

Higher College Farm, Blackburn Road, Longridge PR3 2YY

Change of use of the existing dwellinghouse (C3) to a small children's residential home (C2)

Planning Statement
July 2025

REPORT CONTROL

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/1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by Positive Pathway Solutions ('the applicant') to progress a full application for the change of use from a dwelling (C3) to a Younger Persons Care Home (C2) ('the proposal') at Higher College Farm, Longridge ('the site').
- 1.2. This planning application is made to Ribble Valley Borough Council ('the LPA') as a full application, relating to the red edge application site boundary defined by the Location Plan.
- 1.3. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Planning Statement will look to demonstrate that the proposals accord with the provisions of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and moreover that there are other significant material considerations which indicate that planning permission ought to be granted.
- 1.4. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application package, which includes the following documents: -
 - 1 Application Form, relevant certificates and notices;
 - Planning Statement (inc: Management Statement)
 - Drawn information: -
 - Location Plan (ref. EAD_203_01)
 - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans (ref. 6478-02)

/2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site, which extends approximately 0.4ha in size, is located at Higher College Farm, on the eastern periphery of Longridge settlement boundary. The site currently comprises of a residential dwelling know as 'Higher College Farmhouse' and its associated outbuildings. The site is part of an allocated employment site within the Housing and Economic Development Document (2019), reference EAL3. Figure 1 below illustrates the site and its wider setting.



Figure 1: An Aerial image of the site in its wider setting (Source: Google Maps) Not to scale

- 2.2. The site is bounded to the north by Blackburn Road (B6243) which runs in an east to west direction, while mature hedgerows are present to the northern and eastern boundaries. To the west the site abuts a hedgerow lined track leading to Higher College Farmhouse located on the south of the site, beyond which lies a range of commercial buildings used by Clegg's Chilled Food Service and Anderton's Ribble Butchers for food processing, packaging, and distribution, along with external parking and servicing areas. To the east is a roadway which forms the main access to the food processing businesses, beyond which lies agricultural land.

- 2.3. The application site is located on the eastern edge of Longridge, which has a broad range of facilities and services.
- 2.4. The proposed development is located off the B6243, meaning the site is easily accessible by car and close to local bus routes. The nearest bus stop for passengers travelling from Ribchester/Clitheroe towards the site is located opposite the Corporation Arms, 0.16km away from the site. A new bus stop on Blackburn Road (B6243) opposite the site, for passengers travelling from Preston/Longridge towards Clitheroe/Ribchester, has been delivered as part of the Tootle Green housing development. The footway along the southern side of Lower Road has recently been extended and improved to for a 2m width. These bus routes provide services to Blackburn, Clitheroe, Ribchester, and the centre of Longridge, where services to wider areas can be accessed.
- 2.5. The current access to the site is located along the western boundary, which is taken directly from Blackburn Road, located further to the north of the site.
- 2.6. There are no listed buildings within the site and, by reference to the Environment Agency's flood risk map, it does not fall within an area subject to flooding, lying wholly within Flood Risk Zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding. The site is not subject to any local or national ecological designations. The site is located within the Open Countryside Area, as defined Ribble Valley Borough Council's Proposals Map. The Forest of Bowland AONB lies approximately 1km to the north of the site.

/3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. A search of Ribble Valley Council's planning register has been carried out to understand the planning history relevant to the site and the proposed development. Planning applications relating to the site itself include:

- 3/2023/0706: Proposed erection of 40 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access. Resubmission of application 3/2022/0553. Approved, 14th March 2025
- 3/2022/0553: Full planning permission for the erection of commercial units (Use Class E (g)) including conversion and extension of existing farmhouse for purposes of Use Class E (g). Approved 19th January 2023.
- 3/2018/1105: Outline planning permission for 21 dwellings and associated works. Refused 3rd June 2019.
- 3/2017/0602: Outline planning permission for industrial units (use classes B1, B2, B8) and associated access, parking, landscaping and services infrastructure with all matters reserved except access and change of use of farmhouse to office (B1). Approved 1st December 2017.

