

Parish:	Harpley	
Proposal:	Change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential care home for up to four children aged 8-18 (Use Class C2).	
Location:	Rowan House Back Street Harpley King's Lynn PE31 6TU	
Applicant:	Juventus Services	
Case No:	25/00611/CU (Change of Use Application)	
Case Officer:	Helena Su	Date for Determination: 28 May 2025 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 4 July 2025

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Cllr Beales.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

This application is for the change of use a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential care home (Use Class C2) to care for up to four children between the age of 8 - 18 at Rowan House, Back Stret Harpley, a five-bedroom property.

The application site is approximately 0.08ha in size, located on the northeast side of Back Street, which is approximately 760m from the centre of Harpley village.

Key Issues

Principle of development
Form and character
Impact on neighbour amenity
Highway safety
Any other matters requiring consideration prior to determination of the application

Recommendation:

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

This application is for the change of use a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential care home (Use Class C2) to care for up to four children between the age of 8 - 18 at Rowan House, Back Street Harpley, a five-bedroom property. No external alterations or material operations are proposed to facilitate this change of use.

Harpley is classified as a Tier 5 (Rural Village) settlement under LP01 of the Local Plan 2021-2040. The application site is approximately 0.08ha in size, located on the northeast side of Back Street, which is approximately 760m from the centre of Harpley village.

The application is made on behalf of Juventus Services Limited, a care service that supports children and young people in Norfolk.

SUPPORTING CASE

Submitted on behalf of the Applicant - Summarised due to length. Full comment on Public Access dated 30/05/2025.

On 23 May 2023, the Housing Minister issued a written ministerial statement on planning for accommodation for looked after children. This statement sets out that the planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society. NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and reflect this in their planning policies and decisions by giving due weight to and be supportive of applications for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs and all parties in the development process.

Juventus brings decades of experience in setting up and running children's homes within a highly regulated sector. We take our legal and ethical responsibilities toward children and young people extremely seriously and are committed to providing high-quality care in environments that are safe, nurturing, and respectful of the communities in which we operate. It is of no benefit to Juventus, nor in line with our values, to establish a home that is not fit for purpose, unable to integrate with the local community, or poses any form of risk.

1. Parking Concerns

Causing minimal disruption and integrating respectfully into the local community are core priorities for Juventus. We are fully aware that on-street parking is not a viable option in this location. For this reason, we intend to utilise the front garden area to create suitable parking and turning space for vehicles, thereby avoiding any need for reversing onto the main road—an action we acknowledge carries safety concerns due to blind spots. We do not anticipate that the proposed change of use will significantly alter existing traffic patterns or parking demand.

2. Increased Traffic and Highway Impact

Juventus does not foresee any noticeable increase in traffic levels that would disrupt neighbouring properties. Homes of this size routinely see multiple vehicles entering and leaving during waking hours, and the proposed use will reflect that of a typical family household.

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Our organisation takes environmental impact seriously and operates with a Net Zero policy across all departments, supported by active working groups. We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint wherever possible.

We are fully aware of local road conditions including the absence of pavements, limited street lighting, narrow carriageways, and agricultural traffic. Risk assessments are standard practice when selecting properties. We believe that these characteristics do not present insurmountable issues, and instead offer learning opportunities for children. Road safety is a core part of our care and education approach, and children are taught to navigate various environments safely - urban, rural, or otherwise.

With regard to waste management, the property will function like any family home. Wheelie bins will be stored discreetly and only presented on collection days.

3. Lack of Amenities.

Juventus operates children's homes across both urban and rural areas, in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk. Our experience shows that children and young people benefit from a variety of environments. Our staff team is largely based in Norfolk and has an excellent understanding of local resources, geography, and services. We also actively encourage children to engage with the countryside as a form of recreation, education, and well-being.

4. Village Life

It is unclear why Harpley would be viewed as unsuitable for children. Child abuse occurs across all socio-economic groups and geographic areas—urban or rural, affluent or deprived.

We believe every child deserves the opportunity to experience different ways of life and to feel a sense of belonging wherever they live. Living in a village should be seen as a positive experience, not an anomaly.

Children benefit enormously from exposure to diverse communities. The UK is home to an ageing population, and learning to live alongside individuals of different ages, backgrounds, and beliefs is a vital part of growing up. Far from being a disruption, we believe the presence of our home and children will add richness and diversity to the local area. Juventus also places a high value on maintaining respectful and supportive relationships with local residents.

