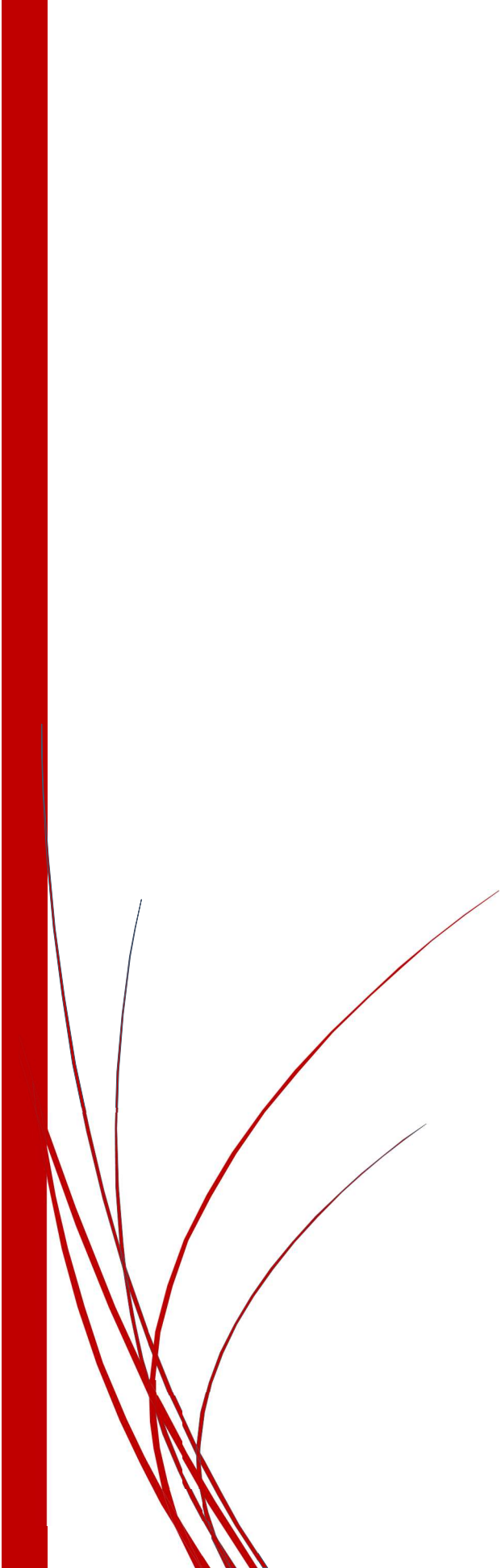




Planning Statement

19 Wood Lane, Prescot,
L34 1LN

October 2021

Scalia Planning

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Scalia Planning, the 'Agent', has been instructed by Supporting Futures Ltd, the 'Applicant', to submit a full planning application for the change of use of 19 Wood Lane, Prescott, L34 1LN, the 'Site'.
- 1.2. The proposed description of development is as follows:
'Change of Use from residential dwelling to care home for children.'
- 1.3. This Statement has been prepared to address the planning policy consideration associated with the change of use and all other material considerations as may be relevant to the proposals.
- 1.4. The application package comprises this Statement and the following:
 - Application Forms and Certification;
 - Location Plan;
 - Site Plan; and
 - Existing layout plan.

2. Site Description and Context

- 2.1. The Site comprises the property at 19 Wood Lane, Prescott, L34 1LN. The extent of the Site is identified on the accompanying Site Plan and in brief extends to approximately 290 sq m. It is currently developed as a four-bedroom semi-detached house with private amenity areas to the front, side and rear, with off road parking for up to three vehicles from Wood Lane.
- 2.2. The Site is located within a predominantly residential area of Prescott, within easy access to local bus stops that provide access to a number of local facilities and services in the surrounding area. It is also within 250m of the Browns Field children's play area and less than 500m of the centre of Prescott.
- 2.3. The Site is in Flood Zone 1 and therefore there is no anticipated risk of flooding from either tidal, fluvial or groundwater sources.

Planning History

- 2.4. In December 2019 planning permission was granted for a single storey rear extension and two storey side extension with porch (application reference 19/00615/FUL).
- 2.5. The above permission has been implemented, with the property enlarged to comprise the current accommodation, in brief being ground floor living room, family room, kitchen and dining area with four bedrooms at first floor, one with en-suite, and family bathroom.

