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Local Needs Assessment Report

Proposed Change of Use from HMO (C4 / Sui Generis) to C2 – Children's Residential Care Home

Address: 3 Deane Avenue, Ruislip

Prepared by: V-Design Cad Services LTD

Date: 24-09-2025

1. Executive Summary

This report provides evidence that there is a **clear and urgent local need** for children's residential care within the London Borough of Hillingdon and demonstrates that the proposed change of use from an HMO to a children's residential care home (C2) will meet this need.

Key points:

1. The property is **currently an HMO** for up to six adult residents, so there is **no loss of a single-family dwelling (C3)**.
2. There is **documented shortage** of children's residential care placements, leading to many children being placed outside Hillingdon Borough.
3. Existing local C2 homes are **at capacity** or **unsuitable for specialist needs**.
4. The proposed care home will provide **four high-quality, Ofsted-regulated placements** in a safe and homely environment.
5. The scheme aligns with local and national policy, delivering substantial **social benefits** while improving local care provision.

Conclusion:

The proposal meets a critical local need, complies with planning policy (including Policy DMH8 and London Plan Policy H12), and should be supported.

2. Introduction and Scope

Hillingdon Council has statutory duties under the **Children Act 1989** to safeguard and provide care for looked-after children.

Due to **limited local provision**, many children are currently placed in out-of-borough care homes, which has negative impacts on:

- Stability of care,
- Ability to maintain family connections,
- Access to education and local support services,
- Council budgets due to higher external placement costs.

This report:

- Establishes the level of local need,
- Reviews existing provision and capacity,
- Demonstrates why 3 Deane Avenue is uniquely suited to meet this need,
- Provides evidence to justify approval of the proposed development.

3. Planning Policy Context

National Policy

- **NPPF (2024) Paragraph 135:**
Supports development meeting identified community and care needs.
- **Children Act 1989:**
Sets out local authority responsibilities for looked-after children.

Regional Policy – London Plan

- **Policy H12 – Supported and Specialised Accommodation:**
Supports development of specialist care facilities where unmet demand exists.
- **Policy GG4 – Delivering the Homes Londoners Need:**
Encourages inclusive communities with diverse housing types.

Local Policy – Hillingdon Local Plan

- **Policy DMH1 – Safeguarding Existing Housing:**
Protects family homes (C3). *Not applicable here, as the site is already an HMO (multi-occupancy use).*
- **Policy DMH8 – Care Homes:**
Permits C2 developments where:
 1. There is an **identified local need**,

2. The location is appropriate and integrated,
3. There is no harmful over-concentration of similar uses.

4. Current Use of the Site

The site currently operates as a lawful **HMO accommodating up to six adult residents**, with shared living and kitchen facilities.

Feature	Current HMO	Proposed C2 Care Home
Residents	6 adults (independent)	4 children (max)
Supervision	None	24/7 trained professional staff
Visitors	Unrestricted	Pre-booked, limited
Noise management	Minimal	Strict operational controls via OMP
Regulation	Local housing standards only	Ofsted + national safeguarding standards

Key point:

The proposed use **reduces overall occupancy** and replaces unregulated adult use with **tightly controlled, highly supervised care**, likely reducing potential disturbance for neighbours.

5. Local Demand for Children's Care

5.1 Current Statistics – Local Need for Children's Care

The latest data from Hillingdon Children's Services (January 2025) shows a **significant and growing demand** for children's residential care:

- **Total looked-after children (LAC): 285**
- **Children requiring residential (C2) care placements: 56**
- **Children placed outside the borough due to lack of local provision: 34**
- **Looked-after children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP): 34.1% (National average: 31.5%)**
- **Looked-after children receiving SEND support: 16.3% (National average: 26.3%)**

Table 1: Placement Summary

Category	Number of Children	% of Total
Total Looked-After Children (LAC)	285	100%
Residential Care Placements Needed	56	19.6%
Placed Outside Borough	34	60.7%

Key Findings:

1. Around **1 in 5 looked-after children** in Hillingdon require a specialist residential placement.
2. More than **60% of these children are placed outside the borough**, often at significant distance from family, friends, and support networks.
3. This reliance on out-of-borough placements **increases costs** for the council and **reduces stability** for vulnerable children.
4. There has been a sharp **increase in demand** due to a spike in **unaccompanied asylum seeker children** – 128 of the 185 new looked-after children in the last six months fall into this category

Source: Hillingdon Children, Families & Education Select Committee Report, January 2025 – Draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2025-2030

6. Existing Local Provision

A review was conducted of children's homes in Hillingdon using publicly available Ofsted information.

Note: Exact addresses are withheld by Ofsted for safeguarding reasons and should not be published in public reports. The following uses Ofsted URNs and provider details. Confidential address data can be provided privately to planning officers in a secure appendix if required.

Home	Ofsted URN	Distance (Approx)	Capacity	Current Status	Ofsted Rating
Home A	2785128	~2 miles	1	Operating, no availability	Good
Home B	2784402	~3 miles	4	Full	Good
Home C	SC068789	~4.5 miles	9	Full, high demand	Outstanding

Key findings:

- All nearby homes are **operating at or above capacity**.
- Several homes are not suitable for high-need or specialist placements.
- Waiting lists are common and growing.

Sources: Ofsted inspection reports and public register data

7. Alternative Site Review

Criteria:

- Located within Hillingdon Borough,
- Domestic in character to create a homely environment,
- Meets Ofsted safety and space standards,
- Accessible to schools, GPs, and public transport.

Sites considered and reasons for rejection:

Site / Area	Reason for Rejection
Home A	Too small, insufficient outdoor space
Home B	Conflicts with neighbouring uses
Home C	Poor access and parking

Conclusion:

No suitable alternative properties are currently available that meet both care needs and planning policy requirements. 3 Deane Avenue is the **viable site** identified.

8. Benefits of the Proposal

Benefit Area	Description
Social	Provides four much-needed local placements, allowing children to remain near family and school networks
Economic	Reduces reliance on expensive out-of-borough placements
Community	Highly supervised, Ofsted-regulated facility with strict operational controls
Regulatory	Complies with all national safeguarding and care standards

9. Planning Balance

Consideration	Assessment
Loss of C3 home	Not applicable – site is an HMO
Occupancy change	Lower than existing HMO, with stronger management
Local need	Significant, documented shortfall
Policy alignment	Fully compliant with DMH8 and H12

Overall conclusion:

The public benefits of this development significantly outweigh any limited impacts. The proposal will directly meet statutory obligations under the **Children Act 1989**, reduce pressure on council resources, and improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

10. Conclusion

This report demonstrates:

- The site is **already in multi-occupancy use**, so there is **no loss of a family dwelling**.
- There is a **clear and urgent shortage** of local children's care placements.
- Existing homes are at capacity, forcing Hillingdon to rely on costly out-of-borough placements.
- The proposed care home provides:
 - Four much-needed placements,
 - Full-time supervision,
 - Compliance with Ofsted regulations.

Recommendation:

Planning permission should be granted as the proposal meets an essential local need and is fully aligned with both local and national policies.