5. Occupation and Shift Patterns

Rowan House will operate as a registered children's home for UK-based children aged 8 to 18. It will not accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Regarding staffing, the home will operate on a 24-hour shift basis. Staff will arrive in the morning, stay overnight, and leave the following morning—mirroring the routines of a typical household. This modern shift model has been adopted to reduce disruption and improve continuity of care.

All children have individual care and safety plans, tailored to their specific needs. Our experienced and highly trained staff act as corporate parents and just like in any family home, will support children in accessing education, participating in community activities, maintaining friendships, and attending appointments.

PLANNING HISTORY

07/01224/F: Application Permitted: 06/08/07 - Single storey extension to dwelling (Delegated)

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RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT with the following comments:

The Parish Council felt there was not sufficient information available for this application, leaving many unanswered questions that Councillors raised between themselves

The application states local amenities available but it was felt that these are limited in the Parish.

The red outline of the site does not seem to be accurate

There would not be enough space for 4 cars, 2 cars with a turning space would be tight on space.

The Planning Statement states Policy LP29 - Housing for the Elderly and Specialist Care as a relevant policy of the Adopted Development Plan however the application is for Children 8-18 not the Elderly

Discrepancy between consultation dates.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION with comments:

From the information supplied, it would appear that in the main parking requirements would be primarily for staff use and whilst clearly there are likely to be visitors attending these may well be pre-arranged which can ensure management of the parking provision. The current available (and retained parking provision) would marginally exceed current guidance whilst still enabling vehicles to park and manoeuvre on site. Likewise, there would appear scope to increase parking provision should the need arise.

However, notwithstanding the above, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) is of the opinion that the proposed use is likely to operate akin to the present permitted use of the site and it is unlikely there would be a material increase in vehicular movements or that visitor parking demand would significantly alter. The present parking arrangements serve a five-bedroomed property, which under current parking guidance requires three parking spaces (excluding any garage provision). Service vehicles, home deliveries and visitors are likely to occur under the current permitted use on an ad hoc nature, for which parking guidance does not require additional parking provision, and that is clearly a material consideration

REPRESENTATIONS: 13 OBJECTION comments and **7 SUPPORT** comments.

OBJECTION comments summarised as follows:

- Highway concerns with parking and turning on site, visibility to Back Street, number of cars on site.
- No facilities for young people, children or asylum seekers. Harpley is a small village with no shop, the pub is currently closed and there is limited bus services and no pavement or street lighting.
- Nearby agricultural operations operate in this area.
- Would not comply with LP21 (traffic increase), LP29 (proposal is not for elderly or specialist care and site is not near facilities).
- How will waste be collected on the site - will commercial bins be provided?
- Citizens of Back Street are predominately senior citizens.
- Lack of police presence in the village and recalls break-in at this address.

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- Concern that if the application is approved, there would be little control for the future use of the house if this enterprise fails.
- Concern regarding consultation date and date on the site notice.
- Query need for an extraordinary Parish Council meeting for the planning application.

SUPPORT comments summarised as follows:

- Communities have responsibility for welfare of young disadvantage people and rural environment could work for them.
- Village currently supports many young people. Harpley is a lovely village and should be shared. Current owners of the property - have had no issues raising four children at this property and village; sending them to local schools and activities locally. Site can accommodate up to six parking spaces. Harpley is a circular village so village hall and school are not too far.
- No asylum seekers will be placed in the proposed children's home.
- Village may be short of amenities, but there are plenty of children in the village of all ages who find something to do, whether its walking, cycling, visting the park etc
- Impact on the village would be negligible.

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN 2021-2040

LP01 - Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy Policy (Strategic Policy)

LP06 - Climate Change (Strategic Policy)

LP14 - Parking Provision in New Development

LP18 - Design & Sustainable Development (Strategic Policy)

LP20 - Environmental Assets- Historic Environment (Strategic Policy)

LP21 - Environment, Design and Amenity (Strategic Policy)

LP29 - Housing for the elderly & Specialist Care (Strategic Policy)

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide 2021

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

Principle of development

Form and character

Impact on neighbour amenity

Highway safety

Any other matters requiring consideration prior to determination of the application

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Principle of Development:

The application site is located within the development boundary of Harpley, as identified by the Local Plan 2021-2040, and considered to be in a sustainable location within the village for development.

