

HYNDBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL - COMMITTEE REPORT	
APPLICATION REF:	11/25/0343
APPLICATION ADDRESS:	7 Bluebell Way, Huncoat, Lancashire BB5 6TD
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Full: Change of use from a dwelling to a residence providing care for one child
DATE REPORT WRITTEN:	3 November 2025

Description of the Site and the Proposed Development

This application relates to 7 Bluebell Way, a detached dwelling occupying a corner plot at the junction of Bluebell Way and Sedum Gardens. It is a two and a half storey building, containing four bedrooms (one with ensuite facilities), a kitchen, dining room, living room and a lounge. The property includes an integral garage and an external car parking space for one vehicle.

7 Way Bluebell forms part of a modern housing estate developed since year 2005, with other similarly designed dwellings that have small front gardens, narrow plot widths and typically one plot car parking space. Bluebell Way is a privately maintained street and does not form part of the adopted highway network.

This proposal is for the change of use of the existing dwelling to a residence providing care for one child. According to the information submitted with this application, care will be provided by two carers who will be present in the home on a rolling basis. The proposed development will not result in external alteration to the existing building.

Consultation Responses/Representations

Public Consultation: Neighbour notification letters have been sent and a site notice posted adjacent to the application site. The Local Planning Authority have received a total of 16 objections. The comments are summaries as follows:

- The proposal will add to traffic and cars on the estate, which may increase the likelihood of accident.
- The potential on-street parking as result of the proposed development would compromise the access of emergency vehicles to Sedum Gardens.

- The applicant has made multiple applications and there are another two properties on the estate owned by the same business owner, one of which was operating illegally before planning was approved (sic).
- The proposal would result in three children's homes in this estate, which is disproportionate.
- The proposal would result in the loss of housing,
- The noise and disturbance associated with the proposed use and shift changes, including frequent coming/going of shift workers and cars at unsocial hours.
- The proposal would detract the residential character of the local community.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) Children's Services: Objection to the application for the reasons as follows:

- The provider has not consulted Lancashire Children's Services about the proposed home to establish whether there is a local need for this provision.
- As the LCC Market Position Statement for Children's Homes (April 2025) suggested, there is not considered to be a local need for solo children's home. Lancashire Children's Services has limited demand for such provision and for the small number of Lancashire children who do require a solo home, there is already considered to be enough provision in our local area to meet this demand.
- There is already another children's home (operated by the same provider within the same postcode/on the same street) and there is another Ofsted Registered children's home within 0.33 from the proposed home. Having too many children's homes close together can have an impact on the effective running of both new and existing homes. Having too many children's homes in a particular area is something that should be considered from a local community perspective.
- Prosperity Children's Services already operate seven Ofsted registered children's homes in Lancashire but has never cared for a Lancashire child. The provider has chosen not to be part of Lancashire County Council's children's care commissioning arrangements for considering the steps they could take to increase the likelihood of caring for a Lancashire child. If this planning application is approved, it is highly likely that the home would not be used for a Lancashire child and would, like all their other homes, be used for care for children from outside Lancashire, some of whom may be a long distance from home, which is not in line with best practice of children in care living close to their local community, friends and school.

LCC Highways: No objection subject to the following conditions:

1. Construction of vehicle cross-over across the footway fronting the site; and
2. Construction of car parking spaces.

Relevant Planning History

- 11/23/0068 – Full: Change of use of dwelling (use class C3a) to residential care home (use class C2) for a mother and baby (or for 2 children) supported by up to three carers. Refused: 7 July 2025 due to the impact on the living conditions of nearby occupants and harm to highway safety due to a lack of off-street parking provision. Redetermined appeal APP/R2330/W/23/3335566 dismissed on 23 December 2024 due to harm to highway safety (no harm was found to the living conditions of nearby occupants)
- 11/23/0069 – Application for Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) for a change of a residential dwelling (C3a) to a household comprising of a resident Mother and Baby or up to two children. Refused: 16 March 2023

Relevant Policies

Hyndburn Core Strategy (CS)

Policy Env6 High Quality Design

Policy Env7 Environmental Amenity

Policy T1 Improving Connectivity

Hyndburn Development Management Development Plan Document (DMDPD)

Policy EM26 Design Quality and Materials

Policy DM29 Environmental Amenity

Policy DM32 Sustainable Transport, Traffic Management and Highway Safety (including GN8: Car Parking Standards)

Hyndburn Local Plan 2040 (Emerging Local Plan)

The Council's Local Plan 2040 underwent an independent examination between 16 and 25 September 2025 to determine if it is 'sound' and legally compliant, conducted by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Local Planning Authority is expecting a post examination letter from the Inspector within a couple of weeks. Until then, limited weight is generally afforded to the Emerging Local Plan

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Guidance

Hyndburn Borough Council Parking and Access Standards (2010)

Children's Residential & Supported Accommodations Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (Children's Home SPG)

Observations

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration (NPPF paragraph 2). NPPF defines sustainable development (paragraph 8), sets a presumption in favour of such development, requiring that: proposals in accordance with an up-to-date development plan be approved without delay (paragraph 11); and, that decisions should be approached in a positive and creative way (paragraph 39). NPPF (paragraph 61) says it is important that [...] the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed; and that (paragraph 63) the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including housing for looked-after children, should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.

