Planning Statement

88 Bence Lane
Darton, Barnsley
S75 5DA

On behalf of

Horizon Care & Education Group Ltd

Prepared by Blue Bee Consulting Ltd.

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1. INTRODUCTION

. 1.1 Blue Bee Consulting has been instructed by Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd to prepare this supporting Planning Statement to accompany Certificate of Lawful Use of a property at 88 Bence Lane, Darton, to be used as a children's care home.

. 1.2 This supporting Planning Statement has been prepared to assist the Council in their determination of the application.

. 1.3 The Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed use accords with the NPPF and that it is consistent with the objectives and relevant policies contained in the development plan.

. 1.4 The application is supported by detailed drawings, together with Vision Statement which describes the overarching values and principles of Horizon Care & Education Group Ltd.

. 1.5 In terms of the structure of the report, Section 2 contains background information about the site, including a description of the application site and its surroundings. Section 3 contains a detailed description of the application proposals. In Section 4, we consider the need for the application scheme. Section 5 provides a summary of the planning policy context applicable to the site. In Section 6 we consider the principle of the site sustainability and the impact on residential amenity, and Section 7 contains our conclusions.

2. APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site and Surroundings

. 2.1 The application site comprises a detached, two storey, five-bedroom house, which extends to an area of approximately 480 square meters. The property has a double driveway to the front, with a small area of mature shrubbery and trees partially obscuring the view of the property from the pavement and road.

To either side of the property there are similarly sized residential dwellings with mature planting screening the view from the side.

Directly opposite the property is agricultural farmland, which extends across several fields and hedges.

Adjoining the rear boundary are the rear gardens of residential dwellings located on Kibroyd Drive. The distance from the rear of the application property to the garden boundary line is circa 11 meters, and to the nearest residential property to the rear is circa 19 meters.

A plan of the application site and its immediate surroundings has been provided with the application.

. 2.2 Vehicular access to the property is from Bence Lane via the double access driveway.

Bemce lane is a single carriageway of approximately 6 meters in width, which is sufficient for free flowing traffic in both directions, and does not pose a risk for vehicles entering or exiting the property.

. 2.3 There is currently a substantial area of hardstanding / driveway to the front of the property which provides parking for circa 4 cars.

. 2.4 The application site is well contained with clearly defined

boundaries. The boundary treatment consists of a mix of timber fencing and mature trees which obscure visibility from residential neighbours.

. 2.5 In terms of the wider area this is predominately residential and agricultural. The area also benefits from having local shops and services within easy reach.

Designations

. 2.7 There are no buildings on the site or within close proximity that are statutorily listed.

. 2.8 The site is not considered to be at risk of flooding.

. 2.9 Whilst there are trees on the site, none of them are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

3. APPLICATION PROPOSALS

. 3.1 The application proposes to use the residential dwelling as a children's care home.

. 3.2 It is intended that the home will provide residential accommodation for young people. All the children/ young people will be under the age of 18 and will be resident in the home for between 3 and 5 years. Each child/ young person will have his or her own bedroom.

. 3.3 Children / young people who are taken into the guardianship of Horizon do not have a physical or mental impairment. Rather, they are children / young people who have been adversely affected by circumstances and are simply in need of a secure, stable and caring place to live. This is normally due to fears for their wellbeing and a lack of suitable guardians within the family network. Horizon's Homes are designed to mirror and recreate the family home and provide a welcoming and homely environment.

Appendix 1 sets out the Horizon Vision and how a Horizon Home operates.

. 3.4 All the children / young people cared for in Horizon Homes are educated off site in state or independent schools. They are also encouraged to take part in external / after school social and sports activities and to visit and meet with friends. The preparation of meals and domestic activities will be undertaken by those caring for the children / young people. However, they are encouraged to assist, as is the case in a family home.

. 3.5 The children / young people are cared for 24 hrs a day by team of dedicated carers assigned to the property. Care is provided by professional members of staff working 24 hr shifts. In certain circumstances, there may be an additional member of staff who works a shift of up to 12hrs between 9:30am and 21:30pm. Shift changeovers are staggered. For part of the working week a manager may also be present at the property.

. 3.6 In terms of the internal layout of the property, this will generally be retained as existing.

. 3.9 There are no planned changes to the external appearance of the property.

. 3.9 To the passer by there will be no visible change at the property as it will continue as a residential dwelling.

4. NEED

. 4.1 There is a recognised need for additional and new accommodation for children requiring care in the Barnsley district. This is both in numerical and qualitative terms. At present, some children are being housed in accommodation outside of the Borough boundaries. These children should be placed in suitable accommodation within the Local Authority area, however this is simply not possible due to a shortage of suitable accommodation and placements.

. 4.2 Due to the demand and pressure for placements, the Council require and indeed are reliant upon support from the private sector and organisations such as Horizon Education and Care Ltd. These organisations thus have an extremely important role to play in assisting the Council in meeting their statutory obligation to provide care for children in need.

. 4.3 It is our view that the scale and extent of need in the area is a material planning consideration to which significant weight should be given in the determination of this application.

5. PLANNING POLICY

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

. 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. This document seeks to streamline Government guidance and supersedes the previous suite of Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements.

