



Clerk Laithe Lodge
Newton in Bowland
Clitheroe

Planning Statement
February 2025

A Report commissioned by:
Real Care Support Ltd

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Site and Surroundings	3
3. Proposed Development	5
4. Planning Policy	8
5. Planning Assessment	11
6. Summary and Conclusion	15

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Real Care Support Ltd in support of a planning application for the proposed change of use of a dwelling with B&B annex to a children's care home (Class C2) at Clerk Laithe Lodge, Newton in Bowland, Clitheroe.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the background and context of the application; providing a description of the site and surroundings, explains the proposed development scheme and summarises the relevant policies of the statutory development plan and other policy documents. It then assesses the merits of the application against the identified policies, national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and all other material considerations
- 1.3 It demonstrates that the application site is in a suitable and sustainable location for the proposed development and will create a high -quality children's care home. The proposed development is in full accordance with the relevant spatial strategy, sustainable transport and general development management policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028, and government policy aimed at changing uses, delivering social care and achieving sustainable development in rural areas.
- 1.4 Regarding the development plan and all material considerations, there is a clear and compelling case for planning permission to be granted without delay in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 11c of the NPPF 2024.

Supporting information

- 1.5 This statement should be read together with the following list of plans and supporting documents submitted with the application.

- Location Plan 2068 1.1
- Existing Site and Block Plan 2068 1.2
- Proposed Site and Block Plan 2068 1.3
- Existing Floor Plan – Barn 1 2068 1.4
- Existing Elevations – Barn 1 2068 1.5
- Existing Floor Plan – Barn 2 2068 1.6
- Existing Elevations – Barn 2 2068 1.7
- Proposed Floor Plan – Barn 1 2068 3.01
- Proposed Elevations – Barn 1 2068 3.02
- Proposed Floor Plans – Barn 2 2068 3.03
- Proposed Elevations – Barn 2 2068 3.04
- Preliminary Roost Assessment
- BNG Metric
- Ecology Services letter dated 27.2.25
- Draft Biodiversity Gain Plan
- Preliminary Roost Assessment
- Arboricultural Constraints Appraisal

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment

2 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site measures approximately 0.16ha and is located on the B6478 to the north of Newton in Bowland. The site is situated within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The site consist of two distinct buildings, the first building that lies adjacent to the road is a residential dwelling. The second building to the rear is an annex used as a bed and breakfast. The buildings hereafter are referred to as Barn 1 (dwelling house) and Barn 2 (B&B).
- 2.2 The site comprises the two buildings along with associated car parking and some surrounding land. The site is surrounded by agricultural fields which are in active use. To the rear of the site is a dense line of trees which separate the property from agricultural fields.



Figure 1: Site Location (@Google 2024)

- 2.3 Access to the site is taken from B6478 which leads to a car park located to the south of the site. The site lies less than 484m, from Newton village centre. Bus stops lie approximately 224m to the south along the B6478 providing services to Clitheroe Town Centre, Dunsop Bridge and Slaidburn.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.4 A review of the planning history of the site has been undertaken and the most relevant applications are set out in the table below.

Application	Description	Decision	Date
3/2020/0933	Construction of a rural farm shop with the inclusion of two retail units	Refused	01 February 2021
3/2020/0444	Construction of a rural farm shop with the inclusion of two retail units	Refused	11 September 2020
3/2018/1045	Erection of a new single-storey link building between existing dwelling and bed and breakfast annexe	Approved	12 February 2019
3/2011/0417	Proposed erection of an annexe building providing 5no Bed and Breakfast rooms with ancillary space	Approved with Conditions	31 January 2012
3/2001/0727	Erect New Garage	Approved with conditions	22 October 2001

3 Proposed Development

Client Background

3.1 Real Care Support Ltd is a Preston-based company that has been trading since 2018. Its services include:

- Ofsted Registered Therapeutic Children's home
- Therapeutic crisis and respite care
- Support, care and supervision services for young people, children and their families
- Secure and welfare transport nationwide
- Welfare recovery tasks
- Appropriate Adult services
- Bed watch services

3.2 Many of the referrals that Real Care Support receives are from local councils for children who are in crisis. That crisis can be due to a placement with a residential home or a foster placement breaking down or they may be in crisis due to family circumstances involving sexual, physical or drug abuse and they need somewhere to go that is safe and to work with people who have been trained in the skills necessary to work with them.