The case of North Devon DC v FSS and Southern Childcare Ltd (2003) confirmed the view that carers who provide 24-hour care, but who are not resident, could not be regarded as living together in a household (which would be required in the context of Use Class C3(b)). Therefore, in the case of this application, where the applicant has confirmed there will be staff present on site, working in shifts, the use is considered to fall within Use Class C2.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF is supportive of diverse housing needs for different groups in the community, this includes looked after children.

LP29 (Housing for the Elderly and Specialised Care) of the Local Plan 2021-2040 supports specialised housing for those who need support where is it location within the Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (LP01) and i. close to town or village shops, public transport, community facilities and medical services; and ii. these are easily reached by those without access to a car, as appropriate to the needs and level of mobility of potential residents.

Harpley is a settlement within the Settlement Hierarchy of LP01 of the Local Plan 2021-2040. With regard to criteria i. of LP29 - Whilst Harpley does not have a local village shop or medical services, it does have community facilities such as a village hall and a primary school, which would be considered appropriate facilities for the intended residents of the residential care home. Moreover, whilst bus services are infrequent, a bus service to King's Lynn and Fakenham does operate on a daily basis and during peak hours in the morning and evening. Considering criteria ii. of LP29, the residents would be children aged 8 - 18 and unlikely to have access to a car and therefore would be reliant on the staff and carers to travel more widely if necessary.

The proposed residential care home in the development boundary of Harpley, as per LP01 and LP29 of the Local Plan 2021-2040 and provisions of the NPPF would therefore be acceptable in principle.

Form and Character:

The application site comprises a detached two-storey five-bedroom dwelling, situated within a modest plot, with a generous rear garden area. The site lies between No 23 to the north-west, and Home Farm, a Grade II Listed Building, to the south-east. No alterations to the external appearance of the dwellinghouse, or the site, is proposed.

Third party comments have speculated on the removal of landscaping to the front of the site to create additional parking and turning area on the site to accommodate the proposed development. However, as a Change of Use application, this is not currently being proposed. Should works, including the removal of landscaping and laying of hard surfacing to the front of the site be considered, planning permission might be required - however, this would be dependent on the level of changes being proposed. A planning application for this will then be determined on its own merit.

Regarding form and character, the proposal would have a neutral impact and would accord with LP18 and LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040.

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Impact on Neighbour Amenity:

The proposal has received numerous comments from neighbours in support and in objection to the application. Comments in objection covered matters such as noise and disturbance, highway safety (parking on site, parking off site, and visibility from the site), suitability and sustainability of the site location and waste collection. On the other hand, comments in support relate to welcoming the use into Harpley village and impact to the village would be negligible.

Given the nature of the proposed development, which is for a change of use only, there would be no overshadowing, overlooking and overbearing impacts.

Third parties have raised concerns regarding traffic movement, noise and disturbance. Given the level of staff proposed, it is not considered that the number of trips generated would be hugely different from a single dwelling of this scale, and while there may be times when staff are changing shifts and there are more cars on site, there is adequate room on site for parking and manoeuvring. This is considered to be acceptable and would not cause an unacceptable noise and disturbance impact.

Some third-party comments have expressed concern about the use of this site and the nearby agricultural businesses. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs)." This is repeated in LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040. It is considered that the use of this site for a C2 use would remain largely similar to that of use class C3 (residential dwellinghouse), albeit not occupied by a single household, and would therefore be unlikely to be detrimental to surrounding agricultural businesses and vice versa.

Finally, a third party commented on the lack of police presence and historic police involvement at this address. This is not a material planning consideration and certainly not related to the proposed use.

Regarding impact on neighbour amenity, the scheme is considered to comply with LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040.

Highway Safety and Parking Provision:

The Parish Council and neighbours have made comments related to the parking and turning area on the site, visibility to and from the site, and level of traffic on Back Street.

The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection to the principle of development. For a five-bedroom dwelling, 3 parking spaces are required as per LP14 of the Local Plan 2021-2040. The main parking requirements would be primarily for staff and whilst visitors might visit occasionally by a pre-arranged visit to ensure management of the parking provision on site. The Local Highway Authority consider that the current available parking provision would marginally exceed current guidance and there is scope for increased parking provision. Notwithstanding this, the proposed use would be akin to the existing use and unlikely to materially increase vehicular movements.

