level of residential amenity. In addition, there is no regular timetabled outdoor play time like the previously approved a Children's Day Care Nursery ref 15/00335/FU.

7.13 Woodcroft house will be used as a part of this residential care facility as a building predominantly relating to the business operations/administrations, providing space for offices. It will also be used by the residents as a community space and space for family visitors to spend time with their children. There will also be a kitchen and residential spaces where the young adults will learn life skills to enable them to make the often difficult transition from the child to adult care system.

7.14 The gardens add further benefit to providing for the additional needs of the residents, providing an important outdoor space. In addition, the aim of the business is that the children live in a normal domestic environment, so the residents will use the garden no more than a child in a family based home.

7.15 It is important to highlight, as mentioned earlier in this statement, that the application site would be able to become the location for C4 HMO's within each property with no planning permission required. This on balance would raise greater concern to the residential amenity than that of its use as an OFSTED and CQC regulated care home.

7.16 Equally to this, the site remaining largely unoccupied increases its vulnerability and if it were to be operational with legitimate activity as proposed, the risk of crime will significantly reduce. This is iterated within the Crime Impact Assessment that accompanies this application.

7.17 Proposals for Ofsted and CQC care homes are not uncommon and planning decisions relating to similar proposals have concluded that it cannot be assumed that children and young people living within residential care homes would be more likely to be antisocial

or create higher levels of noise or disruption than those living within a traditional family 'unit'. The residential care homes we are proposing will be managed by specialist staff who are trained to deal with any situations should any arise. The crime impact statement also addresses the extent of any potential relating risks and have included recommendations that will reduce or mitigate any potential occurrence of this.

7.18 One of the core principles of the NPPF is to ensure a good standard amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

7.19 The property is accessed directly from West Street. There is only one access route to the property. The Hamlets and Woodcroft House is a private road, providing a quiet and safe access route to and from the properties.

7.20 Regarding access to the property, this will be controlled via the electric gate that is proposed. It will contribute to the residents safety as well as providing a strong initial layer of security across the site in general as is iterated in the supporting Crime Impact Assessment document that verifies its necessity. It will contribute to the monitoring and management of visitors to the site.

7.21 The 8 dwellings including Woodcroft House all have their own parking, suitable for up to two cars with a garage. The access point is established and the change of class of the dwellings to a single residential unit, does not require any amendments to the access point.

7.22 In relation to deliveries and servicing the proposal will not generate over and above that expected of a similar grouping of C3 Dwellings. These comings and goings will therefore have no increased impact on the existing highway network.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 8.11 This document seeks to address the main elements of the application proposal to provide an overview of the planning policy framework against which the application will be assessed.
- 8.12 This application proposes the change of use from C3 to C2 at the site of The Hamlets, West Street, Prescot, L34 1LE.
- 8.13 The application has been considered against the policies of the Local Plan and relevant material and National Planning Policy and Legislation. It has been illustrated that the proposal conforms to the criteria set out in these policies and that the principle of development is acceptable.
- 8.14 The NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development running through the decision-taking process. The proposed development is consistent with the NPPF's core principles.
- 8.15 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This proposal satisfies all relevant national and local policy considerations.