



Planning Committee

12 June 2025

S24/2103

Proposal: Change of residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a small care home for 2no. children (Use Class C2)

Location: 6, Dunster Close, Grantham, Lincolnshire

Applicant: Mr Brankin

Agent: DK Plans Architectural Services

Application Type: Full Planning Permission

Reason for Referral to Committee: Member Call in by Cllr Morgan – Public/Local Interest

Key Issues: Amenity impacts
Highway safety

Technical Documents: Supporting Information/Planning Statement

Report Author

Kevin Cartwright (Senior Planning Officer)

01476 406375

Kevin.cartwright@southkesteven.gov.uk

Corporate Priority:

Growth

Decision type:

Regulatory

Wards:

Grantham Arnoldfield

Reviewed by:

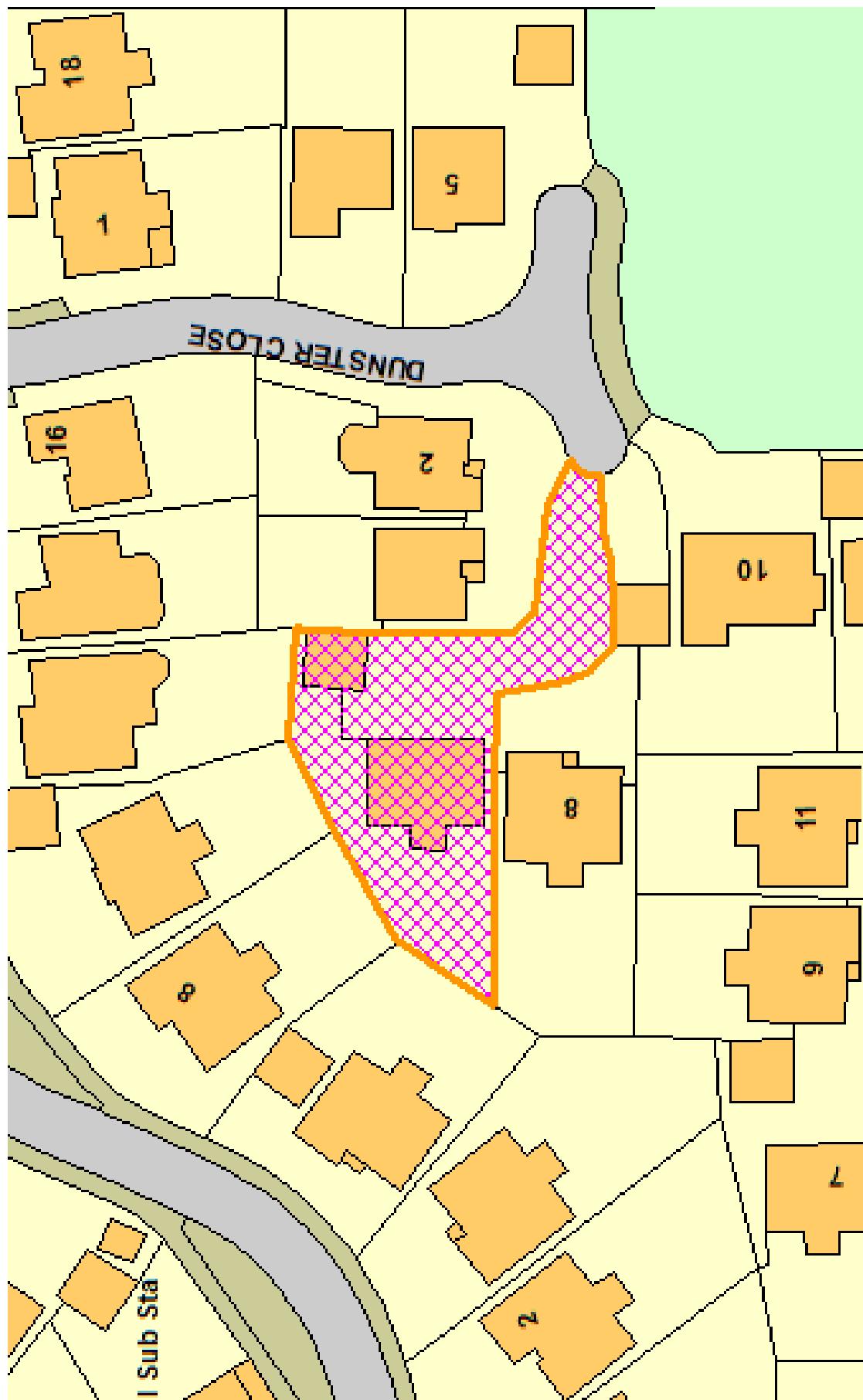
Phil Jordan, Development Management & Enforcement Manager

