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Our Ref. 18/291

Development Management
Rochdale Borough Council
Floor 3, Number One Riverside
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5th November 2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CHANGE OF USE FROM RESIDENTIAL DWELLING (C3) TO RESIDENTIAL HOME (C2) AT 9 GREENWICH CLOSE, ROCHDALE.

This letter accompanies a planning application submitted on behalf of Nestlings Care Ltd, and seeks planning permission for the proposed change of use of a dwellinghouse (C3) to a residential home (C2) at 9 Greenwich Close, Rochdale.

Introduction

Nestlings Care Ltd specialises in specialist residential care homes for young people with mental health problems, mainly returning into community following hospital admissions in order to rehabilitate them before they can return to family homes or live independently. The young people at Nestlings may have Autism, Aspergers' Syndrome, Post traumatic stress disorder and trauma. Given the specialist nature of placements, the young people are intensively supported to enable them to gain valuable day to day living skills in the community.

This application seeks the full planning permission for Rochdale Borough Council for the change of use of the aforementioned property from its current C3 use to enable provision of a residential care home to accommodate a maximum of three young people aged between 16 and 25 years. As part of the current proposals, no external alterations are proposed.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that the statutory Development Plan will continue to be the starting point for the consideration of planning applications for the development or use of land, unless material considerations (namely National Planning Policy Framework) indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for Rochdale consists of the adopted Core Strategy, in addition to the Saved Policies of the Rochdale UDP. Those policies relevant to the current proposals are considered to be as follows:

Rochdale Core Strategy:

- SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities
- C3 Delivering the right type of housing
- C6 Improving health and well being
- SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place
- P3 Improving design of new development
- SO4 Promoting a greener environment
- G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
- SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
- T2 Improving accessibility
- DM1 General development requirements

Relevant saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

- G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

Published in July 2018, the revised NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As such, it is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. To achieve such, NPPF outlines three overarching objectives of the planning system, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). These objectives are as follows:

- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 10 of the NPPF confirms a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** is at its heart, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.

Paragraph 11 clarifies that for decision-taking this means:

- *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
    - *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
    - *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.*

Planning Considerations

Based on the planning policy context, the key issues relevant to the current planning application are considered to be as follows:

- Principle of Development;
- Impact on Residential Amenity; and
- Highways Impact

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area as designated under the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), where new development, wherever possible and appropriate, should be concentrated within the urban areas of the borough to facilitate urban regeneration and to protect the countryside. Policy C3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will deliver the right types of homes, well designed and built to appropriate densities, to meet the overall needs and aspirations of the borough. As part of this, the Council will support the provision of housing on appropriate sites to meet the needs of specific groups including more vulnerable groups. The proposed use of the property for the purposes of the provision of care is therefore a policy complaint and therefore acceptable use within this urban location. The site is situated within a sustainable location within Bamford, located within proximity to regular bus services that operate along War Office Road and Norden Road, providing links into Rochdale and beyond. Further to this, a number of local shops, restaurants, takeaways and other amenities are also located within a walking distance of the site within Bamford precinct. The principle

of development is therefore considered to be wholly acceptable, and the application accords with Policy C3 of the adopted CS, G/D/1 of the adopted UDP and the NPPF.

In addition to this, the proposal is also clearly consistent with the provisions of NPPF, and in particular the social dimension of sustainable development. Mental health difficulties are a significant challenge within the community & society. Young people with mental health problems are stigmatised and discriminated against. Nestlings care LTD takes their social responsibility seriously and values diversity and social inclusion with intentions to support young people having a chance at good quality of life within positive social environment.

This being the case, there is no policy context which would therefore preclude or prevent the proposed change of use from C3 to C2, and thus the principle of the scheme is deemed acceptable, subject to all other material planning considerations.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The property in question is located within a wholly residential area, and the amenity of nearby and adjacent residents must be considered appropriately as a key planning consideration in accordance with the requirements of Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy. Policy DM1 states that that all development proposals should be compatible with surrounding land uses and should not adversely affect the amenity of residents. In addition to this, Policy G9 of the Core Strategy requires that final development does not lead to an increase in noise pollution. This being the case, it is important for officers to appreciate how the care facility will function on a day to day basis.

As outlined previously, the care home will for all intents and purposes function as a single residential household, in much the same manner as any other residential dwelling. There will be a maximum of three residents at the house supported by two members of staff at all times. The young people will attend educational classes, undertake indoor and community-based activities, be expected to complete house chores, and will have a routine as any other household. They will be supported and supervised by a highly skilled team with maximum of two staff present at the property at any given time during the day and the night. The team itself is comprised of a consultant psychiatrist, a psychologist, a psychiatric nurse, a psychotherapist and an occupational therapist to provide support to the young people where necessary.

The staff will work on a rota basis with three full-time employees providing support throughout the day between 8am and 10pm. Two of the staff will remain overnight to provide support, finishing at 8am the following day. This working pattern, which is established across the various care homes operated by Nestlings Care, ensures that the facilities will not generate frequent vehicle movements throughout the day more akin to that of a commercial premises, which could otherwise disrupt the amenity of nearby residents. This being the case, the potential for associated traffic movements is evidently not materially different than if the dwelling were to be used by a family. The shift patterns have been specifically determined to ensure the vehicle movements would be similar to residents of the property arriving from and leaving to go to work each day. Clearly, the day-to-day functioning of the facility will remain consistent and comparable to that of a permanently occupied residential dwelling. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in amenity terms with respect to vehicle movements.

At this point, it is also necessary to address the matter of anti-social behaviour. It is noted that often, members of the public assume a worst-case scenario with respect to residential care homes. To this effect, the applicant would take the opportunity to reassure local residents that that the proposals will not give rise to undesirable or anti-social behaviour of this nature. Nestlings Care is registered to take young pope with mental disorders. Given the specialist nature of care homes and vulnerability of young people, young people with antisocial behaviour are not admitted to the homes. None of their various homes across the north-west have had any incidents of negative behaviour within community.

In this respect, it is noted that various planning inspectors have established that it is unreasonable for a decision-maker to assume a worst-case scenario without any evidence or justification to substantiate such an approach. However, should officers or residents wish to discuss this matter in further detail, the applicant would be more than willing to answer any queries interested parties may have.

Otherwise, the current application is considered to be acceptable with respect to impact on residential amenity, and the proposals are considered to be wholly consistent with Policies DM1 and G9.

Highways Impact

As outlined in the previous section, the volume and frequency of vehicle movements will be similar to that of a single household, and there is no reason to assume that such cannot be accommodated comfortably into the local highway network. Equally, there is plenty of provision for the off-road parking of vehicles within the curtilage of the property ensuring there is no overspill of parking onto the highway.

Officers will note that the property occupies a sustainable location, well related to shops, services and opportunities to access public transport. As such, the proposals are considered to be acceptable with respect to highways impact, and therefore consistent with Policy T2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

Conclusions

Nestlings Care Ltd seek full planning permission for the change of use from residential dwelling (C3) to residential care facility (C2) of 9 Greenwich Close, Rochdale.

It has been demonstrated that the proposed development would not give rise to any issues of amenity impact, or adversely affect highway safety. To the contrary, the proposed care home will provide safe and appropriate accommodation to home vulnerable young people in need of specialist care and support within the city. The property will for all intents and purposes function as a single household on a day to day basis, and the current proposals are therefore considered to be wholly acceptable in this prevailing residential context.

In light of the above, we would respectfully request that officers recognise as such by supporting the current application at the earliest possible opportunity. Should officers, or indeed residents, have any further queries with respect to this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours faithfully,

Chris Megson RTPI

Planner