3.3 Time at a crisis or respite home provides time to de-escalate children's anxieties. To do this work successfully it is important that the child feels safe and secure and their environment and location play a large role in this.

The Purpose of the Home

3.4 The Clerk Laithe children's care home will be registered to accommodate up to five children and will operate in full compliance with the "Children's Homes Regulations" and its Statement of Purpose, a statutory document. The home will be regularly inspected by Ofsted to ensure adherence to the highest standards of care.

3.5 The home's primary purpose is to provide care for children who are in crisis or require respite support. It will focus on helping children process trauma, stabilize their emotional well-being, and prepare them for the next stages in their lives. This includes reintegration into family care, transition to foster care, or placement in one of Real Care Support's therapeutic homes.

3.6 The home will provide care for children aged between 8 and 17 years old. Community integration is a cornerstone of Real Care's approach, aiding children in returning to "normal lives". Real Care Support's Statement of Purpose outlines how children will be actively involved in and contribute to the local community.

3.7 Although the home will not provide on-site education, it will support children's educational needs by working closely with the Virtual Head, local education authorities, and nearby schools and colleges. The goal is to help children make meaningful progress in their education and

development.

The Operation of the Home

- 3.8 The Clerk Laithe will accommodate up to five children, providing a safe and supportive living environment. The property includes 5 bedrooms for the children, all fitted with en-suite bathrooms. In addition, there will be designated overnight accommodation for staff, including one staff bedroom in Barn 1 and additional facilities in Barn 2.
- 3.9 Staffing at the home will follow a 24-hour shift pattern, including waking night staff. Typically, multiple staff members will be on duty during a shift, supported by the Manager and Deputy Manager as needed.
- 3.10 Shift changeovers will occur between 10:00 am and 11:00 am to minimize traffic during peak hours. Vehicle movements associated with the home are expected to be minimal, with off-street parking available. During handover periods, fewer car movements are anticipated to be present and phased changeovers will ensure minimal disruption.
- 3.11 Within the home, a set of "House Rules" will be in place to establish clear expectations for conduct and behaviour. These rules are designed to create a structured environment for both children and staff.
- 3.12 Real Care Support aims for the Clerk Laithe home to be a local resource for Lancashire County Council, providing a safe and stable environment where children can develop and transition into permanent placements.

Proposed Works

- 3.13 This application is for full planning permission for a children's care home. The full description of the proposed development is:
- Proposed change of use of holiday accommodation and rear extension for children's care home and change of use of dwelling and external alterations to form children's care house for up to 5 children together with access works to form car park.
- 3.14 The proposed development involves the conversion and renovation of the two existing barns, Barn 1 and Barn 2. The scheme aims to sensitively repurpose the buildings while retaining their rural character and introducing improvements to support modern care home use.
- 3.15 Barn 1 is currently a two-storey dwelling comprising residential spaces, including bedrooms, a lounge, a kitchen/diner, bathrooms, and storage areas. The proposed works will include the addition of new windows designed to match the existing style, ensuring consistency with the barn's traditional appearance. Rooflights will also be installed to increase natural light within the building. Internally, the first-floor layout will be reconfigured, with an additional window added to the southeast elevation.