3 June 2025

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

To authorise the Assistant Director – Planning & Growth to GRANT planning permission, subject to conditions.

S24/2103- 6, Dunster Close, Grantham, Lincolnshire



1 Description of Site

- 1.1 The application property is located on Dunster Close which is a cul-de-sac located with the Poplar Farm residential estate.
- 1.2 The detached property, is accessed via a shared private driveway from the turning head on Dunster Close that also serves the neighbouring properties.
- 1.3 The application site is located on the eastern side of the Poplar Farm estate.
- 1.4 The property has a roughly triangular shaped rear garden which is bounded by close boarded fencing. The frontage of the plot is open plan and accommodates a detached double garage and associated off-road parking on the driveway.

2 Description of Proposal

- 2.1 The application proposes the change of use of the property from a dwelling to be used as a care home for 2no. children. The applicant has provided the following comments as to how the proposal would operate:
 - 2.2 *"Dunster Close will provide care for a maximum of 2 young people, who will be aged between 8 and 18 years old, which will be in line with our Ofsted registration.*
 - 2.3 *There will be 2 staff on duty at any one time. The staffing levels we have set is for the benefit of our children, but they do not require 1-1 staffing constantly. 1 staff member could take the children out whilst the 2nd staff member is cooking or completing paperwork.*
 - 2.4 *There will be one handover period, 10.00 – 10.30 every morning, where 2 staff will be finishing their shift whilst another 2 will be taking over.*
 - 2.5 *Two staff members would be at the home for a 24 hour period including sleeping at the property overnight.*
 - 2.6 *The young people do have multi-agency work involvement, but meetings are encouraged virtually or at another location as the home is the 'safe space' for the children and not a working environment.*
 - 2.7 *There may be a requirement for a professional visit for the children, this would be during 'working hours' but could be in the early evening (up to 19.00) as the children will be in education and may have after school clubs or activities planned.*
 - 2.8 *We will be placing Lincolnshire young people in Dunster Close, to ensure they stay within their local county, rather than being placed miles away from home, which benefits not only the children, but also the local authority as the social workers will not need to travel long distances to visit. We have consulted Sarah Keating, who is a commissioning officer in the Lincolnshire County Council, Children's Strategic Commissioning Team. Sarah has confirmed they would welcome the opening of the home, to offer placements for Lincolnshire young people.*
 - 2.9 *There would be no structural changes to the home, inside or out which would require planning permission".*

3 Relevant History

3.1 None

4 Policy Considerations

4.1 SKDC Local Plan 2011 – 2036

4.2 Policy SD1 – Principles of Sustainable Development
Policy SP1 - Spatial Strategy
Policy SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SP3 – Infill Development
Policy H4 – Meeting All Housing Needs
Policy EN5 – Water Environment and Flood Risk Management
Policy DE1 - Promoting Good Quality Design
Policy SB1 – Sustainable Building
Policy ID2 - Transport and Strategic Transport Infrastructure

4.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

5 Representations Received

5.1 LCC Highways & SuDS Support

5.2 No objections. LCC does not have adopted parking standards and considers each application on its own merits and whilst it is possible that the development may result in more parking demand there is parking available on the highway in the vicinity, and it is therefore not considered that this proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

5.3 Environmental Protection

5.4 No objection to the change of use.

5.5 Lincolnshire Police

5.6 No objections to the development.

5.7 Lincolnshire County Council Children's Care (Senior Commissioning Officer)

5.8 At this point in time we are not able to comment on any planning requests. However, I can sign post you to our Sufficiency Strategy and Market Position Statement, however I do want to add both of these documents were created over a year ago and are currently under review.

