



**Planning Statement in support of  
Planning Application for**

**Change of Use and Refurbishment Works  
31 Victoria Road (Rock House), Barnsley**

**September 2025**

**Revision P2**

1<sup>st</sup> October 2025

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## **1. Introduction**

The following statement has been prepared in support of the Change of Use and Refurbishment Works at 31 Victoria Road, Barnsley.

The property, to which the application relates, is a detached 3 storey stone built property, located on Victoria Road to the North of Barnsley Town Centre. Victoria Road sits within a conservation area of the same name and is made up of predominantly large semi-detached and detached villa style residential properties. Most properties are set back from the road, all with off street parking and large rear gardens. Over time, some of the properties on Victoria Road (especially those closest to Huddersfield Road) have been converted into commercial uses although the majority are still residential dwellings.

In 2009/2010 number 31 Victoria Road was converted into an educational day centre for children with disabilities (operated by Greenacre School). Whilst the external appearance of the property remained mostly unchanged (except for new stepped access to the front door) the internal layout was radically changed with the installation of a platform lift in the centre of the property to provide wheelchair access to the rooms on the first floor. The ground floor spaces were fitted out with specialist kitchen equipment and sanitary facilities for use by people with a variety of disabilities. To the rear of the property, an access ramp was constructed up to the rear door to provide level access for wheelchair users. The gardens were landscaped with wheelchair friendly paths, raised planting beds and even a small wooden shed/outbuilding to the far end of the garden. There are 3no. off street parking spaces to the front of the building. One space on the drive was typically kept clear for the minibus to enable loading/offloading away from the highway.

The daycare facility provided spaces for students to take part in a variety of practical activities including crafts, cooking and gardening. Students would be transported to and from the facility in minibuses at various times of the day depending on the activity schedule. Whilst we don't have data on staff numbers, due to the nature of the facility and the disabilities of the students, it is likely that there could have been anywhere between 5 and 10 members of staff or volunteers on site at any one time, in addition to the student numbers.

Greenacre operated services at this facility until 2023. Once vacated, the lease was terminated, and the property was taken back as a Barnsley Council (BMBC) asset.

## **2. Background**

Following the transfer of the property back to BMBC, several options were explored for the property including conversion and disposal.

Barnsley Children's Services have had a shortage of accommodation in Barnsley for some time, requiring them to source rental properties to bridge the gap. Operating on this model is costly for the service so surveyors from BMBC Estates have been working with them to try and acquire suitable properties for conversion into children's care facilities. A lack of suitable properties on the market has meant this process has been slow, especially with the added delays dealing with estate agents and solicitors.

Following Greenacre's departure from 31 Victoria Street, the estates team considered options for re-use or disposal. As part of this process, they circulated details the property to other council services to see if there was any appetite for taking it on. Given the lack of success in acquiring external properties, Children's Services showed interest in potentially redeveloping the property for use as

16+ transitional facility. This type of accommodation helps care leavers adapt and prepare for independent living once they turn 18. An appraisal was produced for consideration and following various internal board approvals, the project was given the green light.

### **3. Proposed Development**

The proposed development will require change of use from Class F2 – Learning and non-residential Institutions; to C2 – Residential Institutions. Approval for change of use forms part of this application.

The proposed facility will operate as a residential institution and will provide accommodation for a maximum of 4no. young people at any one time. The accommodation will consist of 4no. bedrooms on the upper floors, which will have an en-suite shower room and a small kitchenette to allow residents to prepare their own food as they grow in confidence. The ground floor accommodation will consist of a communal activity & training space, staff office and a communal laundry room. There will also be a staff sleep in room at the ground level, which will be located off the main circulation hallway, adjacent to the office. The ground floor space will be used by the occupants to develop the skills they need to become fully self-sufficient in day-to-day life as well as providing a space for social interaction with the other residents. The rear garden will be retained as an activity/leisure space for the residents.

The facility will be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with 2 to 3 staff on site during the day and one staff member sleeping overnight. Shift patterns will operate on a 24hr cycle with changeovers taking place in the morning or late afternoon to avoid peak traffic times. Staff meetings on site will be limited to staff and the facility manager only, with any larger team meetings being held in the BMBC offices on Westgate.