3.2. In addition, the following planning applications have been made relating to nearby sites:

- **3/2020/0507:** *Outline Planning application for business units use classes B1(b)(c) and B2 and storage use class B8 and associated improvements to existing access with all matters reserved except for access.* Approved 18th November 2020.
- **3/2019/0644:** *Land south of Blackburn Road, Erection of business units (use class B1) comprising three new buildings with access, parking and provision of secure compounds.* Approved 29th November 2019.
- **3/2017/0317:** *Land South of Blackburn Road, Outline Planning application for Employment Floorspace (use Class B1, B2, B8).* Approved 4th September 2017.

Pre Application Advice

3.3. Pre application advice was sought from Ribble Valley Borough Council in relation the proposed change of use of the existing dwelling on site. Pre application discussions took place in 2025 and a response was provided on the 17th April 2025 by case officer Stephen Kilmartin (included at Appendix A).

- 3.4. Initially, the approach was to submit a lawful development certificate, as it was considered that the proposal would not constitute a material change and would be used in a similar manner to a family home.
- 3.5. The LPA argued that the definition of Class C3(b) specifies a maximum of six residents receiving care at the property. However, the proposal at hand would have at maximum capacity four children and five staff present during normal working hours. The Council's position was that this exceeds the limit of six residents and, as a result, falls outside the scope of Class C3(b).
- 3.6. As such, the LPA stated that the proposed C2 use would be a materially different use than the existing C3 use and that planning permission would be required.
- 3.7. Notwithstanding the above, the overall response was positive, with the LPA confirming that the principle of the use of the dwelling for a C2 use is unlikely to raise any significant direct conflict with the aims and objectives of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

/4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. The proposed development consists of the proposed change of use of Higher College Farmhouse from an existing dwellinghouse to a children's care home for children from 8 to 17 years old. The existing house is a large, detached dwelling. Internally, the property includes 6 bedrooms, whilst externally there is 8 parking spaces and large garden that wraps around the property.
- 4.2. The proposal would not result in any changes to the external or internal arrangement of the dwelling and as such the character of the property will remain as it is presently. The extent of the dwelling and its associated curtilage is provided in the accompanying Location Plan.
- 4.3. The dwelling would be home to a maximum of 4 children residing at the property and when at this capacity up to 4 support staff along with a supporting manager will also be on site with 3 bedrooms/spaces being made available for staff to sleep overnight.
- 4.4. The carers will generally work on a rolling rota basis of two days on followed by four days off. Shifts will start at 9am and change over the same time two days later. At this time, a new team of carers will start their shift, with a different carer/s staying overnight to ensure full 24-hour care. The site provides up to three bedrooms for carers on site, and four bedrooms for the children, allowing the site to function as effectively and without alteration to the current layout of the home. The children will not require any specific medical care which could be viewed as requiring material changes to the property to make it fit for purpose, they are simply being provided care by an adult, providing assistance with day to day tasks.
- 4.5. The existing parking arrangement will allow for 8 parking spaces ensuring there would be a parking space for each of the carers and others who would be on duty at any given time. The proposed use would not generate any additional built form such as a new driveway or further space for vehicle parking and as such would be contained within the existing planning unit. No works are proposed to the existing elevations/wider site and the use will not require the implementation of any additional infrastructure.

Management Statement

- 4.6. In advance of the submission the applicants would like to make the following comments in relation to their business operation.

"Positive Pathways Solutions offer care and accommodation to children aged 8-17, our homes are Ofsted registered and there is a strong management team in place who oversee the day to day operations of the homes.

We care for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties along with mild to moderate learning difficulties such as autism, global development delay, foetal alcohol syndrome to name but a few.

We strive to offer a high level of care and at our most recent inspection at Oak House we were graded good in all areas this is down to the management and leadership team that we have at PPS."