6 Representations as a Result of Publicity

6.1 This application has been advertised in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. 24no. letter of representation have been received.

6.2 A summary of the main concerns are listed below:

- Dunster Close is a small cul-de-sac of 8 residential dwellings, No.6 is in the very far corner sharing a driveway with 2 other properties. There is no turning space on the shared driveway.
- How would vehicles from shift movements be accommodated.
- Dunster Close has no footpaths
- Parking spaces are unsuitable for the mobility impaired, older people, people with young children or loading and unloading
- The proposal does not show 4no. parking spaces required when four staff are present during changeover periods.
- Proposal will lead to on street parking
- Support for the children will generate further parking needs
- Loss of privacy. The garden of No.2 Dunster Close is overlooked by the northern side elevation of No. 6 Dunster Close
- Increased light pollution if street lights are lit all night to facilitate the care home use
- Facilities including schools, surgery, shops, recreation etc. between 10 and 40 minutes away.
- Parked cars will prevent bins being carried along the driveway
- No secure boundary treatment
- The shared driveway widths are not correct as there is a planted area adjacent to 10, Dunster Close.
- Increased noise and disturbance from vehicle/staff movements
- Potential increased anti-social behaviour
- Lack of a business management plan
- Loss of community character as the cul-de-sac contains 8no. dwellings and the change of use of one would impact on neighbourhood amenity
- If granted conditions in relation to arrival and departure times of staff, and business management plan is required and enforced.
- Driveway is narrow with poor visibility.
- Deeds prevent non-residential use and any obstruction of the driveway
- The driveway is shared with 2,4,6,8 and 10 Dunster Close and is designed for single car passage proposal. Proposal would restrict this.
- Security of the property is inadequate for vulnerable children
- Adjacent gardens are in full visibility. This would not provide adequate privacy for neither the children in care or for other residents

- Severe loss of privacy and constant disturbance psychological and emotional suffering.
- Will not be able to enjoy the use of their garden due to noise disturbance
- Negative impact on property values. (Not a material planning consideration).
- Wider publicity should have been undertaken along Berkely Avenue as Dunster Close can only be accessed via Berkely Avenue.
- Concern regarding the welfare of the future occupiers. Care cannot be provided successfully in a commercial setting.

6.3 Additionally, 1no. letters of support have been received from the applicant. A summary of the comments are listed below:

- We will only ever provide care for 2 young people in this home, as we do not believe in children growing up in institutional homes.
- I have managed large 7 bedded Local Authorities Children's homes and they do not provide the outcomes I expect for children.
- There will be 2 staff members working with our children daily, to try and replicate a "normal" family structure.
- The children will not be on a 1:1 staffing ratio but have 2 adults in the home to allow for the children to remain at home with one adult, whilst the other goes shopping, or one adult can take the 2 children out, whilst 1 adult is preparing dinner.
- There will be a maximum of 5 cars at the property for approximately 30 minutes per day, at handover which will be between 1000-1030 in the morning.
- There will be no constant flow of vehicles to and from our home
- The rest of the day there will be a maximum of 3 vehicles and the parking availability can be covered on the existing driveway
- No children with disabilities will live in Dunster Close. Planning approval will grant permission in line with Ofsted categorisation and Children with disabilities cannot be placed at Dunster.
- There will be visitors to our home but not more than the typical family home. The only exception to this is the daily handover period 10.00-10.30.
- We are not requesting any structural modifications to the home, which means there will be no increased loss of privacy for the neighbourhood.
- It is our expectation the street lighting will remain exactly the same as it currently is. We do not have increased over night lighting at our other homes where planning has been granted, including Lincolnshire, and do not request this in Dunster Close.
- All amenities are within an appropriate distance for our children to access, just the same as any other family who lives in this area. The walking distances which have been quoted are just the same for any other children who live near Dunster Close.
- I will not be drawn into negative, stereotypical views on anti-social and offending behaviour committed by children in care, which should be considered discriminatory.