- 3.16 The ground floor of Barn 2 will feature an open-plan lounge/dining area, a games room, an office, staff room, WC, and storage spaces, creating a more functional layout. The first floor will include additional bathrooms. These changes aim to modernise the internal layout while maintaining the barn's external character and making it fit for use.
- 3.17 Barn 2 will include a proposed rear extension off the ground floor kitchen. The single-story extension will feature a roof light, two windows, and double doors for access. It will use materials that match the existing building, and the roof light will be set into a pitched roof that aligns with the roofline of Barn 2.
- 3.18 The scheme has been designed to meet modern health, safety, and environmental standards. Each young person accommodated within the development will have a private bedroom with an en-suite bathroom.
- 3.19 The rooms are furnished with a single bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers, and additional items to reflect personal preferences. Communal areas will be decorated in consultation with the young people to ensure the space meets their needs and preferences. The development will also include one staff sleeping-in room in Barn 1 and three general-use bathroom toilets across the whole scheme. A fully functional kitchen and an open-plan dining area will provide space for shared meals. Barn 1 includes three young person bedrooms and Barn 2 includes two young person bedrooms.
- 3.20 The scheme includes lounges one in each Barn, offering space for young people and staff to watch television, play games, or relax. An outdoor seating area will also be available, providing a setting for outdoor dining or leisure during warmer weather.
- 3.21 On the ground floor of Barn 2, there will be a dedicated staff office for the secure storage of confidential files, which will remain locked when not in use. An additional office and a utility room are also provided in Barn 1. Staff rooms are included with appropriate facilities.
- 3.22 The car park will be increased in size to accommodate nine spaces, for six full-time staff at normal operating periods and for visitors. This increase allows for space for vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear.
- 3.23 Overall, the proposed development considers the barns' rural character and improves their safety and suitability for care-related purposes. The scheme demonstrates a sensitive approach to suitable reuse, ensuring the buildings meet needs while respecting their rural setting. None of these changes are permanent and can be easily altered again in the future should the need arise.

4 Planning Policy

- 4.1 Relevant policy is provided in the Core Strategy 2008-2028, National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which are important material considerations.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028

- Key Statement DS1 Development Strategy – The site is located outside of Newton which is defined as a Tier 2 village, Tier 2 villages are defined as being less sustainable than the 32 defined settlements. Developments will need to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits.
- Key Statement EN2 – The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected. The council expects development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, and building materials.
- Key Statement DS2 Presumption of Sustainable Development – Councils must take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. Planning applications that accord with the local plan should be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- Key Statement DM12 Transport Considerations – New development should be located to minimise the need to travel. It should have good access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car. Sites should generally offer more sustainable means of transport and improve sustainable travel practices.
- Policy DMG1 General Considerations – In determining planning applications development must be of a high standard, be sympathetic to the existing and proposed land uses, consider the layout and relationship between buildings and use sustainable practices. Consider the parking implications, ensure safe access and not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area
- Policy DMG2 Strategic Considerations – Outside the defined settlement areas development must meet one of the following considerations, development must be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area, the development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where local need can be demonstrated. Additionally, in AONBs the council will have regard to the economic and social well-being of an area however, more importantly, the consideration of the effect the development has on the landscape will be key.

- Policy DMB1 Supporting Business Growth and Local Economy – This policy encourages the appropriate development and diversification of the rural economy. The reuse of an existing building will be supported when it contributes positively to the local economy without compromising the rural setting.
- Policy DME2 Landscape and Townscape Protection – This policy requires that proposals protect and improve the landscape character, and avoid detrimental impacts on views, visual amenities and the rural environment. The proposal overall must include measures to minimize any visual harm or intrusion.
- Policy DMG3 Transport & Mobility – Development proposals must address accessibility and transportation concerns, particularly in rural locations.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

- 4.2 This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Relevant sections of the NPPF 2024 include:

- Paragraph 7 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Paragraph 11 The presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the Framework. For decision-taking this means approving development where it accords with an up-to-date development plan, where there are no relevant development plan policies or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date granting permission unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.
- Paragraph 61 A key objective of the Framework is to significantly boost the supply of homes by ensuring a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are met and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- Paragraph 63 The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, student, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent and people wishing to commission or building their own homes).
- Paragraph 82 In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing.