/5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan. The determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. The Development Plan, insofar as it is relevant to the application site, site comprises of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (2014) and the Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document (2019). Additionally, key policy documents that comprise 'material considerations' include the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF), and any local supplementary planning guidance documents considered relevant to the proposal.
- 5.3. As can be seen from the extract of the Local Plan Proposals Map provided below, which illustrates the site is located within the open countryside, outside of the defined settlement boundaries. However, the extract shows that the site is an allocated employment site, as per Policy EAL3 of the HED DPD.

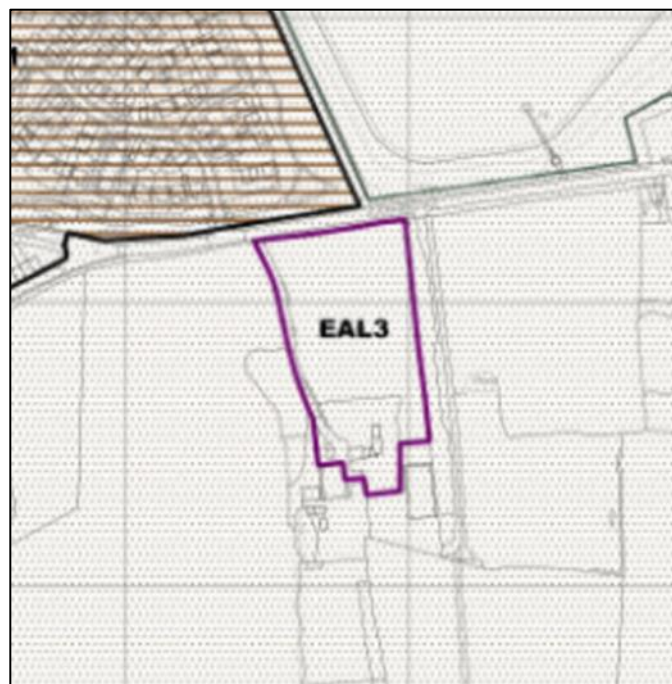


Figure 2: Extract from the Proposals Map

Ribble Valley Borough Council

- 5.4. **Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy** states that the majority of new housing should be concentrated within the settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.
- 5.5. **Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** echoes the NPPF, showing how the Council will favour proposals which reflect sustainable development.
- 5.6. **Key Statement EN2: Landscape** mainly focuses on protection of the Forest of Bowland AONB through ensuring development contributes to the conservation of the area by enhancing and protecting the landscape and character. The statement does offer more general coverage by linking the policy to the protection of all landscapes outlining that the Council expects all development to be in-keeping with the character of the local landscape.
- 5.7. **Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** illustrates that the Council will seek to conserve and where possible, enhance the area's biodiversity and geodiversity to preserve habits and species.
- 5.8. **Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations** illustrates that new development should be located to minimise the need to travel, especially by personal vehicle. All new developments should have convenient access to public transport, as well as pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 5.9. **Policy DMG1: General Considerations** states that new development should be of a high standard, being sympathetic to its surrounds.
- 5.10. **Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations** shows that proposals within the Open Countryside where possible should be accommodated through the re use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.
- 5.11. **Policy EAL3: Higher College Farm** is the allocation of the site as employment land, found in the Housing and Economic Development Document (2019). Land will be allocated for

employment uses (defined as uses falling within classes B1 to B8) to meet employment land requirements in the plan period (2008-2028) as follows and as shown on the Proposals Map.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 5.12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions as per Paragraph 2 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 5.13. The NPPF sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The golden thread running throughout the NPPF is the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11) whereby proposed developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social, and environmental issues should be granted planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted. The NPPF strongly supports economic development.
- 5.14. Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 8 of the Framework as having three overarching objectives:
- a) 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;
 - b) 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
 - c) 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.