- These are children, who, through no fault of their own, cannot live with their biological families, and need a safe, nurturing and caring home to grow up in.
- We would be willing to devise a fair effective management plan as mentioned by Mr Wagstaff, to ensure neighbours and my children who will live at Dunster Close, live in peace and do not face any unwanted disturbance.
- Deeds and covenants are a private law matter and therefore cannot be considered within the planning application.
- Positive Independence has been subject to Ofsted inspections and have never received a rating below good, and we consider ourselves to be an active part of the community.

7 Evaluation

7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the adopted Development Plan consists of the following documents:

- South Kesteven Local Plan 2011-2036 (Adopted 30 January 2020)

7.2 The Local Planning Authority have also adopted a Design Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Adopted November 2021) and this document is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

7.3 In addition, the policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (“the Framework”) (Updated December 2024) are also a relevant material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

7.4 Principle of Development

7.5 Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Children’s Strategic Commissioning Children’s Services Independent Placements Market Position Statement 2024-25 states:

7.6 *“LCC wants to continue developing partnerships with independent placement providers, especially those in Lincolnshire or in directly adjacent counties, in order to meet the care, support, and education needs of Lincolnshire children and young people, keeping them as close to home and existing communities as possible.”*

7.7 The proposal relates to a proposed change of use from a residential dwelling house to a small residential children’s home for two children. Grantham is the main settlement within the district to which development should be steered, as it has facilities and services for not only its community but that of surrounding villages and settlements. As such, the site is considered to be a sustainable location and acceptable in principle.

7.8 Additionally, Policy H4 (Meeting all Housing Needs) states that new housing proposals shall (a) enable older people and the most vulnerable to promote, secure and sustain their independence in a home appropriate to their circumstances, including through the

provision of specialist housing across all tenures in sustainable locations. It is considered that the proposal would provide accommodation as envisaged by Policy H4.

7.9 Impact on the character and Appearance of the area

7.9.1 Local Plan Policy DE1 requires development to make a positive contribution to the character of the area, avoiding harm to the street scene. This is consistent with NPPF Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) which amongst other things states that developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping.

7.9.2 The proposal relates to a change of use and would not require any external/internal alterations to the building.

7.9.3 While it is likely that that proposed development may result in an increase in vehicles being parked at the property or on the public highway, particularly during shift changes, this additional parking would not be unusual when compared to multiple car ownership which is now often the norm for families living in a property of this size. As such it would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, particularly as it would be a transient in nature during the staff change over. This is discussed further below in the context of a recent appeal decision that relates to a lawful development certificate for a children's care home for two children, that was allowed at appeal.

7.9.4 The proposal therefore complies with Policy DE1 of the South Kesteven Local Plan and NPPF Section 12.

7.9.5 Residential Amenity

7.9.6 In a recent Appeal Decision ref. APP/E2530/X/24/3354568 at Main Street, Hougham, the Planning Inspector came to the conclusion that a proposed change of use of a private dwelling Use Class C3 to a children's care home Use Class C2 for 2 children, would not as a matter of fact and degree be a material change of use.

7.9.7 The Inspector noted that in this case the children's home would be managed 'as if it were a family home in all respects apart from the presence of staff carers' and the appellants maintained that 'the use would not be materially different to the use of this house by a typical family household'.

7.9.8 The Inspector agreed that the use of the house as a large family home 'would create a variety of traffic movements and a substantial demand for parking facilities' but did not 'envisage that the use as a children's home would make a significant difference to the effect that a typical family household's use had on the level of activity, trip generation and overall comings and goings'.

7.9.9 The role of the carers would not be significantly different to that of parents looking after children in a family home and taking them to school or on trips out'.