The development plan sets out general policies regarding character, appearance and residential amenity. Additionally, the Council has prepared and published a Supplementary Planning Guidance for Children's Home SPD in June 2025 to provide guidance on applications for children's homes. The SPG is a material consideration. It makes the following policies as guidance for new proposals:

Policy 1: Meeting the care needs of local communities

The development of a children's care home will be supported if it can be demonstrated that the care home will support local communities. However, planning permission will not be granted for development of a children's care home if Lancashire County Council object to the development on the grounds that it will not contribute to meeting the needs of local communities.

Policy 2: Site Specific Requirement for Care Homes

The development of a children's care home will be supported provided the following criteria are satisfied:

- i. That the general location of the care home is considered to be suitable and appropriate;
- ii. That the application property is suitable for the number of children and carers proposed;
- iii. That there is sufficient off-street car parking for carers and visitors and that the development will not impact on highway safety, and
- iv. That the development will not result in a concentration or cluster of children's care home in that area.

Considerations

Principle of development

The application proposes the change of use of a detached dwelling to a care Home for one child (with 2 carers). The property is set in a large established residential estate composed of similar detached /semi-detached dwelling houses.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF particularly requires that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community (including looked after children) should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Footnote 26 of the NPPF suggests that evidence of need for looked after children can be found in the relevant Local authority's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy.

In recent years, Hyndburn has experienced significant growth of children's homes operated by agency providers, which has resulted in many children being moved to the Borough from their home community. The council has witnessed a steady increase since year 2020 in the

number of planning applications and applications for certificates of lawful development for the change of use of dwellings to children's care homes.

Unfortunately, according to the consultation response provided by LCC Children's Services, there is limited demand for such type of provision, and for the small number of Lancashire children who do require a solo home, there is already sufficient provision in our local area to meet this demand. The applicant has chosen not to be part of Lancashire County Council's children's home commissioning arrangements for consider the steps they could take to increase the likelihood of caring for a Lancashire child. If this planning application is approved, it is highly likely that the home would not be used for a Lancashire child and would, like all other homes operated by the applicant, be used for care for children from outside Lancashire.

The Framework seeks to ensure that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements should be addressed, but that the overall aims should be to meet an area's identified housing needs. In this context, the applicant has not convincingly demonstrated there is an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed in this location. Furthermore, at the time when this planning application is considered, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and the proposed development would result in the loss of a market dwelling. Thus, alongside the fact that there is no identified needs for the solo home in Lancashire and the potential that the proposed home would not be occupied by a child of Hyndburn or Lancashire, officers are of the opinion that the harm associated with the loss of a four-bed market dwelling at the time when the Council fails to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply would outweigh the benefit of provision of a solo children's home.

In conclusion, it is considered that there is no evidence suggesting that the proposed development would help meet the care needs of local communities. The proposed development therefore fails to comply with Policy 1 of the Children's Home SPG.

Site-Specific Assessment

To ensure the proposed children's homes are being appropriately located and not giving rise to any harms at the local level, Policy 2 (Site Specific Requirements for Care Homes) of the Children's Home SPG sets out four criteria and states that such proposals would not be supported unless all four criteria are satisfied. In this section, the proposed development is to be assessed against the criteria contained within Policy 2 of the Hyndburn Residential & Supported Accommodation SPG.

i. General location

The application site is located within an established residential area within the defined settlement boundary of Hyndburn Borough. There is no identified environmental and

planning policy constraints associated with this site to prohibit the provision of a children's home in such location.

ii. Suitability of the application property for the number of children (with carers) proposed

7 Bluebell Way is a detached dwelling at the junction of Bluebell Way and Sedum Gardens. The properties immediately adjacent to the application site are predominately detached residential dwellings with off-street parking provision. In this instance, no changes are proposed to the external scale and appearance of the building. There may, however, be minor additions in the nature of alarms, door key pads and the like, that would have little, if any, impact on the visual character of the building. The forecourt of the property would be altered to provide an additional car parking space (as illustrated in 25-025 Transport and Parking Statement). This application proposes the change of use of this detached four-bed dwelling to a care home for one child (with two carers present at any one time). Given the scale of the existing dwelling, officers are of the opinion that the proposed development complies with the criterion ii of Policy 2 of the Children's Home SPG.

iii. Parking provision and highway safety

GN8 of the Hyndburn Development Management DPD sets out the parking standards for development in each use class including the Class C2 use, which requires the provision of one parking space per 5 beds plus one space per 10 beds for visitors/staff.