- 5.15. **Paragraph 47** states that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made swiftly, and within statutory timescales unless an extension has been agreed with the applicant in writing.
- 5.16. **Paragraph 20** states that strategic policies set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of development, providing for the needs of all.
- 5.17. **Paragraph 97** states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- 5.18. **Paragraph 135** asserts that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short-term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

/6 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1. It is worth noting that although this is a full planning application, we believe a Certificate of Lawfulness would be equally appropriate for a proposal like this, as there are no changes to the site which would constitute a material change of use, in so much as the operation of the dwelling, as proposed, would be indistinguishable from that of a conventional family home. Nevertheless, we are proceeding with the full application to ensure thorough compliance with planning policies.
- 6.2. Notwithstanding the above, the application is for the proposed change of use from a dwellinghouse (C3) to a Younger Persons Care Home (C2). There are no policies within the development plan that specifically relate to the new development or proposed use of care homes. As such, the most relevant policies to the proposal are Policies DS1, DS2 and DMG1.
- 6.3. Key Statement DS1 states that developments that are for identified local needs will be considered in all the boroughs settlements. The Market Position Statement issued by Lancashire County Council in December 2024 regarding Children's Care Homes highlights the difficulties in locating appropriate homes for certain children in care. It stresses the necessity for greater emphasis on meeting the needs of Lancashire children. Furthermore, the statement clarifies that the market is to move away from the provision of large scale children's care homes, which we interpret to mean a move to smaller homes, such as the dwelling subject to this application, are the preferred care solution for LCC.
- 6.4. In this instance, the proposal would provide a smaller children's home (up to 4 children) that will deliver the necessary care required whilst also prioritising Lancashire children. As such, it is considered that the proposal would be meeting an identified local need and is therefore compliant with Key Statement DS1.
- 6.5. Key Statement DS2 states that the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposal is considered to be in a sustainable location, situated within close proximity to bus stops on Blackburn Road which

connects the site to Longridge, Blackburn, Chipping and Preston. The site is also approximately 0.8 miles from Longridge Town Centre which has access to several amenities. It is therefore considered that the proposal is in line with Key Statement DS2.

- 6.6. Policy DMG1 highlights 6 general principles in which new developments will need to comply with. In terms of design, there are no external works proposed and as such, it is not expected that there will be any adverse impacts in relation to design.
- 6.7. In terms of access, the proposal will use the existing access currently used to serve the Higher College Farmhouse. Additionally, the proposal is not expected to significantly increase the number of cars entering the site and as such, the existing number of parking spaces is considered to be appropriate.
- 6.8. In terms of amenity, the property itself is located away from other residential properties, with the only buildings nearby being those related to the existing business located to the south of the site. Consequently, the proposed development is unlikely to adversely affect residential amenity. Additionally, due to the fact that only 4 children would be residing at the property at any one time, the proposed use will not result in any adverse harm to residential amenity in relation to noise and disturbance, as the general make up of occupants is comparable to a traditional family.
- 6.9. Regarding to the last two points, environment and infrastructure, as mentioned above, the proposal does not include any physical changes to the exterior or interior of the property and as such, it is not expected to negatively impact the ecology of the site nor any infrastructure in or around the property.
- 6.10. Given the above, the proposal is in line with Policy DMG1.
- 6.11. Policy DMG2 states that developments within the Open Countryside should be accommodated through the re use of existing buildings. The proposal pertains the change of use of an existing property to a children's care home and as such, complies with Policy DMG2.

Employment Land Allocation

- 6.12. The application site is located in an Employment Land Allocation, being designated as Site EAL3 within the Housing and Economic Development Plan Document. As such, Policy DMB1 is of importance.

6.13. Policy DMB1 states that proposals for the conversion of sites with employment generating potential for alternative uses will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:

- 1. The Provisions Of Policy DMG1, And*
- 2. The Compatibility Of The Proposal With Other Plan Policies Of The LDF, And*
- 3. The Environmental Benefits To Be Gained By The Community, And*
- 4. The Economic And Social Impact Caused By Loss Of Employment Opportunities To The Borough, And*
- 5. Any Attempts That Have Been Made To Secure An Alternative Employment Generating Use For The Site (Must Be Supported By Evidence (Such As Property Agents Details Including Periods Of Marketing And Response) That The Property/ Business Has Been Marketed For Business Use For A Minimum Period Of Six Months Or Information That Demonstrates To The Council's Satisfaction That The Current Use Is Not Viable For Employment Purposes.)*

6.14. With regard to the points above, the proposed development complies with points 1 to 4, as it aligns to policy DMG1 and is compatible with other relevant plan policies. Given that the proposal involves a change of use, it is considered that point 3 is not applicable. Regarding point 4, the economic and social impacts resulting from the loss of employment opportunities are deemed minimal, especially when considering that the proposed development will create some employment for staff members.

