



Planning Committee

Thu 16 Jul
2026
7.00 pm

Oakenshaw Community
Centre, Castleditch Lane,
B98 7YB

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact

**Gavin Day
Democratic Services Officer**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: (01527) 64252 (Ext. 3304)
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GUIDANCE ON FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers, please do not hesitate to contact Gavin Day (gavin.day@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

PUBLIC SPEAKING

For this meeting the options to participate will be in person, by joining the meeting using a video link, or by submitting a statement to be read out by officers.

The process approved by the Council for public speaking at meetings of the Planning Committee is (subject to the discretion and control of the Chair) as summarised below:

in accordance with the running order detailed in this agenda and updated by the separate Update report:

- 1) Introduction of application by Chair
- 2) Officer presentation of the report.
- 3) Public Speaking - in the following order:-
 - a. Objectors to speak on the application;
 - b. Ward Councillors (in objection)
 - c. Supporters to speak on the application;
 - d. Ward Councillors (in support)
 - e. Applicant (or representative) to speak on the application.

Speakers will be called in the order they have notified their interest in speaking to the Democratic Services Team (by 12 noon on Tuesday 14th July 2026) and invited to the table or lectern.

- 4) Members' questions to the Officers and formal debate / determination.

Speakers will be called in the order they have notified their interest in speaking to the Democratic Services Team and invited to address the committee.

Each individual speaker will have up to a maximum of 3 minutes to speak, subject to the discretion of the Chair.

Each group of supporters or objectors with a common interest will have up to a maximum of 10 minutes to speak, subject to the discretion of the Chair.

Notes:

- 1) Anyone wishing to address the Planning Committee on applications on this agenda must notify Gavin Day from the Democratic Services Team on 01527 64252 (Ex 3304) or by email at gavin.day@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk before **12 noon on Tuesday 14th July 2026.**
- 2) Advice and assistance will be provided to public speakers as to how to access the meeting and those using the video link will be provided with joining details for Microsoft Teams. Provision has been made in the amended Planning Committee procedure rules for public speakers who cannot access the meeting by Teams, and those speakers will be given the opportunity to submit their speech in writing to be read out by an officer at the meeting. Please take care when preparing written comments to ensure that the reading time will not exceed three minutes. Any speakers wishing to submit written comments must do so by **12 noon on Tuesday 14th July 2026.**
- 3) Reports on all applications will include a summary of the responses received from consultees and third parties, an appraisal of the main planning issues and a recommendation. All submitted plans and documentation for each application, including consultee responses and third party representations, re available to view in full via the Public Access facility on the Council's website www.redditchbc.gov.uk
- 4) It should be noted that, in coming to its decision, the Committee can only take into account planning issues, namely policies contained in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 and other material considerations, which include Government Guidance and other relevant policies published since the adoption of the Development Plan and the "environmental factors" (in the broad sense) which affect the site.
- 5) Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when the committee might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.
- 6) Late circulation of additional papers is not advised and is subject to the Chair's agreement. The submission of any significant new information might lead to a delay in reaching a decision. The deadline for papers to be received by Planning Officers is 4.00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

Further assistance:

If you require any further assistance prior to the meeting, please contact the Democratic Services Officer (indicated on the inside front cover), Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, or Planning Officers, at the same address.

At the meeting, these Officers will normally be seated either side of the Chair, who will be seated at the front left-hand corner of the Committee table as viewed from the Public Gallery.

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Roger Bennett (Chair)	Bill Hartnett
	Simon Farmer (Vice-Chair)	Wanda King
	William Boyd	Nicola Lloyd
	Brandon Clayton	Ian Woodall
	Andrew Fry	

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and / or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

3. Confirmation of Minutes (Pages 7 - 12)

4. Update Reports

To note Update Reports (if any) for the Planning Applications to be considered at the meeting (circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting)

5. 25/01276/FUL - 15 Neighbrook Close, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5YA (Pages 13 - 22)

6. 26/00113/FUL- Kingfisher School, Clifton Close, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 0HF (Pages 23 - 32)

7. 26/00373/PIP - Walnut Tree Farm, Dark Lane, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcestershire (Pages 33 - 42)

8. 26/00507/FUL - 219 Walkwood Road, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5NX (Pages 43 - 54)

9. Urgent Business

To consider any Urgent Reports, details of which have been notified to the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Roger Bennett (Chair), Councillor Simon Farmer (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, William Boyd, Brandon Clayton, Andrew Fry and Ian Woodall

Officers:

Helena Plant, Steve Edden, Paul Lester and Amar Hussain

Democratic Services Officers:

Gavin Day

8. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bill Hartnett and Matt Dormer with Councillors Juliet Barker Smith and Brandon Clayton in attendance as substitutes respectively.

Apologies were also received from Councillors Wanda King and Nicola Lloyd.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28th May 2026 were presented to Members and it was:

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28th May 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

11. UPDATE REPORTS

There were no update reports.

Planning Committee

Thursday, 18th June, 2026

12. 26/00230/S73 - LAND WEST OF, HITHER GREEN LANE, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE, B98 9AZ

The application was reported to Planning Committee for determination because the application was for major development and as such the application fell outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 5 to 8 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack.

The application was for the Land West Of, Hither Green Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 9AZ and sought the variation of Condition 16 of the previously approved application 21/01830/FUL.

Officers detailed the history of the application 21/01830/FUL in that it came before Members of the Planning Committee on 22nd March 2024 and was refused by Members, However, following an appeal the application was approved on 13th February 2025 and construction commenced in August 2025.

The Section 73 application before Members sought an amendment to Condition 16, the proposed amendment was as follows:

FROM: None of the dwellings hereby permitted shall be occupied until the highway improvements to the Dagnell End Road / A441 Birmingham Road junction as shown in the PJA Drawing Ref: 2809 P 12 Rev P4 (planning permission ref: 19/00976/HYB) have been approved in writing and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and is open to traffic. The junction is to include Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) signal control.

TO: Prior to the occupation of the 101st dwelling, the highway improvements to the Dagnell End Road / A441 Birmingham Road junction as shown in the PJA Drawing Ref: 2809 P 12 Rev P4 (planning permission ref: 19/00976/HYB) shall have been approved in writing and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and is open to traffic. The junction is to include Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) signal control

Officers detailed that the significant part of the amendment would allow developers to occupy 100 dwellings before the highway's improvements to the junction on Dagnell End Road were completed. It was further detailed that no other Condition nor aspect of the application were before Members to discuss or alter.

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Worcestershire County Council, Highways (County Highways), had examined the application and found that the impact to the highways network due to the traffic generated by the addition of the 100 dwellings could not be considered severe and therefore, no objection was raised.

Officers clarified the following after questions from Members.

- That recent works at the junction were undertaken by Open Reach which included relocating cables. County Highways further confirmed that work to alter the junction had not yet started.
- It is the decision of the applicant if they brought forward other Section 73 applications to vary Conditions. This was not a material planning consideration.
- That the required bus services required under the Section 106 agreement of the original application had not yet been implemented.

County Highways further detailed that driver travel behaviour had stabilised at a lower level than seen pre-Covid. This was attributed to a number of factors which including flexible working schedules and remote working. The outcome was that the bulk of traffic was now experienced Tuesday to Thursday with Fridays and Mondays being significantly less busy. Additionally, there was now an Elongated PM traffic/commuter period across all days.

Members had concerns that the lack of alternative transport provision available would compound traffic congestion as there would not be any alternative arrangements for residents. However, after discussion with Officers, they accepted that any bus route must be commercially viable for the operators, and if a bus service was put in before dwellings were occupied, there may be little uptake which could cause the service to be prematurely cancelled.

There was little support for the principle of the application in that Members felt that the developer was wanting to occupy dwellings before they had completed their agreed works. However, Members understood that they could find no material planning reason to refuse the application without an objection from County Highways. Therefore, on being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, DELEGATED POWERS be granted to the Assistant Director of Planning, Leisure, and Culture Services, to GRANT Planning Permission and determine the final scope and detailed numbering of Conditions.

Planning Committee

Thursday, 18th June, 2026

13. 25/00454/FUL - KINGFISHER CAR PARK 7, CHURCH ROAD, REDDITCH, B97 4AB

The application was reported to Planning Committee for determination because the application was for major development and as such the application fell outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.

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The application was for the Land West Of, Hither Green Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 9AZ and sought the variation of Condition 16 of the previously approved application 21/01830/FUL.