3. Proposed Use

- 3.1. The Application proposes the change of use of the Site from residential (Class C3) to a residential care home for up to three young people between the ages of 8 and 17 (Class C2). There are no physical works proposed that would require the grant of planning permission.
- 3.2. The Application has been submitted on behalf of Supporting Futures Ltd who are an established, reputable provider of residential care and education for young people with special educational needs and are registered with Ofsted under the Learning Disability category. Supporting Futures Ltd operate a number of residential homes for children diagnosed with Learning Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Conditions across the North West.
- 3.3. Supporting Futures Ltd would operate the property as a residential care home, providing a safe, caring and secure home environment for up to three young people. Autism and Autism Spectrum Conditions cover a wide range of severity, and the home would help assist in providing continuous care and support for the individuals in a safe and homely environment.
- 3.4. The home would be the main residence for the young people, with daily care provided on a 1:1 basis for each individual. In addition, some of the residents may require specialist assistance in areas such as speech and language therapy and educational support. This would normally be provided within the property by visiting specialists by prior appointment with the manager of the home.
- 3.5. The day to day running and management of the facility will be in line with the National Minimum Standards and Regulations as issued by the Secretary of State for Health under the Care Standards Act (2000). A Health and Safety check has already been undertaken in respect of the property which confirms that there are no structural changes or modifications required in order for the building to be compliant with both the Children's Homes Regulations and Ofsted Registration.
- 3.6. The operational standards would require a minimum of three members of staff to be present at any one time during the day, with two members of staff present during the night. The overnight staff would normally work on a 24-hour rota, with staff changes taking place between 09:45hrs and 10:00hrs (outside of peak hours). Any staff not undertaking a night time shift would normally leave the home by 21.00hrs. The additional specialists/care assistants referred to in paragraph 3.4 above would attend the property only during the daytime hours, and any visits from family members and other healthcare professionals would also take place during this time – all of the above would need to be by prior arrangement with the home manager to ensure the safety and comfort of the residents and to minimise any disturbance to their daily routines.

Additional Operational Provisions

- 3.7. The provision of care normally required within the homes operated by the Applicant is on a 1:1 basis. There are sometimes circumstances where a young person would

need additional support for a short period of time and as such this Application seeks the ability to allow for 2:1 care for each resident should the need ever arise. This is not a normal scenario but it is a provision that needs to be in place within any conditions imposed on the grant of a permission in order for Ofsted to register a property as suitable for the number of residents proposed. This is referred to as 'crisis care' and is a short term means by which to address a specific difficulty or requirement that one of the residents of a facility may have.

- 3.8. Supporting Futures Ltd do not operate facilities for residents with long term crisis care/2:1 care needs. If a resident needed short term 2:1 care their case would be reviewed regularly, with such care requirements rarely lasting longer than 7 days. If such care is required for longer than 7 days then the operator would be required to review whether the facility was the most appropriate location for the child to reside.
- 3.9. In a scenario where there were only two young people in residence at the property and one developed a need for 2:1 care, the Applicant would not introduce a third young person to the facility until the period of crisis care had subsided. If, however, there were already three young people in residence and one or more of them developed a need for 2:1 care the result of this would be for an additional adult carer to be present at the property per resident during the daytime hours, therefore a maximum of six adult carers and three young people at the property during the day. During night-time hours, there would normally be two carers on site in addition to the residents, if a young person required a waking carer due to crisis care then arrangements would be made to ensure an additional night time carer was available.
- 3.10. Supporting Futures Ltd has advised that it is extremely rare for the young people to develop a requirement for 2:1 care but they are conscious of the requirement to facilitate for such care as part of the Ofsted registration process and want to ensure that any conditions imposed on the use of the property allow for this.
- 3.11. As events requiring 2:1 care are so rare, the Applicant does not envisage a scenario whereby more than one resident would be in need of such assistance at any one time.