7.9.10 The Inspector considered that 'A typical family household here could have several car drivers and separate travel patterns associated with each individual's education, work and leisure'.

7.9.11 In this instance the supporting information states that the proposed development would operate in a similar manner:

7.10 *"There would be two staff on duty at any one time. The staffing levels being set for the benefit of our children, but they do not require 1-1 staffing constantly. One staff member could take the children out whilst the second staff member is cooking or completing paperwork."*

7.11 This is considered to be directly comparable with how a family would function in this property.

7.11.1 It is noted that concerns have been raised in relation to noise and disturbance, however it is considered that the proposed use would not differ materially from the occupation of the house by a family with children.

7.11.2 It is accepted that there would be a degree of increased activity during shift changes, and any professional visits that are required, but as discussed above these would be transient in nature and as such would not result in any significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

7.11.3 In relation to overlooking and loss of privacy, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any additional overlooking or loss of privacy beyond that of occupation of the site by a family. The rear garden area is bounded by a substantial close boarded fence.

7.11.4 Taking into account the above matters the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DE1 of the local plan and NPPF Section 12.

7.12 **Highway Safety**

7.12.1 From a visual inspection of the site there is a detached double garage that provides 2no. parking spaces. There is a distance of approximately 12 metres from the front of the garage to the edge of the shared driveway which would also be available for car parking.

7.12.2 The current driveway arrangements do not allow occupiers to enter the site and leave in a forward gear. Drivers are required to reverse along the shared driveway onto the turning head of Dunster Close. This arrangement would continue.

7.12.3 Policy ID2 of the South Kesteven Local Plan (SKLP) seeks to ensure the impacts of development proposals are addressed in terms of strategic and local transport infrastructure. Paragraph 116 of the framework makes clear that development should only be refused on highway grounds where there is an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts on the highway network would be severe. Whilst it is clear that there would at times be a need for some parking on the highway. For example during staff change over, it is considered that this would not be detrimental to highway safety.

7.12.4 During shift change overs, arriving staff could park on Dunster Close, allow the on-site staff to move a vehicle to free up a space and then proceed to park within the curtilage of the property. It should be noted that there is no objection to the proposal from Lincolnshire County Council in its capacity as local highway authority.

7.12.5 It is often a regular occurrence that garages are used for general storage rather than for vehicle parking. In this instance, it is considered appropriate to require the garage to be

available for vehicle parking at all times that the use is in operation. This can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

7.12.6 It can therefore be concluded that the application, in respect of highway safety, is not in conflict with Policy ID2 of the Local Plan and NPPF Section 9.

7.13 **Flood Risk**

Policy SD1 sets out the criteria for new development to ensure it is sustainable. Local Plan Policy EN5 (Water Environment and Flood Risk Management) together with Section 14 of the NPPF seeks to direct development to areas with the least probability of flooding, together with implementation of SUDs drainage where possible, in order to minimise surface water runoff. The application site is located within an established residential area that is located in Flood Zone 1 which is at the lowest risk of flooding and relates solely to the change of use of the property.

7.14 As such the proposed development is considered to be acceptable from a flood risk perspective.

8 Other matters

8.1 Publicity

8.2 The planning application has been advertised in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement including neighbour notifications, site notice and relevant consultees.

8.3 Access to facilities and services

8.4 The application site is located within Grantham which is regarded as a sub-regional centre providing services and facilities not only for its residents but also support for the surrounding villages and settlements around them. Whilst it is accepted that the site is not in a town centre location, or immediately adjacent to essential facilities, it is nonetheless located in a sustainable location within a reasonable distance of the services and facilities that Grantham provides.

8.5 This relationship to services and facilities is no different to that of the neighbouring residential properties. As such the proposal is considered acceptable in this respect.

8.6 Security and safety and management

8.7 Unfortunately, Lincolnshire County Council Children's Care have confirmed that they are unable to provide comments on individual planning applications. However, it is understood that children's care homes are registered and regulated by Ofsted who undertake inspections. Ofsted inspections consider a number of matters including: 'overall experience and progress of children and young people, how well children and young people are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers'.