. 5.2 The aim of the document is to ensure that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that positive planning solutions are found to ensure economic development is brought forward. Paragraph 14 states that *"Local Planning Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted".*

. 5.3 Paragraph 17 sets out the core principles which should underpin planning decisions. These 12 principles include the following:

· *"Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth;*

· *Not simply be about scrutiny but instead by a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*

· *Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future*

occupants of land and buildings;

· *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable;*

· *Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.*

. 5.4 Paragraphs 47- 55 set out the requirement to significantly boost the supply of housing. Paragraph 49 requires LPA's to consider housing applications in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

. 5.5 Paragraph 50 requires that LPA's "*deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities*". In order to achieve this objective, LPA's are required to "*plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)*". They are also required to "*identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand*".

. 5.6 Paragraphs 69- 78 are concerned with promoting healthy communities. At paragraph 69 the Framework notes that the planning system has an important role to play in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. It goes on to state that planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote, amongst other things "*opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity*".

. 5.7 Paragraph 70 requires the planning policies and decisions "*ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services*".

. 5.8 With regard to design, the Framework states that good design is a key part of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It also makes it clear that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. However, it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

. 5.9 With regard to transport, the NPPF places great emphasis on the need to site new development in locations "*where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised*". It also requires that a "*safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people".*

. 5.10 With regard to parking provision, the NPPF states that parking requirements should reflect the accessibility of the proposed development together with the availability of and opportunities for public transport.

. 5.11 Paragraphs 196-198 provide guidance on the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 196 reiterates the requirements of Section 38 (6), which requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is a material planning consideration in planning decisions.

6. DETAILED PLANNING MATTERS

Sustainability

. 6.1 The application site is located in a sustainable location accessible to local shops, services and facilities by a range of non-car modes of transport: walking, cycling and public transport.

. 6.2 Non-car modes of travel are thus a realistic alternative mode of travel for both staff and the future occupiers of the property.

Impact on residential amenity

. 6.3 Having regard to the operation of the premises and its relationship with adjacent residential properties, it is our opinion that the application scheme will not detrimentally impact on the residential amenity of adjacent occupiers.

. 6.4 In order to support this view, we make the following comments in relation to the proposed development which show that the residential amenity of adjacent occupiers will not be detrimentally affected:

· The children / young people that will be placed at the property will not have any physical or mental impairment. Rather they are simply children / young people that by reason of circumstance cannot reside with their family or a close relative and thus have to be placed in the care of the Local Authority.

· The premises will operate and function as a family home. The only difference is that instead of care being provided by parents or family members, care is provided by professional staff. Due to the age of the children / young people, who are all under the age of 18, they are unable to reside unsupervised.

· The application property is situated a suitable distance from adjacent residential properties, which are also obscured by the mature trees. Due to these factors it cannot be said that the proposed use will detrimentally affect the residential amenity of the occupiers of these properties. In addition the existing use has the potential for a significant number of vehicle movements to and from the property at all times of the day.

· Traffic movements associated with the proposed use are likely to be lower or similar to the existing use. Almost all movements will occur during the day and at similar times to the traffic movements associated with a typical residential dwelling.

. 6.5 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the application scheme will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of adjacent residential occupiers and thus that the proposed change of use is acceptable in this respect.

7. CONCLUSIONS

. 7.1 Within this Planning Statement it has been demonstrated that the proposed use of the property as a children's care home is acceptable in principle, and that it is an appropriate location for such a use. In particular, the proposed change of use complies with Government guidance contained in the NPPF.

. 7.2 Furthermore, it has been shown that there is a need for accommodation such as this in the area. It is our view that this is a material consideration to which significant weight should be given in the determination of this planning application.

. 7.3 The submission demonstrates that there is a safe and acceptable vehicular access to the site, that adequate car parking provision is provided within the site to meet the operational needs of the development, and that the residential amenity of adjacent occupiers will not be adversely affected.

. 7.4 In this context, and taking into account paragraph 14 of the NPPF, we respectfully request that the LPA grant planning permission for the proposed change of use without delay.

Appendix 1 – Horizon Vision Statement

Horizon Care & Education Group Ltd - 'Our Homes'

"Every child deserves a good start in life, but some need a little more support and guidance than others "

We provide support and guardianship for young people who have been adversely affected by circumstance and need a caring and secure place to live. Our staff are therapeutically trained and supported by our own fully qualified therapeutic clinicians and specialists.

Our homes are located in all situations; rural, suburban and urban locations. Each property offers a welcoming and homely environment, and our young people have their own rooms, which they are encouraged to personalise.

In order to provide each young person with the stability and continuity of a normal home, each individual will be resident on average for a period of between 3 and 5 years. In addition, there will be a small team of professionals who will provide 24-hour care, with a minimum of 2 carers in the property whenever a young person is at home.

Many Carers have worked for Horizon Care & Education for several years, which helps to underpin our ethos of providing a safe and stable home that mirrors a typical family unit. Our homes are monitored and inspected by Ofsted, to ensure we operate at the highest standards, and are continually seeking ways in which to improve. We strongly believe that this model of providing support and guardianship in a homely environment provides the best opportunity for each individual to achieve their potential as they progress through their childhood.

In order to provide a structured environment, each young person is encouraged to be actively involved in the running of their home. This will typically involve weekly routines that include cleaning, cooking, shopping trips, and organised games activities, as well as socialising with friends and keeping up to date with their schoolwork.

Horizon Care & Education Group does not operate dormitory style accommodation, and is unable to provide care for young persons with physical or mental disabilities. The Carers are QCF qualified, and do not prescribe medication. Health issues are dealt with by local GP's and NHS services in the same way as the general population.

Our goal is to provide a home for young people who need extra support and guidance. We aim to provide each individual with the required life skills so that they can achieve their full potential, and are able to make a valued contribution to society throughout their life.