### **4. Site Activity**

The young people living in the property will still be in full time education so will attend college or other training opportunities during the day (weekdays only) meaning there will be very little activity in and around the property during these times. The residents will be permitted to have one visitor per day (restricted to specific times) which will be closely monitored by the onsite staff. Access control systems and CCTV on site will also assist to keep the young people safe by preventing unauthorised access to the building.

The rear gardens will be maintained by the young people as part of their transition programme. There are also two outbuildings, which will be renovated to create secure storage for bikes and gardening equipment. As well as the on-site gardens, there are also public open spaces nearby at St Mary's Gardens and Swift Street.

In addition to the onsite skills development, the residents will also be able to attend additional training sessions and social events at The Hub on Westgate, which is approximately a 10-minute walk from the Victoria Road property. This facility was created in 2023 via another internal refurbishment scheme to provide a base for youth services where young people could come for meetings, support and training.

Vehicular movements will be limited to staff shift changeovers and we therefore anticipate a reduction in activity of the nature, in comparison to the previous use.

## 5. Pre-application Advice

Initial informal pre-application advice was sought in June 2025 in relation to the change of use requirements. Further formal pre-application feedback was received in September 2025 (reference 2025/ENQ/00337).

The information within this statement will address the relevant points raised.

## 6. Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF favours sustainable development and applications that demonstrate compliance with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations prevent this.

The NPPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 - Decision making
- Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

### Barnsley Local Plan

The Barnsley Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is available on the BMBC website. The plan covers future development up to the year 2033. The plan outlines the Council's vision for the future of Barnsley and its residents as well as aspirations to be involved with the wider city regions including Leeds and Sheffield.

The plan outlines Barnsley's commitment to economic growth including provision of jobs, improvement in living conditions/quality of life, improving the choice of homes and protecting and enhancing environmental assets.

The following local plan policies are relevant to this application:

**Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development** – States that proposals for development will be approved where there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

**Policy GD1: General Development** – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

**Policy D1: High quality design and place making** – Development is expected to be of a high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

**Policy H4: Residential Development on Small Non-Allocated Sites** – Proposals for residential development on sites below 0.4 hectares (including conversions of existing buildings and creating dwellings above shops) will be allowed where the proposal complies with other relevant policies.

**Policy H6: Housing Mix and Efficient use of land** – Housing proposals will be expected to include

a broad mix of house size, type and tenure to help create mixed and balanced communities. Homes must be suitable for different types of households and be capable of being adapted to meet the changing needs of the population. Proposals to change the size and type of existing housing stock must maintain an appropriate mix of homes to meet local needs.

**Policy T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel** – New Development will be expected to:

- Be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, be accessible to public transport and meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Provide at least the minimum levels of parking for cycles, motorbikes, scooters, mopeds and disabled people set out in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document.

**Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety** – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

**Policy Poll1: Pollution Control and Protection** – Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

#### Addressing relevant policies as part of the application

The following section demonstrates how the relevant policies will be implemented in the proposed development.

#### Policy SD1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

The proposed development will include a full refurbishment of the existing property. The change of use will trigger thermal upgrades to the building fabric to satisfy building control. As this facility will be for Children, it will be subject to inspection and certification from Ofsted to ensure it meets their stringent standards. Originally built as a dwelling, the appearance, layout and external spaces reflect that of a residential property and although this will be a residential institution rather than private flats, it should still provide a positive environment for both the new residents and the surrounding residential properties.

#### GD1 – General Development

Given the relatively minor extent of the external works and the appearance of the property reflecting that of a residential dwelling, we do not believe there will be any adverse effect on the future residents or the neighbouring properties/land.