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TO: Prior to the occupation of the 101st dwelling, the highway improvements to the Dagnell End Road / A441 Birmingham Road junction as shown in the PJA Drawing Ref: 2809 P 12 Rev P4 (planning permission ref: 19/00976/HYB) shall have been approved in writing and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and is open to traffic. The junction is to include Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) signal control

Officers detailed that the amendment would allow developers to occupy 100 dwellings before the highway's improvements to the junction on Dagnell End Road were completed. It was further detailed that no other Condition nor aspect of the application were before Members to discuss or alter.

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Worcestershire County Council, Highways (County Highways), had examined the application and found that the impact to the highways network due to the traffic generated by the addition of the 100 dwellings could not be considered severe and therefore, no objection was raised.

Officers clarified the following after questions from Members.

- Recent works at the junction were undertaken by Open Reach which included relocating cables. County Highways further confirmed that work to alter the junction was yet to start.
- It is the decision of the applicant if they brought forward other Section 73 applications to vary Conditions. This was not a material planning consideration.
- That the required bus services required under the Section 106 agreement of the original application had not yet been implemented.

County Highways further detailed that driver travel behaviour had stabilised at a lower level than seen pre-Covid. This was attributed to a number of factors which including flexible working schedules and remote working. The outcome was that the bulk of traffic was now experienced Tuesday to Thursday with Fridays and Mondays being significantly less busy. Additionally, there was now an Elongated PM traffic/commuter period across all days.

Members had concerns that the lack of alternative transport provision available would compound traffic congestion as there would not be any alternative arrangements for residents. However, after discussion with Officers, they accepted that any bus route must be commercially viable for the operators, and if a bus service was put in before dwellings were occupied, there may be little uptake which could cause the service to be prematurely cancelled.

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RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, DELEGATED POWERS be granted to the Assistant Director of Planning, Leisure, and Culture

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Services, to GRANT Planning Permission and determine the final scope and detailed numbering of Conditions.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.48 pm

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**16th July 2026

Planning Application 25/01276/FUL**Change of Use from a Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a Children's Care Home (Use Class C2)****15 Neighbrook Close, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5YA****Applicant: Mr B Hartles & Hingua Homes**
Ward: Webheath And Callow Hill

The case officer of this application is Mrs Alison Young, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 881280 Email: alison.young@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The application site is a detached, four-bedroom dwelling fronting onto the turning head of a cul de sac in a residential area in the Webheath neighbourhood of Redditch. The area is residential and the neighbouring properties are all of a similar scale and design to the application property. There is an existing driveway to the front of the site and a front garden which the plan shows can accommodate additional parking spaces, with four spaces proposed in total on the drive and frontage. The site has an enclosed rear garden which links to another part of Neighbrook Close. There is an off-road parking area to the side elevation of 15 Neighbrook Close and its rear garden.

The site is in close proximity to a bus stop on Springvale Road and the shop, recreation ground and other facilities within Webheath are within walking distance of the site.

Proposal Description

The proposed internal layout of the property has one child's bedroom on the ground floor and two children's bedrooms on the first floor with a further store/ boxroom and an en-suite staff member bedroom on the first floor. The ground floor would have an open plan kitchen, dining and living area, utility area and downstairs cloakroom. The existing small garage would be retained. No external alterations are proposed to the property itself.

The application seeks the change of use of the property from a C3 dwelling to a C2 residential institution to allow full-time care for up to 3 children. The supporting information states that the children would be between 8-17 years old and would have emotional and behavioural difficulties or other specific needs.

The home would provide 24-hour staffing and whilst not a planning matter, the supporting information confirms that the care service would be operated by Hingua Homes a registered care provider and the service would be regulated by Ofsted.

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Relevant Policies :**Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4**

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 20: Transport Requirements for New Development

Policy 39: Built Environment

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Planning History

24/00211/FUL	First floor side extension providing an additional bedroom with an en-suite over the existing garage & ground floor extension, together with single storey rear kitchen/dining/family room extension with mono pitch roof	Granted	18.04.2024
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Consultations**WRS - Noise**

No objection to the application.

Worcestershire County Council Highways

No objection subject to conditions. They note that cycle parking can be provided within the retained garage and recommend conditions requiring the laying out of the access, and proposed 4 parking spaces.

Public Consultation Response

24 neighbour letters were sent in relation to this application and letters of objection from 14 individuals were received in response

The representations collectively raised the following concerns:

- Residential amenity impacts (noise and disturbance)

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- Parking pressure, parking is already limited and used by local schools
- Highway and pedestrian safety
- Character of the area - operational activity would lead to an over intensification of use
- Suitability of the location – limited access to bus services and facilities
- Loss of a family dwelling

A number of other issues have been raised which are not material planning considerations.

Assessment of Proposal

Whether a Material Change of Use has Occurred

Development is defined in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation's in, on, over or under land; or the making of any **material** change in the use of any buildings or land.

Where activity results in a material change of use of a building to a different use class, then planning permission will be required. Depending on the circumstances of each case, a children's care home will either fall into a C2 or C3 use classification.

- Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order as amended refers to "use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care".
- Class C3(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order as amended refers to "use as a dwelling house by not more than six residents living together as a single household, (including a household where care is provided for residents)."

If a children's home was being run on the basis of children being looked after by a permanent occupant of the dwelling, there would usually be no change of use and therefore no requirement for planning permission. This is regardless of whether the individuals living together are related as family members. However, if care is provided on a shift pattern basis, it is likely that a change of use from C3 to C2 will occur.

Notwithstanding the above, it should further be noted that a change of use from C3 to C2 may not amount to a **material** change of use that requires planning permission. If there is no material difference in activity to that of a dwellinghouse, and no greater level of disturbance or amenity impact, then no **material** change of use has occurred. The issue will ultimately be a matter of fact and degree in each individual case. The key issues are the numbers of residents involved, whether or not staff work shift patterns or have a permanent residence at the site and the materiality in planning terms of any change of use.

With regards to the current proposal, there would usually be three children and three members of staff present at the property between 8am and 10pm. In addition to this there would often be a registered manager there during weekdays between 9am and 5pm and

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two waking night staff between 9.30pm and 8.30 am. Other visitors are expected to be infrequent although no details have been provided.

Whilst there would be staff on duty 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, there would be no staff living at the property. Staff would therefore operate on a shift pattern basis, with day shifts taking place between 8am-10pm and night shifts operating between 9:30pm-8:30am. The comings and goings arising from the proposed shift pattern and changeover of staff would have a material impact to character. Whilst shift patterns would be consistent and there would only be two shifts per day, changeover of staff would be a regular, daily occurrence and during periods of staff handovers, there could be a total of 5 staff present at any one time. Therefore, as a matter of fact and degree and having regard to relevant appeal decisions which have considered this matter, officers conclude that a **material** change of use from C3 to C2 would arise in this instance and therefore it is correct that planning permission is sought.

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Webheath and Callow Hill ward, within an urban area of Redditch, which is defined in Policy 2 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4 (BoRLP4) as a sustainable location for development.

The proposal would result in the loss of 1 C3 dwelling but would provide care and a place of residence for up to 3 children. Officers consider that care residences, in the same way as C3 dwellinghouses, should be in sustainable locations offering occupiers good access to local services such as schools. In this regard the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Character and Appearance

Policy 39 of the BoRLP4 states that development should contribute positively to the surrounding environment. Policy 40 requires development to be of a high design quality.

The external appearance of the dwelling would be unchanged and the only physical alterations to the site would be the creation of two parking spaces on the existing front garden in order to provide four spaces altogether, with two on the existing driveway. Concerns have been raised by local residents that the proposed commercial use would not be in keeping with the local character. However, the external appearance of the building would not be altered and would still reflect a residential property. The proposed parking area would require the removal of some of the existing planting at the property although there would still be space for planting to be retained or replaced on the corner and to the side of the parking area. The grass area to the frontage of the property is not part of the site and not within the ownership of the Applicant.

Therefore, having regard to the above, the development is considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance and would meet the requirements of policies 39 and 40 of BoRLP4.

Residential Amenity

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Paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should seek a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Consideration should therefore be given to the impact of the proposed change of use on the residential amenity of surrounding properties, including the impacts arising from the operation of the care service and the associated comings and goings.

The shift patterns indicate that staff would be on a shift pattern of 8am to 10pm for daytime staff and 9.30pm to 8.30am for night staff. The changeover of staff would see the arrival of up to 3 cars around 8am and leave around 10pm. It is also expected that a registered manager would arrive and leave the site usually at 9am and 5pm on weekdays. Other visitors are expected to be more infrequent and therefore not cause a significant impact.