A gravelled parking and turning point are provided at the front of the site, south side and rear of the dwellinghouse, where there is a detached garage. The planning agent has demonstrated that up to 7 vehicles could fit on site. It is considered that there is sufficient parking on-site for the proposed use, in accordance with LP14 and LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040 and Norfolk's Parking Standards.

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Concerns have been raised that the intensification of the site would put pressures on the local road network. Again, considering the potential maximum number of cars visiting the site, impacts would be similar to those expected if the building was occupied as a five-bedroom residential dwelling. Maintenance of the road would be the responsibility of the Local Highway Authority and is not a material consideration within the scope of this application.

In regard to highway safety, the proposal would comply with LP06, LP13, LP14 and LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040.

Other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of this application:

Biodiversity Net Gain:

As a change of use application, the site would meet the de minimis exemption for Biodiversity Net Gain set out in Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Drainage:

The site is located in flood zone 1 and not in an area of known drainage issues or nutrient neutrality catchment area. Paragraph 181 and 182 of the NPPF ensures that development would not result in drainage issues elsewhere. It is expected that at any one time, the maximum number of people on site would be around 7: 4 residents and 3 members of staff (2 members of staff to stay overnight). The proposed change of use would not increase use and pressure on the local drainage network as it would operate the same as a residential dwellinghouse with one household.

Sustainability of the site:

A number of third-party comments expressed concern regarding staff getting to and from the site.

LP06 of the Local Plan 2021-2040 requires all development to recognise and contribute to the importance of future proofing against the challenges of climate change to support the transition towards meeting the Government target of becoming a net zero economy by 2050. The application seeks to utilise an existing dwelling whilst not introducing additional traffic movements, beyond that expected of a normal household.

The Applicant has provided an example of a rota for the proposed development which shows three members of staff on the site, with two members of staff staying overnight most nights. The Applicant has confirmed that staff would arrive in the morning, stay overnight, and leave the following morning - just like a typical household.

Waste Collection:

The proposal is not for a commercial unit, where waste would exceed the domestic use of the site. Waste from the site would be akin to the residential use of the site. The Applicant has confirmed that waste bins would be stored discreetly on site and only presented on collection days.

Specific comments and issues:

On receipt of comments from the Parish Council, clarification was sought regarding the issues that were raised in order that the Agent may address the points. However, the Parish Council did not provide additional comments.

The Parish Council and neighbours have commented on the consultation period and site notice date. In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (DMPO) (England) Order 2015, Part 3, Article 15(5), letters were sent out to adjoining neighbours and a site notice was put up near the site. The date on the site notice was changed to comply with the legislation - allowing for the full 21 days for the site notice to be displayed. It is considered the application has been appropriately advertised as set out in the DMPO 2015.

Furthermore, a neighbour raised concerns with the Parish Council holding an extraordinary meeting for this planning application. The Parish Council meeting is separate from the functions of the Borough Council and up to their discretion to hold extra meetings for planning applications.

Lastly, some third-party comments mentioned asylum seekers being accommodated on the site. The Applicants have clarified that the proposal is intended for children in care between the ages of 8 - 18, not for asylum seekers. Whilst the Applicant's do work with asylum seekers in some capacity, it is a strand of their organisation which does not relate to this planning application.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:

A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).

C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in Section 149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors. It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

CONCLUSION

The application seeks to change the use of a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a residential care home for up to four children aged 8 - 18 (Use Class C2). The application site is an existing five-bedroom dwelling in Harpley, a Rural Village, where the sustainability of the site is considered acceptable being within the development boundary of Harpley.

Although concerns were raised by third parties and the Parish Council, regarding impact on neighbour impact, highways and the sustainability of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposed scale of operations of the proposed use would be similar to the residential use a large dwelling of this size and would not have any unacceptably detrimental impacts on neighbours or the locality as a whole.

On the basis of the above, the scheme is considered acceptable and in accordance with LP01, LP06, LP18, LP21, LP29, of the Local Plan 2021-2040, and the NPPF. It is therefore recommended that Members approved this application, subject to the imposition of conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out using only the following approved plans:

Location Plan 02/04/2025

- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.