In the consultation response, LCC Highways note that the three car parking spaces should have been provided for a 4-bed dwelling (Use Class C3) according to the Hyndburn car parking standards. However, the existing integral garage is substandard internally to count towards parking provision, so that there is only one adequately sized off-road car parking space. There is therefore a current under-provision of off-road parking. The proposed change of use to a C2 care home for one child would require two off-street car parking spaces to be provided. The proposed provision of two side-by-side car off-street parking spaces following the reconstruction of a footway to a vehicle crossing specification is considered acceptable subject to the recommended conditions.

iv. Whether the proposal would result in concentration or cluster of children's care home in the area

According to the consultation response provided by LCC Children's Services, there is already a children's home (operated by the same provider within the same postcode/on the same street) approximately 220 metres (m) from the application site, and there is another Ofsted Registered children's home within 0.33m from the proposed home.

Having too many children's homes close together can have an impact on the effective running of both new and existing homes, and their cumulative impacts should be considered from a local community perspective.

Officers are of the opinion that having a cluster of children's home in a particular residential area is likely to present a challenge to sustain mixed, balanced and sustainable communities, and to affect the residential character and amenity of the neighbourhood. Supporting text of Policy 2 (Paragraph 6.18 and 6.19) of the Children's Home SPG particularly notes that it is important that groups of two or more children's care homes do not have a cumulative adverse impact on a residential area, and new care home should not be closer than 400m from an existing children's care home. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Policy 2 of the Children's Home SPG.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy 1 and 2 of the Children's Home SPG, as Lancashire County Council raised an objection on the ground that it would not contribute to meeting the needs of local communities, and the proposed development would result in a concentration of children's care home in the local area.

Residential Amenity Impact

Hyndburn Core Strategy Policy Env7 and DMDPD Policy DM29, taken together, require that development protects the amenity of neighbouring residents.

In this instance, the proposed children's home would provide accommodation for one child, to be cared for by staff (two per shift) on rota. The Design & Assessment Statement accompanying this application suggests that *'the property will function as a home, not a facility. It will not generate noise, activity, or comings and goings beyond what would be expected in a typical family dwelling.'* This is an understandable and achievable aspiration, particularly for a detached property. Therefore, officers do not dispute that the building itself, would likely continue to have a character consistent with that of a dwellinghouse, and is unlikely to result in undue amenity impact by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing, or loss of privacy of the dwellinghouses within its immediate vicinity.

Therefore, the question for the present purpose is to consider how a small children's care home differs from a dwellinghouse in terms of planning impacts, noting, in particular, that it would be a staff workplace with routine comings and goings of staff, with additional professional visitors, in addition to being a home. With multiple children's home in an area would potentially erode the residential character/nature of the area. The wider impact of the proposed development on the local community has been assessed in part iv of the Site Specific Assessment section above.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed development to be injurious to the residential character of the area when considered cumulatively alongside existing children's care facilities in the neighbourhood. Whilst the scheme does not propose any physical alterations to the building's exterior, the introduction of multiple children's homes in the same neighbourhood may result in the loss of social cohesion and erosion of established residential character.

Other Considerations

The LCC Children's Home Market Position Statement raises concerns relating to the already challenging staff recruitment and retention issues being faced by children's home providers in Lancashire. The provision of further agency children's homes in Lancashire risks affecting quality across both new and existing homes and impacts upon local services including schools, healthcare and police services.

The proposed use would arguably fall within Use Class C2 identified in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). The C2 class includes a wide range of residential institution uses (such as hospitals, nursing homes, residential school, training centre) for which the property would not be suited. Should the planning permission be granted, a condition would be recommended to restrict the use to that proposed.

Conclusions

In conclusion, providing accommodation and care for looked-after children is worthy and necessary. However, according to comments of the LCC Children's Services, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the proposed care home for one child would meet the need for Lancashire children, and in fact most solo homes in our area are caring for children from other local authority areas. As such, the proposed development would place additional demands on public services. Furthermore, the proposed development would result in the loss of a market dwelling at the time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, which is considered to be contrary to the Policy GC1 of the Hyndburn Development Management DPD.

Having assessed the proposed scheme against the relevant policies, it is considered that the proposed development, by virtue of its location, concentration of similar facilities in its vicinity, and the lacking of demonstrable needs of such type of care accommodation in the Borough, is likely to be injurious to the residential character of the area when considered cumulatively alongside the existing care facilities in the neighbouring area. Whilst the proposal does not propose any physical alteration to the exterior of the building (other than formation of an

additional car parking space with re-located footway), the proposed development may result in the loss cohesion and further erosion of established residential character.

On this basis, the application is recommended for refusal for the reasons set out in the report.

Recommendation

That the application be Refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its failure to demonstrate a local need and its nature and scale failing to align with Lancashire Children's Services commissioning strategies, is contrary to Policy 1 of Hyndburn Children's Residential & Supported Accommodations Supplementary Planning Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development, by virtue of the presence of existing children's home in its vicinity, and the resultant loss of a market dwelling, would adversely affect the established resident character of the area, and potentially resulting into the loss of social cohesion. This would be contrary to Policy 2 (iv) of the Hyndburn Children's Residential & Supported Accommodations Supplementary Planning Guidance, Policy GC1 of the Hyndburn Development Management Development Management Development Plan Document and Policy ENV7 of the Hyndburn Core Strategy.