The property faces onto the turning circle of a cul de sac and there are residential properties to one side of the site, to the front and also to the side at the rear. Much of the disturbance from the operation of the care home would arise from the front parking area of the property; this lies directly next to the parking area and garage of number 14 Neighbrook Close. No 13 faces out towards the driveways of Nos 14 and 15. Whilst car movements may be higher than the former C3 use of the property, they would still be relatively infrequent within a 24 hour period and would be expected at specific times rather than unrestrained. Officers note that comings and goings may happen at late hours in the case of a dwellinghouse where occupiers work shift patterns.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) have been consulted in relation to noise and nuisance matters and have raised no objections. They have highlighted, however, that they can only comment on predictable noise. With regards to the level of noise made by the children placed at the care home this would be dependent on the behaviour of the individuals living at the property and the degree of control and supervision by staff rather than the proposed use being inherently noisy. The characteristics of the individuals and operational matters such as staff supervision are not planning matters, however and the service would be regulated by other controls, such as Ofsted. The supporting information submitted with the application states that the operator is committed to ensuring the home integrates seamlessly with the surrounding residential character, that it would be operated to mimic a typical family home, that staff would be highly trained to manage behaviour in a supportive and professional manner, that any potential disturbance would be minimised especially during unsociable hours and that no external alterations to the property are proposed.

The scale of the use in this instance is relatively small, and a planning condition could be attached to the permission to restrict the number of children in the care home to be no more than 3.

Whilst the NPPF sets out that fear of crime should not undermine quality of life, the proposed use in this case involves children 8-17 years old who would be supervised 24 hours a day by responsible adults.

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Based on the above considerations it is concluded that there are no reasons to refuse the application on residential amenity grounds.

Highways

Worcestershire County Council Highways have reviewed the proposal and have taken into account the number of staff and the shift patterns associated with the proposed use and consider that the 4 parking spaces available which are shown on the site layout plan as on the driveway and existing frontage to the property are acceptable. The existing garage is to be retained and the Highway Authority has stated that it would therefore be available for cycle parking. A condition to create a parking area on site for 4 vehicles is considered reasonable and necessary in order to prevent the displacement of vehicles on the highway for sustained periods of time.

Public Consultation Responses

Letters of objection have been received from 14 individuals. A summary of the issues raised that have not already been covered in the report and an officer response to these issues are provided below, however regard has been had to the full contents of all submissions whilst drafting this report and forming the recommendation.

Concern raised	Officer response
<p>Character impacts Neighbrook Close is a cul-de-sac and neighbouring residents have stated that a staffed care home use would be out of keeping with the established residential character and with the demographic profile of existing residents.</p>	<p>There is no policy restriction against children's homes in residential areas and the use is not unacceptable in principle. More relevant is the scale of the use and the impacts that would arise in practice. In this case the use would have some similarities to a family home, albeit there would be additional comings and goings from staff changeovers etc which have been considered. With regards to the scale of the use, a condition has been recommended to limit the number of children to a maximum of 3 that would be looked after at the property.</p>
<p>Highway safety, traffic and parking impacts Several comments refer to existing congestion and parking demand in Neighbrook Close, especially linked to nearby schools and that reliance on on-street spaces would make the existing parking problems worse. Concerns regarding the regularity of delivery vehicles and turning-circle issues have also been raised. Increased risk to pedestrian</p>	<p>The increased number of traffic movements arising from the change of use in the context of the surrounding area would not be significant and has not been raised as a concern by the Highways Officer. Whilst there would be more comings and goings expected with the proposed use, changeover of staff would only typically be twice a day and other visitors would not be regular and therefore similar to a typical dwelling. The parking area can accommodate staff numbers, except potentially during staff changeover times. The</p>

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<p>safety. Access for emergency vehicles.</p>	<p>proposed use would therefore not add significantly to the existing parking demands for on street parking that could cause congestion. Additional cars at a property are again something that can happen at a typical dwelling. The staff shift changes would not be at the school drop off and pick up times that it is stated cause congestion and parking issues in the Close. There is a footpath to the front and side of the site and pedestrians would not have to walk around the turning circle and in general footpath provision is good in the local area and local amenities/services can be walked to.</p>
<p>Sustainability of the location Bus service and lack of facilities for children</p>	<p>The site is located within the urban area of Redditch and there is regular bus between Washford and Redditch with the nearest stop in close proximity to the site. It is accepted however that the buses do not run after 7pm. The site is accessible to facilities including a recreation ground which is within walking distance.</p>
<p>Residential amenity impacts (noise/disturbance) The proposal would create more noise, disturbance, footfall and activity than a normal family home, particularly due to 24-hour staffing, shift changes and visitors.</p>	<p>It is not expected that there would be 24/7 activity at the property, given that this would provide a home for 3 children and staff changeover would be infrequent throughout the day. A family home of this size could reasonably house 3 children. Whilst activity levels may exceed those of a typical dwelling, this isn't in itself reason to refuse planning permission. A noise survey has not been requested by WRS and is not considered necessary in this instance.</p>
<p>Safety, security and layout Resident profile (needs, behaviour). Effects on elderly/vulnerable residents)</p>	<p>Consideration needs to be given to the land use rather than personal characteristics of occupants. Matters relating to safeguarding and care provision are regulated under separate legislative regimes (e.g. Ofsted). There is no evidence of likely impact of anti-social behaviour arising from the use. Assumptions about the behaviour of future occupants cannot be made.</p>
<p>Suitability of property</p>	<p>The proposed use would provide care for up</p>

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The dwelling is a standard 3–4 bed house not designed for institutional care, layout and site constraints limit suitability for the intended use.	to 3 children, which could reasonably occupy a family home of this size. Space for staff and a carers bedroom has also been provided and the property has an enclosed rear garden area. Other regulations are in place to control operational matters.
Loss of family dwelling to local housing supply.	Whilst this is noted, the loss of housing would only be very small. The proposal would also provide a place of residence for looked after children. Paragraph 63 of the NPPF sets out that the housing needs of looked after children also need to be addressed.
Need for a children’s home	There is no requirement for the Applicant to demonstrate need and the application must be assessed on its merits. The proposed change of use from a dwellinghouse to a children's home is considered acceptable in principle and there are no technical planning reasons to withhold the grant of planning permission.
Other Impacts Impact to property values	Impact on property values is not a material planning consideration.

Conclusion

Having regard to the sustainable, residential location of the site, the proposed change of use of the residential property to a children’s care home is considered acceptable in principle.

There are no outstanding objections from consultees, and it is concluded that there are no issues of highway safety or severe road network impacts that would warrant refusal. Whilst there would likely be an intensification of activity at the site due to the change of use, it is not considered to be so significantly adverse as to cause unacceptable noise or amenity impacts to neighbouring residents.

Taking all matters into account, including all third party representations that have been received, it is considered that the change of use is acceptable subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

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Conditions:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:
25126-01 Ground and first floor plan
25126-02A Site and location plan

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) The property subject to this application shall only be used as a residential care home for up to 3 children at any one time and shall be used for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class C2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: to provide certainty of the proposed development and limit the scale of the use in order to protect the amenity of neighbours.

- 4) The Development hereby approved shall not commence until the access and 4 car parking space provision shown on Site and Location Plans Job No. 25126_Drawing No. 02 have been provided. These areas shall thereafter be retained and kept available for their respective approved uses at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

- 5) The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until sheltered, safe, secure and accessible cycle parking for 2 cycles have been provided on site. The cycle parking shall thereafter be kept available for the parking of bicycles only.

Reason: To encourage sustainable modes of transport

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the number of objections received exceeds that which can be considered by officers.

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Planning Application 26/00113/FUL

New single storey building and access off Clifton Close to serve as a vocational training centre for post-16 students with special educational needs, as part of Kingfisher Special School.

Kingfisher School, Clifton Close, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 0HF

**Applicant: Mr Jonathan Astley
Ward: Matchborough and Woodrow Ward**

The case officer of this application is Emily Cox, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 881699 EXT 1699 Email: emily.cox@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

Kingfisher School is located in the residential area of Redditch where the principle of development can be accepted.

Proposal Description

The proposal is for a new single storey building serving a vocational training centre for post-16 students with special educational needs (SEND). The information submitted with the application confirms that the proposed extensions would not result in any increase in pupil or staff numbers and that it would not affect the current car parking arrangements at the school.

The extensions would be located on the most southern point of the site, and would not extend the school building on to the adjacent playing field which is classified in the Redditch Local Plan as an area of Primarily Open Space.