6.15. In relation to criteria 5, although no marketing information has been submitted with this application, we are of the belief that the proposed change of use of the dwelling would not adversely affect the potential for future employment developments on the site. At present, the dwelling has a C3 classification, which does not support employment use and therefore, changing it to a C2 use would not constitute a loss of an employment use.

6.16. Furthermore, during the pre-application discussions, the case officer noted that the proposed C2 use is unlikely to present any significant direct conflict with the borough's adopted development strategy, particularly concerning the aims and objectives outlined in Policy DMB1.

Sustainable Development

6.17. Considering the Framework as a whole, it is important to note that Paragraph 7 of the NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At Paragraph 8 it is stated that: "Achieving sustainable

development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives 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)”.

- 6.18. The first objective is with regards to the economy, where the planning system should help to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity. The second objective is a social objective whereby the planning system should help 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 wellbeing. Finally, an environmental objective, whereby the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, mitigating and adapting to climate change and minimising waste and pollution.
- 6.19. Firstly, in terms of economic benefit, Positive Pathway Solutions are responsible for providing high quality, bespoke care at reasonable prices, ensuring that families of all backgrounds are able to access necessary care. As such, the proposal will be an addition to a growing business that provides a wide range of services to a diverse clientele.
- 6.20. In terms of social benefit, the proposed development would result in a necessary addition of care provision for children within the local area. Positive Pathway Solutions will provide a home for a young individual who needs additional care with their day to day lives, helping to improve their quality of life and in turn, their future. The proposed use would be comparable to a typical family home, and therefore whilst providing a much needed use, it will also ensure that there are no impacts upon the amenity of neighbours, given its operation will be no different to the current use.
- 6.21. The third objective is environmental; as the proposal does not include any new built development or changes to the existing property, the site will remain untouched and therefore there will be no adverse environmental impacts to the site or local area.

6.22. Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would constitute sustainable development in the context of the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Local Plan. Furthermore, the above analysis would also suggest the proposals can be viewed positively in the context of the adopted Development Plan.

The Planning Balance/ Summary

6.23. This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of an existing dwelling (C3) to a children's care home (C2) for up to four young people. The proposal responds to an identified local need and reflects Lancashire County Council's strategy to support smaller, community based care settings. The use would operate in a manner comparable to a traditional family home, with no physical alterations proposed, and is located in a sustainable area with good access to services.

6.24. The proposal complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including DS1, DS2, DMG1, DMG2 and DMB1, and aligns with the objectives of the NPPF. It will provide social and economic benefits with no adverse impact on residential amenity, design, or the local environment. Accordingly, the proposed development represents sustainable development, and planning permission should be granted.

/7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1. PWA Planning is retained by Positive Pathway Solutions to progress a full application for the change of use from a dwelling (C3) to a Younger Persons Care Home (C2) at Higher College Farm, Longridge.
- 7.2. The proposal seeks to change the use of an existing residential property to a children's care home, with no physical alterations proposed to the building. The use will operate in a manner consistent with that of a conventional family home, with limited comings and goings that will not give rise to any adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby properties or the wider area. The site is located within a sustainable location and the proposal responds directly to an identified local need for smaller-scale care provision. As such, the development is considered to be fully in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF.
- 7.3. There are no technical constraints which would preclude the development of this site for the proposed use. Given the above, the proposed development is considered acceptable and should be approved without delay.