#### D1 – High quality design and place making

As referenced above, the property was originally built as a residential dwelling, which means that the appearance already blends with the local vernacular. The property also sits within the Victoria Road Conservation Area so any modifications that have been undertaken in the past have had to be sympathetic to the existing property and not adversely impact the character of the local area. The high-quality materials used in the original build have stood the test of time and following a strict maintenance programme, the building generally remains in good condition. That said, the existing roof is approaching the end of its lifespan, and we will therefore be replacing this as part of the works. The windows will also be refurbished/replaced as part of the thermal improvements with the windows to the front remaining as timber sash style. The proposed works to the property will retain the existing features and therefore there won't be any impact on the local conservation area.

#### H4 – Residential Development on Small Non-Allocated Sites

The proposed works will see the existing building converted into a residential institution. We therefore do not believe this applies to this application.

#### H6 – Housing Mix and Efficient Use of Land

As the proposed development is for a residential institution and not housing, we do not believe this applies to this application.

#### T3 – New Development and Sustainable Travel & T4 - New Development and Transport Safety

The existing property is located on Victoria Road approximately 0.5 miles from Barnsley Town Centre. There is a bus stop located along the site frontage and another approximately 35m to the east, providing frequent services to Barnsley town centre and surrounding areas. Footway provision around the site is good providing safe links to the town centre, college and hospital. The site has a vehicular access onto the frontage/driveway. There are parking restrictions on the highway with a single yellow line to both sides, which prohibits waiting or parking between the hours of 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday.

The driveway is spacious and could fit up to 3 cars on if required. Based on the standard parking bay size of 2.5m x 5m, the driveway would provide 2 parking spaces. There is also space to accommodate 1-2 motorbikes/scooters. The on-site parking will be reserved for staff use. There are no plans to change the vehicular access to the site, although it may be necessary to install a gate for safety and safeguarding purposes in the long term. Should a gate be required, this will be no higher than the existing boundary wall to avoid any impact on the visibility splay for emerging vehicles. The service have confirmed that there will be no wheelchair users either living or working at 31 Victoria Road, however, should a wheelchair user visit the property, there is sufficient space on the driveway to accommodate their vehicle including space to manoeuvre around the vehicle.

Vehicle movements will be minimal and generally limited to staff change over times. With the parking restrictions in place on Victoria Road, any visitors to the property between 8am and 6pm will need to park further afield and walk or use public transport.

There will be no commercial deliveries to the property. The site will have large commercial sized bins, which will be collected periodically by BMBC in line with their collection schedule.

There are plans to provide cycle storage in the outbuildings to the rear of the property which would be accessed via a secure gate to the side of the property.

#### Poll 1 – Pollution Control and Protection

The proposed use of the site will not result in any increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution.

### **7. Consultation Feedback**

#### Highways

The feedback from highways was positive but also sought additional information in relation to the operation of the facility, which has been covered in the previous sections of this document.

#### Conservation Comments

The feedback from the Conservation Officer was positive and supports the change of use application.

#### Pollution Control

Whilst Pollution Control haven't raised any concerns around the impact of the completed facility, they have asked for a condition to restrict working hours during the refurbishment works to 08:00-18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00-14:00 on Saturday's and no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays. This

has been recommended to reduce or remove any adverse impact on health and quality of life for people working or living nearby.

## **8. Conclusion**

The proposed scheme will see the existing property at 31 Victoria Road converted from an educational learning facility to a residential institution. The converted property will provide supported residential accommodation for aged 16+ care leavers to prepare them for transition to independent living.

The property at 31 Victoria Road is located 0.5 miles North of Barnsley Town Centre with transport links to the wider borough as well as safe pedestrian access to Town Centre as well as Barnsley College and Barnsley Sixth Form College and other youth support services. The proximity of these facilities will enhance the lives of the residents, and we hope this will allow them to attend their education settings without hinderance through missed bus services or traffic delay's when travelling from the wider borough.

Due to the operational nature of this type of facility compared with the previous use, we expect the proposed use to have a reduced impact on the surrounding area, with less vehicle movements and generally less people on site. We would also expect that the surrounding residents will be pleased to see the building brought back into use after being vacant for 2 years.

The residential setting of the property will also help the young people with their transition to independent living.

On balance, we feel the proposal will have a positive impact on the surrounding area and the renovation works will help to preserve the character of the wider conservation area.