Relevant Policies :

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy 5: Effective and Efficient Use of Land
Policy 16: Natural Environment
Policy 17: Flood Risk Management
Policy 19: Sustainable Travel and Accessibility
Policy 20: Transport Requirements for New Development
Policy 39: Built Environment
Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
Redditch High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

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2015/033/FUL	Classroom extension and internal alterations	Granted	20.03.2015
19/00002/FUL	Retention of an existing modular double classroom unit	Granted	18.02.2019
20/00838/FUL	Removal of 2no. existing mobile classrooms and provision of 3no new classrooms, office and toilets	Granted	04.09.2020
21/00066/FUL	Removal of 2no. existing mobile classrooms and provision of 3no. new classrooms	Granted	12.03.2021
21/00432/FUL	New modular classroom block	Granted	02.06.2021

Consultations**Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Contaminated Land)**

WRS records and mapping indicate the subject site is within the zone of influence from two historic ponds and areas of unknown filled ground. The maps and records indicate the presence of a dried-up pond, planters, metal cages, concrete pad/hardstanding and the potential for made ground. As a precaution, WRS recommend a full tiered condition attached to the permission.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Noise)

No objection.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (fume and odour)

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (fume and odour) – submission of the kitchen ventilation system details to be conditioned.

Sport England

No objection.

North Worcestershire Water Management

No objection subject to compliance with the submitted drainage strategy.

Public Consultation Response

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Site Notice posted 18 February 2026; expired 14 March 2026

Neighbour Letters sent 18 February 2026; expired 14 March 2026

Following the end of consultation, 1 neutral letter has been received by a neighbour. Some of the matters raised are non-material planning considerations and have not been reported within the Report. Their comments are summarised below:

- Concern around cars, taxis, buses during school drop off/pick up;
- Concern over an increase in students and an increase in parking facilities.

Assessment of Proposal

Principle of Development

Kingfisher School is an established special educational needs school which is located in a sustainable, urban area of Redditch. Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space. Given the proposed building would provide vocational post-16 education, this is given substantial weight.

Design and Appearance

The proposed building would be a square shape, which would be in keeping with the design of Kingfisher School, and would have a duo-pitch roof. The eaves would be approximately 4m above ground level and the ridge approximately 6m. Materials proposed to be used include:

- Staffordshire blue brick plinth;
- RAL 7012 Dark grey powder aluminium;
- White render

The building would measure approximately 615 sqm. The height would be approximately 6.1m at its highest point, and width would be approximately 25m. The building is proposed to be single storey, and feature a number of rooms to help support vocational education, including a hair and beauty room, catering kitchen and dining area, IT room, and 4 general rooms.

Due to the siting, design and scale of the proposed building it is considered that it would be in scale with the existing building and would respect the overall character and appearance of the existing building. Due to the scale of the extensions, it is not considered that they would affect the overall character or appearance of the area or the existing amenities of the neighbouring properties.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal accords with the Policies in the Local Plan and the NPPF and is acceptable.

Highway Matters

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As part of the proposal, there would be the creation of a new access, car parking and bicycle parking to serve the building off Clifton Close.

At this stage, your Officers are satisfied that parking and access is sufficient in regard to highway safety, and comments from Worcestershire County Council Highways will be included within the Update Report.

Trees, Drainage and Contamination and Biodiversity Net Gain

The Council's Tree Officer was consulted and no comments were received.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 10% for developments is a mandatory requirement in England under the Environment Act 2021, subject to some limited exceptions. Unless exempt, every planning permission granted pursuant to an application submitted after 12 February 2024 is deemed to have been granted subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to commencement of the development.

It has been found that the proposal triggers the need to provide a minimum 10% BNG. A BNG metric has been submitted which shows a net loss in habitat units and that post development BNG cannot be secured on site and a net loss is recorded. Off-site credits are therefore required to secure the uplift in BNG. It is considered reasonable that this is the only viable option and these credits can be secured via the market.

The development is therefore acceptable in this regard and the pre-commencement condition will be set out within the informatives section attached to any approval.

Other Matters

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (noise) – no objection.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (fume and odour) – submission of the kitchen ventilation system details to be conditioned. This is listed within the schedule of conditions below.

Sport England – raise no objection as the proposal accords with exception 3: *'The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not: • reduce the size of any playing pitch • result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas); • reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality; • result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or • prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site'* of SE Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

Conclusion

Overall, it is considered that the proposal accords with the policies within the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 and the NPPF and is acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material

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considerations, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1) The development hereby approved must be begun not later than the expiration of three years with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

- Location Plan, dated February 2025;
- Existing Site Plan, dated March 2025;
- Proposed Site Plan, dated April 2026;
- Proposed Floor Plan, dated December 2025;
- Proposed Elevations, dated December 2025;
- Landscape Masterplan, dated December 2025;
- Topographical Survey, dated January 2025;
- Drainage General Arrangement, dated January 2026;
- Proposed Levels General Arrangement, dated January 2026

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) All new external walls and roofs shall be finished in materials listed within the Planning Statement, received February 2026.

Reason: To ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance and to safeguard the visual amenities of the area.

- 4) Details of the kitchen ventilation system shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the installation and shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To protect residential amenity.

- 5) Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority development, other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation, must not commence until conditions A to G have been complied with:

A: A preliminary risk assessment must be carried out. This study shall take the form of a Phase I desk study and site walkover and shall include the identification of previous site

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uses, potential contaminants that might reasonably be expected given those uses and any other relevant information. The preliminary risk assessment report shall contain a diagrammatical representation (conceptual model) based on the information above and shall include all potential contaminants, sources and receptors to determine whether a site investigation is required and this should be detailed in a report supplied to the Local Planning Authority. The risk assessment must be approved in writing before any development takes place.

B: Where an unacceptable risk is identified a scheme for detailed site investigation must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to being undertaken. The scheme must be designed to assess the nature and extent of any contamination and must be led by the findings of the preliminary risk assessment. The investigation and risk assessment scheme must be compiled by competent persons and must be designed in accordance with the Environment Agency's "Land Contamination: Risk Management" guidance.

C: Detailed site investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and a written report of the findings produced. This report must be approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to any development taking place. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and must be conducted in accordance with the Environment Agency's "Land Contamination: Risk Management" guidance.

D: Where identified as necessary a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to identified receptors must be prepared and is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority in advance of undertaking. The remediation scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as Contaminated Land under Part 2A Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

E: The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development, other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

F: Following the completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any buildings.

G: In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, these will be subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. Following the completion of any measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report must be prepared, which

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is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any buildings.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

- 6) Prior to first occupation a detailed scheme of soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping shall be completely carried out within the first available planning season from the date of occupation or completion of the development, whichever is the earlier.

For a period of five years after the completion of the approved landscaping scheme, the trees, hedges and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy condition. Any trees, hedges or shrubs that cease to grow or are felled, removed, uprooted, destroyed or die, or become in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority seriously damaged, diseased, or defective, shall be replaced by trees, hedges or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This replacement planting shall be undertaken before the end of the first available planting season (October to March inclusive for bare root plants), following the removal, uprooting, destruction or death of the original trees or plants.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the landscape character and visual amenity of the area; to help assimilate the development into its immediate surrounds; and to provide ecological, environmental and biodiversity benefits, in the interests of no net biodiversity loss.

- 7) Prior to first occupation, in order to provide a net gain in biodiversity for protected species, two schweglar bat or bird box or equivalent shall be placed on site in suitable locations at least 3 metres above ground level facing to the south or east and kept thereafter in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal results in a net gain of biodiversity having regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative

- 1) Proactive engagement by the local planning authority was not necessary in this case as the proposed development was considered acceptable as initially submitted.

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2) Pre-commencement conditions for contaminated land risk assessment are considered necessary for the following reasons:

- There is potential for contamination to exist on the site. The degree and extent of contamination is currently unknown. More information relating to ground conditions is required to determine whether or not remediation will be required (prior to any construction work commencing).
- Where remediation is necessary, this remediation may involve work/techniques that need to be completed before any development is commenced, for example the removal from site of contaminated soils/underground structures, the design and incorporation of gas protection measures in any buildings etc. To carry out such work after construction has started/been completed, may require potentially expensive retro-fitting and in some cases the demolition of construction work already completed.
- Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires development to be suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions, any risks arising from contamination, and any proposals for mitigation, including land remediation. Paragraph 196 goes on to state that after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as Contaminated Land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

3) Biodiversity Net Gain

The application is subject to statutory biodiversity net gain legislation under the Environment Act 2021, and the Biodiversity Gain Condition will be applied.