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**Appendix A - Pre Application Response ref.
RV/2024/ENQ/00105**



RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Officer:	Stephen Kilmartin	Direct Tel:	[REDACTED]	Council Offices Church Walk Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 2RA
Email:	[REDACTED]			
Our Ref:	RV/2024/ENQ/00105			
Location:	Higher College Farmhouse			Tel: [REDACTED]
Date:	17.4.25			
Proposal:	Change of use of the existing dwellinghouse (C3) to small children’s residential home (C2)			

Pre-Application Enquiry Response

Dear Joshua,

I write further to your submission of a request for pre-application advice at Higher College farmhouse, Longridge. The enquiry seeks the Council’s views in relation to the potential change of use of the existing dwellinghouse (C3) to small children’s residential home (C2). Your enquiry seeks the view of the authority in respect of as to whether such a change of use would firstly require planning permission and secondly, if the authority considers the proposal would constitute a change of use, the likelihood of such a proposal being supported.

Material Change of Use:

The application property has a present lawful use as a single dwelling – Use Class C3(a). The submitted information provided by Northwest Child Care in support of the enquiry (Appendix E) states the following:

‘The home would be an ideal place for up to 4 children to grow and develop, feel valued and loved and become successful with their lives and futures. The home would require one full time registered manager and a team of 8 full time carers. The child to staff ratio would be governed by the needs of the children but as a general rule there would be 2 care staff on duty around the clock and a manger and or a deputy manager working office hours.’

As you will be aware Use Class C3 covers uses as ‘a dwellinghouse (whether or not as main residence) by: (a) a single person or single household; (b) a single household of not more than 6 residents where care is provided; or (c) a single household of not more than 6 residents where no care is provided (other than a use within class C4).’

As to whether the proposed use, taking account of the level of activities and nature of occupation, would be considered to fall within Class C3(b) or Class C2 is dependent on the nature of the care provided, the permanent residency or lack thereof of the carers employed on site and the need or likelihood of other external practitioners to visit the premises.

In this respect, taking account of the currently submitted information, the authority is of the view that the proposal would constitute being a Class C2 use, rather than that of a use falling within Class C3(b). Particularly insofar that it is likely that ‘external therapists to offer therapeutic interventions’ are likely to visit the premises and taking account of the interchangeability of the ‘8 full time carers’, the authority does not consider that the individuals residing within the premises would therefore be considered to constitute a ‘household’ and as such would fall outside of the remit of Class C3(b).

The Council's opinion is that a proposed C2 use involving a number of staff on site with their associated movement patterns accessing and leaving the site would be a materially different use than the existing C3 use and planning permission is required.

Should Consent be Sought:

As you will be aware, the building to which the enquiry relates is located outside of any defined settlement limits, with the site also benefitting from an Employment Land Allocation (Site EAL 3). As such, taking account of the location of the site and nature of the proposal, the policies that are engaged and relevant to the determination of the enquiry are considered to be as follows:

Relevant Core Strategy Policies:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1: Protecting Trees & Woodland
Policy DME5: Renewable Energy
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Employment Land Allocation

The site to which the application relates currently benefits from an 'EAL' designation, being designated as Site EAL3 within the Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document Adopted 15th October 2019 (HED-DPD). With the Employment Allocation Policy stating the following:

Land will be allocated for employment uses (defined as uses falling within classes B1 to B8) to meet employment land requirements in the plan period (2008-2028) as follows and as shown on the Proposals Map:

- *Policy EAL1 Land at Sykes Holt, Mellor (1.7ha);*
- *Policy EAL2 Land at Time Technology Park, Simonstone (0.8ha); and*
- *Policy EAL3 Land at Higher College Farm, Longridge (1.5ha)*

With the supporting justification stating:

The Council proposes to allocate 4ha of employment land. This results in an overprovision against the identified requirement in the Core Strategy of 1.6ha. In making these allocations the plan addresses the identified requirements of the Core Strategy whilst also ensuring the delivery of necessary employment land to meet requirements for Longridge. Overall, the Council when taking these allocations and existing commitments into account provides through this plan for a choice of sites and locations to accommodate economic growth.