8.8 The applicant has confirmed that all the relevant information has been sent to Ofsted to commence the registration of the home, which would be completed subject to planning permission being forthcoming. The applicant has advised that the documents submitted include location risk assessment which identifies any possible risks in the local community and how these risks are managed. Registration would be completed should planning permission be granted and Ofsted visiting the site.

8.9 As such, it is considered that the safety/operational and management aspects of the proposal fall within the remit of other regulatory bodies not the local planning authority and would be appropriately addressed.

8.10 It is noted that the applicant has indicated an agreement to a planning condition in relation to a management plan. However, it is considered that this is not required due to the regulatory regime (Ofsted) within which the children and young peoples care homes must operate and the absence of any objection from consultees.

8.11 Need

8.12 The applicant has confirmed that there is an on-going dialogue with Lincolnshire County Council Strategic Commissioning Team in relation to the home and that they would welcome the opening of the home to offer placements for Lincolnshire young people. Whilst no comments have been received from LCC in relation to this application, there is no evidence to the contrary to dispute these comments.

9 Crime and Disorder

9.1 It is considered that the proposal would not result in any significant crime and disorder implications. This is supported by the fact that the Police Liaison officer has not raised any objection to the proposal.

10 Human Rights Implications

10.1 Articles 6 (Rights to fair decision making) and Article 8 (Right to private family life and home) of the Human Rights Act have been taken into account in making this recommendation. It is considered that no relevant Article of that act will be breached.

11 Conclusion and Planning Balance

11.1 Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed use will have no impact on the appearance of the dwelling house, or the character of the area, no significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would not have a significant impact on the surrounding highway network as the care home would operate in a similar manner in terms of vehicle trip generation to a residential dwelling house.

11.2 Whilst concerns have been raised in relation to residential amenity, highway safety and impact on the character and appearance of the area, the officer assessment of the application is that the proposal does not result in any conflict with the policies referred to below.

11.3 As such the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the development plan, when taken as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the NPPF to indicate otherwise.

RECOMMENDATION:

To authorise the Assistant Director – Planning & Growth to GRANT planning permission, subject to conditions..

Time Limit for Commencement

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order that the development is commenced in a timely manner, as set out in Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Approved Plans

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with planning application form, and with the following list of approved plans:
 - i. The Location Plan – DK246_LP Rev A.
 - ii. Existing and Proposed Site Plan – DK246_300 Rev A.
 - iii. Proposed Ground Floor Plan -DK246_301
 - iv. Proposed First Floor Plan -DK246_302

Unless otherwise required by another condition of this permission.

Reason: To define the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

Ongoing Conditions

- 3 The garage on site shall be available for the parking of vehicles at all times that the use, hereby permitted, is in operation.
Reason: To ensure adequate parking provision on the site.
- 4 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification) the premises shall be used only as a children's care home for up to two children and for no other purpose (including any other use falling within Class C2 of the Order).
Reason: To ensure that the development operates as assessed.

Standard Note(s) to Applicant:

- In reaching the decision the Council has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner by determining the application without undue delay. As such it is considered that the decision is in accordance with paras 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Not applicable

Existing and Proposed Site Plan



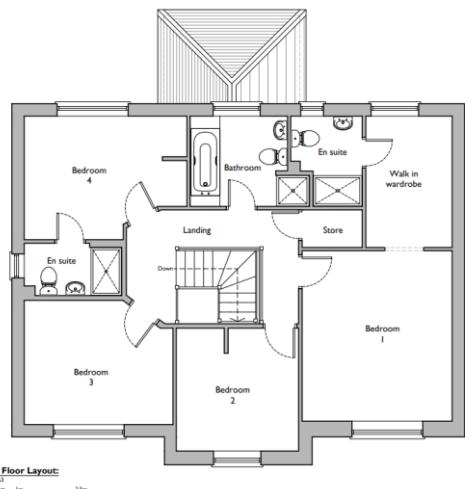
Existing Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Existing First Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan