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Redditch Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed below.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

1. The application for planning permission was made before 12 February 2024.
2. The planning permission relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) applies.
3. The planning permission was granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and (i)the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates* was granted before 12 February 2024; or (ii)the

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application for the original planning permission* to which the section 73 planning permission relates was made before 12 February 2024.

4. The permission which has been granted is for development which is exempt being: 4.1 Development which is not 'major development' (within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) where:

- i) the application for planning permission was made before 2 April 2024;
- ii) planning permission is granted which has effect before 2 April 2024; or
- iii) planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where the original permission to which the section 73 permission relates* was exempt by virtue of (i) or (ii).

4.2 Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:

- i) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- ii) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

4.3 Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

4.4 Development of a biodiversity gain site, meaning development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the Biodiversity Gain Planning condition which applies in relation to another development, (no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee).

4.5 Self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- i) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- ii) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- iii) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

4.6 Development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high speed railway transport network (High Speed 2) comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

* "original planning permission means the permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates" means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions are section 73 planning permissions.

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is

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minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits. The effect of section 73D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

If planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) and a Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in relation to the previous planning permission ("the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan") there are circumstances when the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition subject to which the section 73 planning permission is granted.

Those circumstances are that the conditions subject to which the section 73 permission is granted:

- i) do not affect the post-development value of the onsite habitat as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan, and
- ii) in the case of planning permission for a development where all or any part of the onsite habitat is irreplaceable habitat the conditions do not change the effect of the development on the biodiversity of that onsite habitat (including any arrangements made to compensate for any such effect) as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the site is owned by Worcestershire County Council. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.

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Planning Application 26/00373/PIP**Planning Permission in Principle for up to 6 dwellings, garages and associated access drive****Walnut Tree Farm, Dark Lane, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcestershire****Applicant: Mr and Mrs Adrian and Julie Nicholls
Ward: Astwood Bank and Feckenham Ward**

The case officer of this application is Emily Cox, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 881699 EXT 1699 Email: emily.cox@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Permission in Principle (PIP) is an alternative route of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. This process separates the issues concerning the principle of the proposed development, from the technical details of the proposal. The process has two stages - permission in principle, which establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle; and the second stage, technical details consent, where the detailed development proposals are assessed. The new process was introduced in June 2018 and was intended to speed up and simplify the planning process for small housing developments.

While assessing applications for permission in principle, the scope for assessment is strictly limited to the following issues:

- Location
- Land use
- Amount of development

Consideration of this application has to be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is one such material consideration. Following a grant of Permission in Principle, the site must receive a grant of technical details consent before development can proceed. The granting of technical details consent has the effect of granting planning permission for the development.

Site Description and Relevant Planning History

This application seeks permission in principle for one dwelling on land at Walnut Tree Farm, Dark Lane, Astwood Bank.

The site lies just outside of the designated residential area of Astwood Bank, which is a village and is in the Green Belt. The site currently forms the wider residential curtilage of Walnut Tree Farm. The site is bound by Dark Lane to the south, agricultural fields to the north and west of the site, and by a row of dwellings to the east of the site. The row of dwellings to the east of the site are in the residential area.

Relevant Policies :

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Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 Policy 2: Settlement Hierarchy
 Policy 4: Housing Provision
 Policy 5: Effective and Efficient Use of Land
 Policy 8: Green Belt
 Policy 16: Natural Environment
 Policy 17: Flood Risk Management
 Policy 19: Sustainable Travel and Accessibility
 Policy 20: Transport Requirements for New Development
 Policy 39: Built Environment

Others

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
 Redditch High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

25/01245/PIP	Proposed new dwelling with associated access drive, garage and gardens	Granted	06.01.2026
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Consultations**Worcestershire Highways - Redditch**

WCCHA have no objection. In principle based on location, highways raise no objection to PIP stage 1, however notwithstanding the proposal for 6 dwellings will lead to a significant highway issue in terms of additional trip generation.

From information available to me it appears that visibility is obstructed in both directions from the point of access, given the potential increase in trips we would request that visibility is improved based on the 85 percentile vehicle approach speeds.

The site access via Dark Lane is on an unclassified road subject to the national speed limit. It is a single-track lane with restricted width for most of its length. Dark Lane can only accommodate one vehicle at a time and has limited opportunities for vehicles to pass safely. This would increase the likelihood of unavoidable vehicular conflict and introduces increased risk to all users of the highway.

Notwithstanding the above, based on the criteria used to review PIP Stage 1, the Highway Authority submits a response of no objection; however, we will require further information to be submitted should the application progress to the Technical Details Stage.

North Worcestershire Water Management

Have no issues in principle. The proposed development site is situated in the catchment of the Doe Bank Brook. The site comprises an area of 0.44 hectares, with current land use noted as gardens and a tennis court. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and it is not considered that there is

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any significant fluvial flood risk to the site. The EA's flood mapping, however, indicates that there is some surface water flood risk to the immediate site, as well as a significant flood risk to land at Walnut Tree Farm, which may affect the development site. For this reason, a Flood Risk Assessment must be submitted at the technical matters stage of application, which must include the associated access drive.

Mapping indicates there is an existing watercourse that flows through the site and into a spread owned by Walnut Tree Farm. It is required that the technical matters outline how the watercourse will be incorporated into the development, and a condition survey must be submitted to determine baseline conditions of the watercourse. It should be noted that this watercourse is not included in the national Flood Risk Assessment mapping. As such, any Flood Risk Assessment submitted via the technical details should account for this catchment to ensure accurate modelling of fluvial flood risk.

As no detailed block plans have been submitted, the following is primarily information for the applicant to be aware of. In line with Policy 17.9 of the Redditch Borough Local Planning Policy, de-culverted watercourses are prioritised to ensure natural flow and migration of the stream. All works that have the potential to alter the flow in an ordinary watercourse would require a Land Drainage Consent, as set out in Land Drainage Act 1991 section 23.

Soilscapes (accessible at: <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>) indicates that the underlying soil is likely to be loamy and clayey, meaning that the site could be seasonally wet with impeded drainage. If a soakaway is proposed a porosity test would be needed to determine if this is suitable. If not suitable, other options may need to be considered. STW records indicate that there is a public combined sewer running along Dark Lane. If a connection is needed, consultation with STW would be required. Where surface water runoff cannot be kept on site an appropriate level of attenuation should be included. It would be required that surface water runoff from the site is restricted to greenfield runoff rates up to the 1 in 100 return period, including an additional 40% allowance for climate change, which should be supported by calculations.

While in principle I have no issues with the proposed development from a flood risk perspective, no drainage details have been provided with this application. I would therefore suggest the applicant, at the technical matters stage of the application, include a drainage strategy to avoid the need for conditions. This should be in the form of a drainage plan and should include the means to manage surface water from the site appropriately. It should identify where surface water will be discharged to, as well as detailing the extent of any new buildings and any new hard standing and what materials will be used to finish these areas.

Public Consultation Response

Site Notice posted 16 April 2026; expired 10 May 2026

Neighbour Letters sent 16 April 2026; expired 10 May 2026

Following the end of publicity, 15 objections have been received from members of the public. Their comments are summarised below, and can be viewed in full on Public Access.

- Loss of rural character and peaceful environment;
- Concerns over additional traffic along a single track lane from additional dwellings, and safety concerns for pedestrians, cyclists, existing residents;
- Impact on local wildlife and natural environment;

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- Increase in light pollution;
- Set a precedent for future development in the countryside;
- Construction traffic concerns;
- Services impacted at schools and doctors surgeries;
- Concerns regarding the harm to the Green Belt;
- Impact on drainage;
- No BNG and ecology reports submitted as part of the application;

Concerns relating to the Green Belt have been addressed within the Report. All other matters would be subject to a Technical Details Consent application. All material planning considerations have been taken into account and are set out within this Report, all non-material planning considerations have not been considered. Permission in Principle is not a planning permission in itself. The consideration of this application is limited to very specific matters and cannot at this point be the subject of any conditions, other matters raised must be considered at the subsequent Technical Details Consent Stage.

Assessment of Proposal

The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, proposed land use and amount of development.

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS) and therefore regard should be had to paragraph 11(d) and footnote 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which together state that for applications providing housing, where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5YHLS, the policies which are most important for determining the application are considered out-of-date and planning permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. 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, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Location

The site lies within the Green Belt.

In respect of Green Belt policy, it has been established through case law that the list of exceptions for 'appropriate development' set out in Policy 8 of the BORLP4 and the NPPF amounts to a closed list. Thereby, proposals not included on the list are regarded as 'prima facie' inappropriate development. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out exemptions to inappropriate development, including at parts e and g:

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e) limited infilling in villages

g) redevelopment of previously developed land.

The site is currently forms the wider residential curtilage of Walnut Tree Farm. It is considered that the site could fall within exceptions e) and g) listed in paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

The Applicant's Green Belt statement also considers the exemptions, who believe the site could fall either within exemption e) or g). The applicant also considers the site to be Grey Belt land, under paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that: the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the following apply:

A: the development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

B: there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

C: the development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework;

D: where applicable, the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156 - 157.

Grey Belt is defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF as follows:

Grey Belt: for the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey Belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

Does Green Belt land on the site strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes a), b), or d)?

To establish whether the application site can be considered 'grey belt' it must be first be determined whether the site strongly contributes to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d) of the Green Belt which is set out in paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (LBUA); in terms of purpose A, given the site's location within Astwood Bank and the separation to Redditch, which is classed as a LBUA. The development is not considered to amount to sprawl of a LBUA and make a weak contribution to purpose A.

b) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; the site location is located just outside of the settlement boundary of Astwood Bank, along a road with existing dwellings. The distance from Astwood Bank to Redditch (Town) has a defined separation distance. As such, it is considered therefore to be a weak contribution to purpose B.

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d) *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;* Astwood Bank is not considered to be a 'historic town' for the purpose of purpose D.

To summarise, the site does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d).

Would the application of non-Green Belt NPPF footnote 7 policies to the scheme proposed on the site provide a strong reason for refusing development?

Footnote 7 states "The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats site (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change."

None of the footnote 7 policies would apply and therefore do not present a strong justification for refusing planning permission.

Would the proposed development on grey belt fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan?

Purposes a, b, and d have already been assessed above. Regard however must be made to c and e.

c) *Safeguard the countryside from encroachment.* It is accepted that the spatial occupation of the site would not encroach into the countryside, as the current use of the site is a tennis court and the wider domestic curtilage. In relation to the wider function the Green Belt the comparatively small nature of the site itself that it does not fundamentally undermine purpose c) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

e) *Assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.* The proposed development would not fundamentally undermine the purpose of Green Belt criterion.

Is there a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed?

The NPPF at footnote 56 explains that demonstrable unmet need would apply where there is a lack of five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply.

Would the development in the grey belt be in a sustainable location?

The application site is located outside but adjacent to the settlement of Astwood Bank, as identified on the Council's Proposals Map. Astwood Bank is considered a Sustainable Rural Settlement within Policy 2 with a variety of services and amenities. Whilst the application site is not within the settlement boundary, it is immediately adjacent (30 metres to the east) and is considered a sustainable location for housing.

Does the proposal include major development involving housing?

The application proposes up to 1 dwelling with a site area of 0.176 ha and as such would not be caught by the requirement to also satisfy the 'Golden Rules' when considering grey belt policy.

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In conclusion, it is considered that the site is Grey Belt and would meet the Paragraph 155 requirements and thus the proposal should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework.

Land Use

The application site is adjacent to other residential dwellings and is not considered to conflict in terms of land use with its immediate surroundings.

Amount of Development

The amount of development (up to 6 dwellings) is acceptable given the area of land shown within the red line boundary on the location, the existing number of dwellings and indicative plans showing the layouts.

Other Matters

North Worcestershire Water Management. The proposed development site is situated in the catchment of the Doe Bank Brook. The site comprises an area of 0.44 hectares, with current land use noted as gardens and a tennis court. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and it is not considered that there is any significant fluvial flood risk to the site. The EA's flood mapping, however, indicates that there is some surface water flood risk to the immediate site, as well as a significant flood risk to land at Walnut Tree Farm, which may affect the development site. For this reason, a Flood Risk Assessment must be submitted at the technical matters stage of application, which must include the associated access drive.

Mapping indicates there is an existing watercourse that flows through the site and into a spread owned by Walnut Tree Farm. It is required that the technical matters outline how the watercourse will be incorporated into the development, and a condition survey must be submitted to determine baseline conditions of the watercourse. It should be noted that this watercourse is not included in the national Flood Risk Assessment mapping. As such, any Flood Risk Assessment submitted via the technical details should account for this catchment to ensure accurate modelling of fluvial flood risk.

As no detailed block plans have been submitted, the following is primarily information for the applicant to be aware of. In line with Policy 17.9 of the Redditch Borough Local Planning Policy, de-culverted watercourses are prioritised to ensure natural flow and migration of the stream. All works that have the potential to alter the flow in an ordinary watercourse would require a Land Drainage Consent, as set out in Land Drainage Act 1991 section 23.

Soilscapes (accessible at: <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>) indicates that the underlying soil is likely to be loamy and clayey, meaning that the site could be seasonally wet with impeded drainage. If a soakaway is proposed a porosity test would be needed to determine if this is suitable. If not suitable, other options may need to be considered. STW records indicate that there is a public combined sewer running along Dark Lane. If a connection is needed, consultation with STW would be required. Where surface water runoff cannot be kept on site an appropriate level of attenuation should be included. It would be required that surface water runoff from the site is restricted to greenfield runoff rates up to the 1 in 100 return period, including an additional 40% allowance for climate change, which should be supported by calculations.

While in principle I have no issues with the proposed development from a flood risk perspective,

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no drainage details have been provided with this application. I would therefore suggest the applicant, at the technical matters stage of the application, include a drainage strategy to avoid the need for conditions. This should be in the form of a drainage plan and should include the means to manage surface water from the site appropriately. It should identify where surface water will be discharged to, as well as detailing the extent of any new buildings and any new hard standing and what materials will be used to finish these areas.

Worcestershire County Council Highway Authority: have no objection in principle. Based on location, highways raise no objection to PIP Stage 1, however notwithstanding the proposal for 6 dwellings will lead to a significant highway issue in terms of additional trip generation. From information available, it appears that visibility is obstructed in both directions from the point of access, given the potential increase in trips WCCHA would request that visibility is improved based on the 85th percentile vehicle approach speeds.

The site access via Dark Lane is on an unclassified road subject to the national speed limit. It is a single-track lane with restricted width for most of its length. Dark Lane can only accommodate one vehicle at a time and has limited opportunities for vehicles to pass safely. This would increase the likelihood of unavoidable vehicular conflict and introduces increased risk to all users of the highway.

Notwithstanding the above, based on the criteria used to review PIP Stage 1, the Highway Authority submits a response of no objection; however, WCCHA will require further information to be submitted should the application progress to the Technical Details Stage.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) and therefore regard should be had to paragraph 11(d) and footnote 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which together state that for applications providing housing, where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5YHLS, the policies which are most important for determining the application are considered out-of-date and planning permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. 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, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

For limb i), having regard to the policies within the Framework, identified at footnote 7, there are no policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance that provide a strong reason for refusing the development.

For limb ii), The proposal would contribute six dwellings to local housing land supply. The site is in a sustainable location and is of suitable land use and amount. This is a two-stage approach, and the Technical Details Consent will consider the detailed development proposals. On this basis, there are no known adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits as set out in limb ii) and Permission in Principle is granted.

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RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, permission in principle be **GRANTED**.

Conditions

1. This decision notice only relates to the grant of planning permission in principle. It does not give any approval or consent which may be needed under any legislation, enactment, byelaws, order or regulation other than the Housing and Planning Act 2016. You may need other approvals, consents or licenses for the development e.g. Technical Details Consent or building regulations approval.

Permission in Principle is not a planning permission; it is a precursor to it. A planning permission only exists when the Permission in Principle and Technical Detailed Consent have been granted.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because 11 (or more) objections have been received.

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**PLANNING
COMMITTEE****16th July 2026****Planning Application 26/00507/FUL****Change of use of existing dwelling (Use Class C3) to a Children's Care Home (maximum of 3 children) (Use Class C2); conversion of existing garage; alterations.****219 Walkwood Road, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5NX,****Applicant: Alexandra Marlow
Ward: Webheath And Callow Hill**

The case officer of this application is Charlotte Wood, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3412 Email: Charlotte.Wood@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The application site is a 4-bedroomed detached dwelling which lies on the southern side of Walkwood Road. It is located within the urban area of Redditch, indicated as white land on the proposals map and is predominantly residential in character, although Windmill Community Centre lies a short distance to the south-east of the site. There are a mixture of house types in the area. Neighbouring property 221 Walkwood Road to the west is similar in design to the host property and lies adjacent to it, whereas number 217 to the east is set much further forward and is adjacent to the parking area of the application site.