- Paragraph 83 To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.
- Paragraph 88 Planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings.
- Paragraph 89 Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be ground adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- Paragraph 96 Planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- Paragraph 124 Planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions;
- Paragraph 129 Development should make efficient use of land taking into account the need for different types of housing and other development and the availability of suitable land; market conditions and viability; availability and capacity of infrastructure; the scope to promote sustainable travel; the desirability to maintain the character and setting of an area or promote regeneration; and the importance of creating well-designed, attractive, healthy and safe places;

5 Planning Assessment

- 5.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires regard to be had to the provisions of the development plan, so far as it is material to a planning application, and to any other material considerations.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan, and states that 'if regard is to be had to the development plan for any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'. Section 39 of this Act also requires decision-makers to exercise their functions with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. These requirements are embodied in the NPPF 2024 which is a principal material consideration and should be given substantial weight.
- 5.3 On this basis, the main issues to be considered in determining this planning application are:
- a) Principle of development
 - b) Design, layout and scale
 - c) Residential amenity
 - d) Access and parking
 - e) Technical matters

These matters are considered below:

a) Principle of Development

- 5.4 The proposed development involves the change of use of an existing dwelling and B&B annex at Clerk Laithe Lodge. The scheme aims to sensitively repurpose the buildings into a children's care home while retaining their rural character and introducing improvements for modern care use.
- 5.5 Clerk Laithe does not lie within a defined settlement, but it does lie within close proximity to the village of Newton in Bowland and within a defined National Landscape. The proposal comprises a change of use and minimal new built development in the form of a rear extension and minor external alterations to windows.
- 5.6 The Council does not have a specific policy within its adopted Core Strategy that deals with the provision of children's care homes, therefore Policy DMG2 is of the most relevance to the proposed development. It confirms that outside of defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of six specified considerations. The fifth consideration is that the development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.
- 5.7 The location of its homes is something that Real Care Support takes very seriously and they seek out locations with specific requirements. The majority of its homes are located in rural areas with several recent planning permissions obtained in rural Wyre with overwhelming

support from planning committee Members. The location of these homes offer privacy and protection for the children and young people within the applicant's care.

- 5.8 There are a number of benefits associated with locating children's care homes in rural area. The countryside provides a peaceful setting for children which can reduce stress and anxiety compared to those homes located within the dense urban areas. The countryside also provides access to green spaces and to open landscapes which all contribute significantly to assisting children and young people in managing their mental health and well-being.
- 5.9 In addition, low levels of pollution and noise can also help to create a better emotional healing environment for children. Access to countryside activities can also encourage physical activity within children and helps to increase their engagement with nature. The location also significantly reduces the risk of exposure to crimes commonly associated with urban areas.
- 5.10 Furthermore, the proposal will also provide extensive benefits to the local community as care homes can provide much needed local employment opportunities which will attract skilled professions such as carers, therapists and support staff. The care home would also utilise local convenience stores, maintenance services and transport providers.
- 5.11 In relation to demonstrating a local need, in March 2023, Lancashire County Council reported approximately 2,000 children in need and approximately 700 children subject to Child Protection Plans across the County (Lancashire County Council, Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy Document 2021-2024). These figures highlight that a substantial number of children require support services in the broader Lancashire region and demonstrate an overall need for care.
- 5.12 Additionally, Lancashire County Council in 2024 has initiated a program called "Where Our Children Live" which aims to modernize care for young people across the County. This includes plans to create up to 15 new children's homes with the first phase including facilities in the Ribble Valley. This again clearly demonstrates that there is a County-level need for high-quality children's care homes.
- 5.13 A Written Ministerial Statement (May 2023) states that 'the planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society'. It is important to consider this statement when assessing the principle of the development and the numerous benefits it provides. This statement clearly illustrates the pressing need for care facilities and the governments intentions.
- 5.14 Key Statement DS2 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework. This paragraph states that planning decisions should support developments that reflect local needs. The proposed change of use to a children's care home aligns with these principles and provides a necessary social service. This scheme complies fully with Policy DMG2 and is acceptable in principle.