Appropriateness of Use

- 3.12. The proposed development would not cause undue noise or disturbance that might affect neighbouring residential amenity as the facility would operate akin to a traditional family home. If it were adults residing within the property with exactly the same care needs as the potential future young people there would be no requirement for securing a change of use as they would be considered to be living as a single household. However, as the Application relates to provision for young people, who case law has indicated are unable to form and live as a single household due to their age, then it is necessary to classify the facility as a residential care home.
- 3.13. There is no evidence to suggest that the establishment of an appropriately registered and managed care home for young people would impact on neighbouring or future resident amenity, if anything it would potentially enhance the amenity of both. There is no provision within the Council's adopted policy (considered in detail at Section 4) that would be prejudiced by the proposed use. A facility operating as proposed would

not lead to increased levels of noise or disturbance, would not result in increased propensity for overlooking, nor would it increase the propensity for impacts on air quality or access to community facilities.

- 3.14. The only activity associated with the proposals that may be noticeable within the area would potentially be the number of vehicle movements in any single 24-hour period, and even then this would not be out of character in respect of a traditional four-bedroom family home in a residential area. The Site is within a highly sustainable location in terms of accessibility by a range of means of transport and the Applicant encourages staff to use alternative options to the private car, including the use of public transport, which would be perfectly reasonable considering the accessibility of the Site. The Applicant also encourages car sharing and cycling.

4. Planning Policy Considerations

- 4.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. In accordance with the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 'Acts'), the relevant planning policy is contained within the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) and the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006), albeit not all of the policies contained within the later have been saved for development management purposes.
- 4.3. This section of the Planning Statement summarises the relevant elements of NPPF, key planning policies and supplementary guidance applicable to the proposals.

NPPF

- 4.4. The National Planning Policy Framework was published in 2018 and amended in February 2019 and July 2021. The key paragraphs of relevance to the determination of this planning application include the following:
 - Section 2: Paragraph 8 (Achieving Sustainable Development)
 - Section 4: Paragraph 47 (Decision Making)
 - Section 8: Paragraph 92 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities)

Section 2: Paragraph 8 (Achieving Sustainable Development)
- 4.5. The proposed application constitutes a sustainable development. The use encompasses strong social benefits by enabling the young people in the care of the Applicant to live in a home environment, within a well established residential area, and within easy reach of all the local services and amenities that a home environment should be able to access.
- 4.6. Sustainable development is a cornerstone of Government policy and is always a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that when making decisions, the local authority should approve developments that accord with the adopted Development Plan without delay.

Section 4: Paragraph 47 (Decision Making)

- 4.7. Paragraph 47 notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with decisions on applications made as quickly as possible.

Section 8: Paragraph 92 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities)

- 4.8. The Application would allow for the provision of a home environment for up to three children aged 8-17 diagnosed with Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum Conditions. They would be able to live and go about their daily lives as part of the community with suitable provisions in place to allow for extra care support should they enter a short period of crisis care need. The application goes to the heart of the objective of promoting healthy and safe communities, communities which are accessible and inclusive for all.

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016)

- 4.9. The objectives and policies relevant to this application comprise the following as contained within the adopted Core Strategy:
- Strategic Objective 2 - Well-Balanced Housing Market
 - Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development
 - Policy CS2 - Development Principles
 - Policy CS3 - Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution
 - Policy CS16 - Specialist and Supported Accommodation
 - Policy CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

Strategic Objective 2 - Well-Balanced Housing Market

- 4.10. Strategic objective 2 confirms the need for the Council to ensure the provision of housing across all sectors, including supported housing which would include the nature of use proposed for the Site.

Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development

- 4.11. This policy reiterates the advice contained within NPPF and also clarifies where, in a position such as that presently within Knowsley where there are no other relevant development management policies in place, *'permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise'*.

Policy CS2 - Development Principles

- 4.12. The development principles set out within this Policy are reflective of the national position in terms of ensuring sustainable development, reducing carbon emissions, promoting sustainable modes of travel, and working towards more balanced communities. The proposed change of use does not conflict with these provisions and complies with the general principles in so far as the Application proposes the re-use of an existing property for a use comparable to and that would sit in harmony with the

surrounding uses, and the Applicant actively promotes sustainable modes of travel among staff and visitors.