Subsequent to the original site designation in October 2019, the Use Classes Order experienced significant revisions that came into effect on the 1st of September 2020 whereby a number of differing use classes were now considered to fall within the same use class, namely Use Class E which reads as follows:

Use, or part use, for all or any of the following purposes:

- A. *Shop other than for the sale of hot food*
- B. *Food and drink which is mostly consumed on the premises*
- C. *the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public*
 - (i) *financial services*
 - (ii) *professional services (other than medical services)*
 - (iii) *any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality*
- D. *Indoor sport and recreation (not swimming pools, ice rinks or motorised vehicles or firearms)*
- E. *Medical services not attached to the residence of the practitioner*
- F. *Non-residential creche, day centre or nursery*
- G. *(i) office*
 - (ii) *the research and development of products or processes or*
 - (iii) *any industrial process, (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)*

In respect of the above, it is noted that the designation solely relates to that of uses falling within use classes B1-B8. In respect of the changes to the Use Classes Order, uses previously falling within use Classes B1(a), (b) and (c) are now considered to fall within Use Class E sub-class/sub-activity (g).

Given the EAL Allocation of the site, Policy DMB1 is engaged insofar that it relates to Designated and Committed Employment Sites with the Policy reading as follows

Proposals for the development, redevelopment or conversion of sites with employment generating potential in the plan area for alternative uses will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:

1. *The provisions of Policy DMG1, and*
2. *The compatibility of the proposal with other plan policies of the LDF, and*
3. *The environmental benefits to be gained by the community, and*
4. *The economic and social impact caused by loss of employment opportunities to the borough, and*
5. *Any attempts that have been made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site (must be supported by evidence (such as property agents details including periods of marketing and response) that the property/ business has been marketed for business use for a minimum period of six months or information that demonstrates to the council's satisfaction that the current use is not viable for employment purposes.)*

As you will note from the criterion above, particularly criterion 5, any application that proposes the redevelopment of the site for purposes in-lieu of an 'employment generating use' will have to be accompanied by robust evidence of the marketing of the site for 'employment uses'.

Such marketing evidence will have to demonstrate that the site has been marketed for a period of six months or information that demonstrates to the council's satisfaction that the current use is not viable or that there is insufficient commercial interest in the site to ensure its likely delivery.

In the absence of any marketing being undertaken and evidence of marketing submitted, the proposal would fail to satisfy criteria 5. However this in itself may not be a reason to refuse planning permission subject to other criteria and policies being satisfied .

The fact that the use of the premises for Class C2 purposes would in effect result in the generation of some employment, particularly in respect of careers or duty manager(s), could also be a material consideration. It would also need to be demonstrated how the proposed C2 use could successfully operate alongside, and not undermine the delivery of, employment development coming forward on the remainder of the site. As such, notwithstanding other development management considerations, the principle of the use of the premises for

Class C2 purposes is unlikely to raise any significant direct conflict with the adopted development strategy for the borough in respect of the aims and objectives of Policy DMB1.

Conclusion:

Taking account of the above, the principle of the use of the building for purposes falling within Class C2 is unlikely to raise any significant direct conflict with the aims and objectives of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Submission Requirements:

Should you proceed to submission of a formal full application, based on the nature of the proposal/site constraints identified above, it is my opinion that the Local Planning Authority would require the following information to accompany such an application to allow for an accurate assessment:

- Application forms
- Location plan
- Existing and proposed site plan
- Proposed landscaping details (where applicable)
- Boundary treatment details (where applicable)
- Operational Statement -including how the scheme could successfully operate alongside, and would not undermine delivery of, the adjacent employment site

The above observations have been provided on the basis of the level of information submitted and the comments contained within this response represent officer opinion only, at the time of writing, without prejudice to the final determination of any application submitted.

Should you wish to discuss any of these matters further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Stephen Kilmartin
Principal Planning Officer