Vehicular access to the site is off Walkwood Road and there is a large parking area to the front of the site, with the garden of the property positioned at the rear. There is additional on-street parking available in the vicinity. The site is in close proximity to a bus stop and the nearest shops and services lie in Crabbs Cross, approximately 850 metres (a 13 minute walk) from the site.

Proposal Description

The application seeks the change of use of the property from a C3 dwelling to a C2 residential institution to allow full-time care for up to 3 children. The children would be between 5-17 years old and would have emotional and behavioural difficulties, assessed as low to medium risk.

The home would provide 24-hour staffing and whilst not a planning matter, the supporting information confirms that the care service would employ suitably qualified staff and the service would be regulated by Ofsted and subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Furthermore, the placements would be subject to assessment by both the care provider and the local placement authority.

The supporting information/risk assessment sets out that the location of the site, within a stable residential setting, is suitable for those with low-medium risk behaviours.

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There would be some changes to the property to facilitate the change of use. Most notably the existing flat roof garage projecting to the front of the property would be converted to a staff office and the garage door would be replaced by two windows. The internal wall dividing the existing dining room and utility would also be removed in order to create a larger dining room area.

Relevant Policies:**Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4**

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 20: Transport Requirements for New Development

Policy 39: Built Environment

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Redditch High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history

Consultations**Worcestershire County Council Highways**

Worcestershire County Council Highways have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposal subject to conditions. They note that there would be 3 staff providing one-to-one care to the children in addition to a registered manager during weekday working hours, however a total of 4 parking spaces would be available to serve the development. A condition for the provision of cycle storage has been recommended in the event that planning permission is granted.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services - Noise

No objection to the application.

Public Consultation Response

4 neighbour letters were sent in relation to this application and letters of objection from 24 individuals were received in response. A petition including 34 names and signatures was also received in objection to the application (some of the people named on the petition also submitted separate letters of objection).

The representations collectively raised the following concerns:

- Harm to residential character

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- Highway safety, traffic and parking
- Residential amenity impacts (noise and disturbance)
- Safety, security and potential for anti-social behaviour
- Unsuitability of property
- Insufficient information
- Waste and servicing capacity
- Impact to local infrastructure
- Loss of dwelling to local housing supply
- Inaccuracy of proposal description (proposed use is C2A secure residential institution rather than C2 residential institution)

A number of other issues were raised, however these have not been reported in this section as they are not material planning considerations:

Assessment of Proposal

Whether a Material Change of Use has Occurred

Development is defined in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation's in, on, over or under land; or the making of any **material** change in the use of any buildings or land.

Where activity results in a material change of use of a building to a different use class, then planning permission will be required. Depending on the circumstances of each case, a children's care home will either fall into a C2 or C3 use classification.

- Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order as amended refers to "use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care".
- Class C3(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order as amended refers to "use as a dwelling house by not more than six residents living together as a single household, (including a household where care is provided for residents)."

If a children's home was being run on the basis of children being looked after by a permanent occupant of the dwelling, there would usually be no change of use and therefore no requirement for planning permission. This is regardless of whether the individuals living together are related as family members. However, if care is provided on a shift pattern basis, it is likely that a change of use from C3 to C2 will occur.

Notwithstanding the above, it should further be noted that a change of use from C3 to C2 may not amount to a **material** change of use that requires planning permission. If there is no material difference in activity to that of a dwellinghouse, and no greater level of disturbance or amenity impact, then no **material** change of use has occurred. The issue will ultimately be a matter of fact and degree in each individual case. The key issues are the numbers of residents involved, whether or not staff work shift patterns or have a permanent residence at the site and the materiality in planning terms of any change of use.

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With regards to the current proposal, there would usually be 3 children and 3 members of staff present at the property at any one time. In addition to this there would often be a registered manager there during weekdays between 9am-5pm. Other visitors are expected to be infrequent, with monitoring visits/Ofsted inspections taking place approximately 14 times within a calendar year and family/friend visits being pre-planned. Each child would meet with a social worker every 6 weeks and this would include meetings at home and also within the community. All domestic operations (cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance) would be managed by duty staff and only periodic property maintenance (plumbing, electrics, repairs) would be contracted. The duties of the staff would therefore be similar to those of parents living with a child.

Whilst there would be staff on duty 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, there would be no staff living at the property. Staff would therefore operate on a shift pattern basis, with day shifts taking place between 7am-10pm and night shifts operating between 10pm-7am. The comings and goings arising from the proposed shift pattern and changeover of staff would have a material impact to character. Whilst shift patterns would be consistent and there would only be two shifts per day, changeover of staff would be a regular, daily occurrence and during periods of staff handovers, there could be a total of 7 staff present at any one time. Therefore, as a matter of fact and degree and having regard to relevant appeal decisions which have considered this matter, officers consider that a **material** change of use from C3 to C2 would arise in this instance and therefore it is correct that planning permission is sought.

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Webheath and Callow Hill ward, within an urban area of Redditch, which is defined in Policy 2 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4 (BoRLP4) as a sustainable location for development, offering the highest level of services.

The proposal would result in the loss of 1 C3 dwelling but would provide care and a place of residence for up to 3 children. Officers consider that care residences, in the same way as C3 dwellinghouses, should be in sustainable locations offering occupiers good access to local services such as schools. In this regard the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Character and Appearance

Policy 39 of the BoRLP4 states that development should contribute positively to the surrounding environment. Similarly, Policy 40 of the BoRLP4 expects development to be of a high quality design that reflects or complements local surroundings and materials.

The external appearance of the dwelling would be largely unchanged apart from the alteration of the existing flat roof garage to an office. This would involve the insertion of two windows in replacement of the large garage door and bricking up around the windows. Cedar cladding was originally proposed on this elevation, however the

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materials were amended to be matching brick as this would be more in keeping with the local area.

Concerns have been raised by local residents that the proposed commercial use would not be in keeping with the local character. However, the external appearance of the building would not be significantly altered and would still reflect a residential property. The existing parking area is already large enough to support the proposed development and therefore the appearance of the wider site would also remain the same.

Therefore, having regard to the above, the development is considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance and would meet the requirements of policies 39 and 40 of BoRLP4.

Residential Amenity

Paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should seek a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Consideration should therefore be given to the impact of the proposed change of use on the residential amenity of surrounding properties, including the impacts arising from the operation of the care service and the associated comings and goings.

The changeover of staff would see the arrival of up to 3 cars around 7am and 10pm, and during these times there would also be up to 3 staff members for each property leaving the site. The supporting statement explains that handover times would be slightly staggered to avoid all staff arriving and leaving together. It is also expected that a registered manager would arrive and leave the site usually at 9am and 5pm on weekdays. Other visitors are expected to be very infrequent and therefore not cause a significant impact.

There are residential properties either side of the site and also to the rear. Much of the disturbance from the operation of the care home would arise from the front parking area of the property; this lies directly next to the parking area of number 221 Walkwood Road which also benefits from a large parking area. However, 217 Walkwood Road on the other side is positioned further forward and the side elevation of this property is adjacent to the parking area of the application site. Notwithstanding this there are no windows on this neighbouring side elevation and it is therefore not considered that the noise arising from the comings and goings would have a significant impact on residential amenity levels. Whilst car movements may be higher than the former C3 use of the property, they would still be relatively infrequent within a 24 hour period and would be expected at specific times rather than unrestrained. Officers note that comings and goings may happen at late hours in the case of a dwellinghouse where occupiers work shift patterns.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) have been consulted in relation to noise and nuisance matters and have raised no objections. They have highlighted, however, that they can only comment on predictable noise. With regards to the level of noise made by the children placed at the care home this would be dependent on the behaviour of the

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individuals living at the property and the degree of control and supervision by staff rather than the proposed use being inherently noisy. The characteristics of the individuals and operational matters such as staff supervision are not planning matters, however the service would be regulated by other controls, such as Ofsted. The scale of the use in this instance is relatively small, and a planning condition could be attached to the permission to restrict the number of children in the care home to be no more than 3.

Concerns regarding safety have been raised within third party representations. Residents have specifically raised concerns with the flat roof garage providing the opportunity for a means to escape, as it is directly below one of the children's bedrooms. Whilst the NPPF sets out that fear of crime should not undermine quality of life, the proposed use in this case involves children 5-17 years old who would be supervised 24 hours a day by responsible adults. With regards to the flat roof garage this is already in existence below a bedroom window, and the control of children absconding is a management issue rather than a planning matter.