b) Design, Layout and Scale

- 5.15 Core Strategy Policy DMG1 requires development to be of a high standard, sympathetic to the existing land uses and of layout, scale, and design. The proposed development will retain the traditional character of Barn 1 and Barn 2 while adding improvements to adopt them.
- 5.16 Barn 1 will be altered to include new windows matching the existing style, roof lights to increase natural light, and a reconfigured first-floor layout. An additional window on the southeast elevation will preserve the building's character while adapting it for appropriate residential use.
- 5.17 Barn 2 will also be redesigned to include functional spaces such as a lounge/dining area, games room, office, staff room, WC, and storage on the ground floor. The first floor will add additional bathrooms, designated spaces for specific care needs, and emergency escape routes for safety.
- 5.18 The proposed extension will be constructed from similar materials respecting the rural character of the barns and its overall setting, the scale of extension is minimal and allows for the barns to be brought into full operational capacity to facilitate modern care expectations.
- 5.19 The scheme has a fully functional kitchen, dining area, two lounges, and outdoor seating, designed to create a sense of community among the young people and staff. The materials and alterations reflect a considered approach to Policy DMG1, ensuring protection and improvement of the landscape character while minimising visual harm.

c) Residential Amenity

- 5.20 Policy DMG1 requires that developments must not adversely impact residential amenities and must respect the character and form of existing rural buildings. The proposed children's care home has been carefully designed to ensure there are no negative impacts on nearby properties. There are no nearby properties that this proposal could affect.

d) Access and Parking

- 5.21 Key Statement DMG3 require development proposals to minimize the need to travel and ensure appropriate transport arrangements, particularly in rural areas. Bus stops lie approximately 224m to the south along the B6478 providing services to Clitheroe Town Centre, Dunsop Bridge and Slaidburn.
- 5.22 The scheme provides nine car parking spaces and ample turning space to allow vehicles to exit the site in forward gear.
- 5.23 NPPF Paragraph 89 acknowledges that developments meeting local needs in rural areas may be located beyond existing settlements. As such, the site layout ensures appropriate parking levels and accessibility for staff and visitors. There are no access or parking concerns, the proposed development is in full accordance with DM12 and DMG3.

e) Technical matters

- 5.24 The application is accompanied by technical reports relating to ecology and trees.
- 5.25 The AIA confirms that the development can be undertaken without removing trees except for 2 small trees – T4 and T5 – which are a respectively a Cherry and a Chinese Thuja. Mitigation can take place elsewhere on site.
- 5.26 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Roost Assessment and BNG data in the form of the statutory metric and a draft Biodiversity Gain Plan. Any mitigation can be provided on site given the extent of the opportunity for biodiversity enhancement on site.
- 5.27 Further bat surveys will be undertaken during the course of the application before it is determined by the LPA.

6 Summary and Conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the change of use of a dwelling and B&B annex to form a children's care home for up to 5 children.
- 6.2 It assesses the application against the up-to-date policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, and all other relevant material considerations. The statement demonstrates that the application site is a suitable and sustainable location for the proposed development, delivering essential care services within a rural setting while preserving the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.3 The proposed development offers a number of benefits, including:
- Meeting an identified local need for high-quality children's care facilities within the Ribble Valley area and the wider Lancashire County area.
 - Providing a myriad of benefits for both young people in care and the five full time staff which will work there.
 - Providing private en-suite bedrooms, communal areas, and outdoor spaces to foster a safe space for young residents.
 - Contributing to the local economy through job creation for care staff and support services.
 - Supports the local economy indirectly through food suppliers and local transport providers.
 - Sensitively reusing and preserving existing rural buildings, aligning with sustainable development principles.
- 6.4 This statement concludes that the proposed development is fully in accordance with the relevant policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, including Key Statements DS2, EN2, DMG1, DMG2, and DME2, as well as the sustainable development objectives outlined in the NPPF 2024. The proposal aligns with government policy by promoting the reuse of existing buildings, supporting the local economy, and enhancing social well-being through care.
- 6.5 Having regard to the development plan and all relevant material considerations, there is a clear and compelling case for planning permission to be granted without delay, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the presumption in favour of sustainable development as outlined in Paragraph 11c of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

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