Policy CS3 - Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution

- 4.13. This Policy does not deal specifically with the loss of properties from residential use, however, it does indirectly acknowledge at part 1 that there is an anticipation of some loss of residential units in the projected figures for new development. The proposed use is akin to a traditional residential use and would not in any way preclude the property from reverting to such use again in the future.

Policy CS16 - Specialist and Supported Accommodation

- 4.14. Part 2 of this Policy states that the Council will:

‘provide or support the provision of new specialist and supported residential accommodation, which will:

a) Be located in an appropriate environment, near to highways and public transport links and local amenities;

b) Feature ease of access for those with mobility, physical or sensory disabilities;

c) Facilitate opportunities to align residential facilities with health and social care services

d) Be well-designed and attractive, in compliance with Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and takes account of consultation with relevant community groups and/or potential occupiers; and

e) Feature an appropriate mix of tenures, including affordable and market units.’

- 4.15. Although there are no physical works proposed in order to facilitate the change of use, and therefore not all of the above are directly relevant, the Policy and its reasoned justification do support the principle of the nature of accommodation proposed for the Site, acknowledging the need for such and the importance of integration within the community in accessible locations.

Policy CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

- 4.16. As with the above, much of this Policy is not directly relevant as there are no proposed physical works, however, as demonstrated by the accompanying floor plan and as can be seen from a site visit, the property offers suitable accommodation and amenity areas for the proposed use without potential for harm to the amenity of surrounding uses or occupiers.

Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006)

4.17. The policies relevant to this application comprise the following as contained within the adopted UDP:

- H5 – Development within primarily residential areas
- H7 – Provision of flats, nursing and residential homes, hostels and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

H5 – Development within primarily residential areas

4.18. The proposals do not conflict with the provisions of this Policy. Although the Application proposed a change of use from residential, it proposed a new use which is very much akin to the nature of a traditional residential use which would have no greater impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents than if the property were to remain a family home.

H7 – Provision of flats, nursing and residential homes, hostels and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

4.19. This Policy sets out the criteria against which such proposals would be considered, indicating that compliance with such would result in a positive recommendation. The Policy considerations are:

'a) There would be no unacceptable increase in the level of noise or disturbance, or loss of privacy, for occupiers of neighbouring property;

b) Any necessary vehicle parking areas would be adequate to meet the needs of the development, safe and screened and/or landscaped so as to avoid causing loss of visual amenity in the area;

c) Bin stores, fire escapes and clothes drying areas would be adequately screened or designed so as to avoid causing loss of visual amenity;

d) In the case of proposals to convert existing property, the property would be suitable in terms of its size and character to accommodate the development proposed; and

e) In the case of proposals for nursing or residential homes, hostels or Houses in Multiple Occupation, the proposals would not result in:

- An existing dwelling having a nursing home, residential home, hostel or HMO on both sides; or

- More than 2 adjoining properties being used as a nursing home, residential home, hostel or HMO.'

4.20. The proposed use complies with all of the above criteria and as such should be supported in principle.

Summary

- 4.21. As demonstrates above, this Application conforms with the provisions and aspirations of NPPF and adopted local plan policy and therefore, in accordance with the advice contained therein, the application should be supported and planning permission granted.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The proposed use of the Site is as a home for young people aged 8 – 17 years of age with Learning Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Conditions, to be operated by an established, reputable provider of residential care and education for young people with special educational needs, who are registered with Ofsted under the Learning Disability category.
- 5.2. The proposed use fully complies with the provisions of the adopted local plan and with the aims and objectives of NPPF.
- 5.3. The proposals use would not result in any detrimental harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. If proposed for adults over the age of 18 with the same disabilities there would be no requirement for a change of use. However, as the young people cannot be considered by law to occupy a property as a single household there is a necessity to secure an appropriate change of use to identify the property as a residential care home.
- 5.4. The home would provide a safe and secure environment for the young people to live whilst being provided with 24 hour 1:1 care from suitably trained staff. The home would be managed by the Applicant and would be registered by Ofsted.
- 5.5. Having regard to the above and the balance of material planning considerations, the application accords with the principles of sustainable development and would help to meet a defined need within the community without causing harm or prejudicing the amenity of neighbouring uses. The proposed use is considered appropriate for the Site and we request that planning permission be granted without delay.