Based on the above considerations it is concluded that there are no reasons to refuse the application on residential amenity grounds.

Highways

Worcestershire County Council Highways have reviewed the proposal and have taken into account the number of staff and the shift patterns associated with the proposed use and consider that the 4 parking spaces available to serve the development are acceptable. As the proposal would involve the loss of a garage which could provide cycle storage, they have requested a condition for the provision of alternative cycle parking. This provision can be secured by a planning condition. Furthermore, a condition to retain a parking area on site for 4 vehicles is considered reasonable and necessary in order to prevent the displacement of vehicles on the highway for sustained periods of time.

Public Consultation Responses

Letters of objection have been received from 24 individuals and a petition with 34 signatures has also been received. A summary of the issues raised that have not already been covered in the report and an officer response to these issues are provided below, however regard has been had to the full contents of all submissions whilst drafting this report and forming the recommendation.

Concern raised	Officer response
<p>Character impacts</p> <p>The proposal would introduce a commercial use and harm the character of the area.</p>	<p>There is no policy restriction against children's homes in residential areas and the use is not unacceptable in principle. More relevant is the scale of the use and the impacts that would arise in practice. In this case the use would have some similarities to a family home, albeit there would be</p>

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	<p>additional comings and goings from staff changeovers etc which have been considered. With regards to the scale of the use, a condition has been recommended to limit the number of children to a maximum of 3 that would be looked after at the property.</p>
<p>Highway safety, traffic and parking impacts</p> <p>Walkwood Road is narrow, has existing parking pressures, no continuous footpaths. The proposal would result in increased traffic from staff shifts, visitors and deliveries/services, overspill parking would cause obstructions, impact on emergency vehicle access, increase risk to pedestrian safety. Loss of garage as a parking space.</p>	<p>Worcestershire County Council Highways have not objected to the proposal.</p> <p>Whilst there would be more comings and goings expected with the proposed use, changeover of staff would only typically be twice a day and other visitors would not be regular and therefore similar to a typical dwelling. The parking area can accommodate staff numbers, except potentially during staff changeover times. Additional cars at a property are again something that can happen at a typical dwelling.</p> <p>There is no footpath directly outside the application site, however there is on the other side of the road, and in general footpath provision is good in the local area and local amenities/services can be walked to. Furthermore, the lack of footpath outside of the property is a pre-existing issue that would affect occupiers of the existing dwelling.</p> <p>Parking spaces within garages are not counted towards provision as garages can usually be converted to living space without the need for planning permission.</p>
<p>Residential amenity impacts</p>	<p>It is not expected that there would be 24/7 activity at the property, given that this would</p>

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<p>(noise/disturbance)</p> <p>Proposal would result in 24/7 activity, shift changeovers at unsociable hours, increased comings and goings, increased noise from vehicles/conversations. Activity levels would exceed those of a typical dwelling. A noise or activity assessment has not been provided.</p>	<p>provide a home for 3 children and staff changeover would be infrequent throughout the day. A family home of this size could reasonably house 3 children. Whilst activity levels may exceed those of a typical dwelling, this isn't in itself reason to refuse planning permission. A noise survey has not been requested by WRS and is not considered necessary in this instance.</p>
<p>Lack of information</p> <p>Insufficient information regarding staffing levels and shift patterns, agency staff, vehicle movements and parking arrangements, visitor numbers, deliveries, emergency procedures, waste storage, handling of complaints and other day-to-day operations.</p>	<p>The supporting information sets out that there would be 3 members of staff (plus centre manager) and that the shift pattern would generally be 7am-10pm and 10pm-7am. Whilst understanding the proposed use is important, matters relating to the day to day management of the service do not relate to land use and are therefore not a material planning consideration.</p>
<p>Safety, security and layout</p> <p>Resident profile (needs, behaviour, absconding risk), concerns that residents may be free to leave facility unsupervised, lack of detail on security and safeguarding (e.g. window restrictions), particular concerns raised regarding flat roof below bedroom window as a means to escape. Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour, effects on elderly/vulnerable residents)</p>	<p>Consideration needs to be given to the land use rather than personal characteristics of occupants. Matters relating to safeguarding and care provision are regulated under separate legislative regimes (e.g. Ofsted).</p> <p>The applicant has indicated that as well as 24/7 staffing there would be security measures in place including discrete alarm systems (to doors and windows), window opening restrictors, and ring doorbell type cameras. There may also be domestic style CCTV. These measures may also be found on C3 dwellings and are unlikely to require planning permission.</p> <p>There is no evidence of likely impact of anti-</p>

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	social behaviour arising from the use. Assumptions about the behaviour of future occupants cannot be made.
Operators/management Applicant is new/unproven operator and does not have sufficient experience managing children's homes	The planning system cannot control who operates a development, only the land use. Therefore, lack of experience is not a material planning consideration. Again, there are other agencies that would assess whether the management of the children's home is satisfactory.
Suitability of property The dwelling is a standard 3–4 bed house, not designed for institutional care, layout and site constraints limit suitability for the intended use.	The proposed use would provide care for up to 3 children, which could reasonably occupy a family home of this size. Space for staff and a carers bedroom has also been provided. Other regulations are in place to control operational matters.
Loss of family dwelling to local housing supply.	Whilst this is noted, the loss of housing would only be very small. The proposal would also provide a place of residence for looked after children. Paragraph 63 of the NPPF sets out that the housing needs of looked after children also need to be addressed.
Concerns that the proposed use class is C2A (secure residential institutions) rather than C2 (residential institutions).	<p>The applicant has applied for a change of use of the property to a C2 use and if permission is granted then the applicant would need to stay within the parameters of this lawful use.</p> <p>The Use Class refers to Class C2 as the "<i>provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care</i>" whilst Class 2A refers to "<i>the provision of secure residential accommodation</i>". The crucial distinction is the provision of care under class 2. Case law has held that the main issue is whether care is being provided rather than whom care is provided to. In this case, care is to be provided to a vulnerable group, and</p>

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	any security arrangements are there to assist in the meeting of the care needs.
Impact to local childminding setting/childcare settings in terms of business viability and a reduction in enrolment.	Impact to other businesses is not a material planning consideration.
Other Impacts Impact to property values Waste and servicing capacity Local infrastructure Proximity to transport links and risk of absconding Environmental hazards not identified in submitted documents/ Wharrage Brook floods and is a nearby hazard	Impact on property values is not a material planning consideration. The applicant has confirmed that waste and servicing may remain as existing as the proposed use is similar to a family home in this respect. However, private waste collection would be used if necessary. There would be 3 children living at the property with up to 4 staff members on duty at any one time. It is not considered that there would be a significant difference to waste/servicing capacity. It is not considered that the scale of the proposed use would have a significant impact on local infrastructure. Risks relating to absconding are a management issue and not a planning matter. Similarly, safeguarding concerns relating to environmental hazards are a management issue and these risk factors are pre-existing for children living in the property as a C3 dwellinghouse.

Conclusion

Having regard to the sustainable, residential location of the site, the proposed change of use of the residential property to a children's care home is considered acceptable in principle.

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There are no outstanding objections from consultees, and it is concluded that there are no issues of highway safety or severe road network impacts that would warrant refusal. Whilst there would likely be an intensification of activity at site due to the change of use, not considered to be so significantly adverse as to cause unacceptable noise or amenity impacts to neighbouring residents.

Taking all matters into account, including all third party representations that have been received, it is considered that the change of use is acceptable subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

Location Plan - drawing no. A2785 P001A

Proposed Site Plan - drawing no. A2785 P005A

Proposed Plans - drawing no. A2785 P006A

Proposed Elevations - drawing no. A2785 P007B

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) The property subject to this application shall only be used as a residential care home for up to 3 children at any one time and shall be used for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class C2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: to provide certainty of the proposed development and limit the scale of the use in order to protect the amenity of neighbours.

- 4) The parking facilities as shown on Proposed Site Plan drawing no. A2785 P005A should be retained as a parking area for the lifetime of the development.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reason: To ensure conformity with submitted details.

- 5) The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until sheltered, safe, secure and accessible cycle parking for 2 cycles have been provided on site. The cycle parking shall thereafter be kept available for the parking of bicycles only.

Reason: To encourage sustainable modes of transport

- 6) All new brickwork used to convert the existing garage to an office, as shown on proposed elevations drawing A2785 P007B shall match the colour, form and texture of the brickwork on the existing dwelling.

Reason:- To ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance, to safeguard the visual amenities of the area.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the number of objections received exceeds that which can be considered by officers.