

Firstly, thank you to all those who have responded to this application and those that have signed the petition. Your comments are duly noted and taken into consideration.

There are a couple of points that I would emphasise besides the attached letter from the Applicants.

Out of character with the area. This is still a dwelling providing a home as a family unit and just because they are not related makes it no less of a home.

The purpose of this residential home is to provide a loving, caring, nurturing, family environment for children who, through no fault of their own and, often due to circumstances beyond their control, are unable to live with their natural parents or family. The aim is therefore to create a stable, family environment to enable the young people to feel valued and have an opportunity to feel safe, grow and ultimately flourish for what in many cases may be the first time in their lives. The intention is that the home would provide long-term care, building relationships between young people and staff just as any family would do.

There would be little difference with the occupation of the property as a residential C3 use and, the use would not result in any intensification of the existing site.

Anti social behaviour.... There is far more management, rules and regulations surrounding children in care than a normal nuclear unit. There is no evidence to demonstrate that the use of the property as a children's residential home would result in safety concerns for residents. The preconceived assumptions made in the submitted representations are unjustified. All residential homes are subject to strict monitoring and inspections by Ofsted.

In an appeal at 184 Waltham Road, Grimsby, the Inspector responded on the matter of anti-social behaviour as follows:

"A registration process is required with Ofsted before the appellant can open a residential home. Part of the registration process involves staff assessments to ensure the manager of the home and the responsible individual are appropriately trained and experienced. The management of the home would fall under the responsibility of the appellant, who manages many other similar facilities, and would be overseen by Ofsted who would inspect the care home.

10. The care home would be staffed 24 hours a day. The staff would be professionally trained in the supervision of young people. At the request of the Council, the appellant submitted a Location Risk Assessment which is a confidential document.

The police's crime reduction officer raised no objections to the proposed development. Having regard to the above, there is no robust evidence to demonstrate that the proposed use would result in an increase in anti-social behaviour and would result in an unsafe area for the public or increase opportunities for crime and fear of crime." (our emphasis)

In an appeal at 37 Napsbury Lane, St Albans, for the change of use of a property to a residential care home for 4 children, the Inspector responded on the matter of anti-social behaviour, as raised in representations as follows:

"My attention has been drawn to the concerns regarding the potential for anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime. Whilst these concerns are material considerations, in this case there is no substantiated evidence before me to support those concerns. I have seen nothing which convinces me that future residents would be likely to be noisier, more badly behaved or engaged in criminal activity than any other children....".

In addition, it should be noted that the registration process is standard practice; all homes are subject to a location risk assessment and any potential risks are managed accordingly as part of the process. The applicant would carry out staff assessments in a similar way to the appeal case particularly given their safeguarding obligations.

A strong ethos of residential care homes is to integrate children into local communities and equip them with skills to be able to live successful independent lives in the future. It is well known that young people's behaviours are strongly influenced by their living environment and the people with whom they have contact.

Anti-social behaviour falls within the norms of society and is not beyond the realms of what could occur at any residential dwelling. Anti-social behaviour is far less likely to occur in circumstances where incoming young people are made to feel welcome and able to form social attachments within an existing community.

In fact, children residing at the proposed care home would likely be subject to greater levels of supervision than children in a typical family home. For example, with the proposed use, it is unlikely that children would be left unsupervised at any point, whereas in a "traditional" family home, older teenagers may be left unsupervised from time to time.

Proximity to Preparatory School.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals would have a detrimental impact on the safety or wellbeing of existing residents. It is also wholly inappropriate to suggest that it would not be safe for the young people to live in close proximity to a children's preparatory school. As stated above, these children will be supervised, more so than a traditional family environment. Safeguarding considerations are absolutely paramount.

Disturbance: re Traffic generation

The property has 5 bedrooms and generous living accommodation so, the property could potentially be occupied by a family of up to 6; this is a realistic expectation. As with many modern households, if it was an all-adult household, for example if the children were still living at home, it could be expected that many, if not all house-sharers would have their own private car, and use it daily for commuting, shopping, social or other journeys.

If a family with 3 or 4 children, 2 parents and grandparents were resident, it could be the case that there would be more than 6 cars if all offspring were of driving age and each owned a car. Again, these cars could be used daily for the above-mentioned journeys, as well as the school/college run. A typical household is likely to generate several such trips a day. There may also be numerous visitors to the site if it remains in Class C3 use, many of whom may travel by car.

In this case, the children would not be car drivers. Only the carers would have access to a car.

Except for care staff not being resident at the home it would operate in a very similar way to a Class C3 dwellinghouse.

There would be little difference with the occupation of the property as a residential C3 use and, the use would not result in any intensification of the existing site.