

**PLANNING STATEMENT ATTACHED TO PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF THE EXISTING FLATTED
ACCOMMODATION (USE CLASS C3(a)) TO PROVIDE SHORT TERM RESIDENTIAL CARE ACCOMMODATION
(USE CLASS C2) FOR 5 YOUNG PEOPLE AT 114-116 WALMERSLEY ROAD, BURY BL9 6DX.**

STATEMENT PREPARED BY:- MR MIKE CARR MSc MRTPI, MAT DESIGN LIMITED

ON BEHALF OF:- THE CHERRY BLOSSOM FAMILY

STATEMENT DATE: JUNE 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

This planning statement has been prepared to support a full planning application that proposes the change of use of 114 – 116 Walmersley Road, which is currently used as 6 self-contained flats falling under use as a C3(a) to a use falling under Use Class C2 (Residential Institutions), thereby providing an opportunity for semi-independent living for the 5 residents (16-25 years old) so as to provide them with the life and social skills to become independent from the care system.

For clarity, Use Class C2 includes residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres. There would be no secure residential accommodation which falls under a separate Use Class C2(a).

2. 114 – 116 WALMERSLEY ROAD

114 – 116 Walmersley Road is made up of 2 linked terrace properties that comprise of 6 self-contained flats, along with front garden areas and a substantial rear service yard that provides bin storage, access to Back Walmersley Road East and ample space for the storage of cycles.

In terms of the setting of 114 – 116 Walmersley Road within the locality, the existing flatted accommodation is sustainably located and is close to all local services such as shopping and medical facilities. Whilst there is no off-street car parking is available within the site, there is a range of public transport routes within easy walking distance of the site and this area of Bury is well provided for by on-street parking along New Vernon Street and Back Walmersley Road East.

3. SITE LAND USE ALLOCATION

The application site is located in a Primarily Residential Area, as denoted on the Bury Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. The building(s) are not Listed, nor is the site in a Conservation Area, whilst there are no other planning constraints that we are aware of that should prevent this development from taking place.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

There are no current or earlier planning applications that would affect the consideration of this planning application

5. RELEVANT APPEAL DECISION

APP/H4315/W/20/3265183 - 48 Knowsley Road, St Helens. WA10 4PU – Decision date 28th April 2021.

6. THE APPLICABLE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National & Local planning policy framework through which this planning application should be considered consists of:-

- ***The 2021 National Planning Policy Framework*** – Particularly paragraph 62 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes) and paragraphs 110 & 111 (Promoting Sustainable Transport) and;
- ***The Bury Unitary Development Plan*** provides the adopted local policy framework against which the proposals for this site are to be considered against;

- **UDP Policy H4** - Housing needs provides the principle adopted policy, which sets out the Council's role in meeting housing need in moving from acting as a provider of housing, towards enabling other organisations to provide needs based housing, although this situation may change within the period of the Plan.

Policy H4 identifies that such housing will be required to cater for a wide range of groups, including the elderly, the disabled, those leaving institutional care, single parent households, low income groups, the homeless and people who are generally having difficulty entering the housing market as first time buyers.

Policy H4 states that the Council will seek to increase the development of needs based housing through negotiations and agreements with the private and independent sectors, and will be particularly concerned to use the provisions of PPG3 - Housing (replaced by the NPPF), which allows the Council to seek the building of affordable housing as part of substantial housing developments.

Policy H4 also states that the Council will also encourage the development of sites with characteristics which make them particularly suitable for needs based housing, for example those close to town centres, public transport, day centres, places of employment, and other local community facilities.

7. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed use would seek to provide sensitive and personalised care for a maximum of 5 young people, aged between 16 -25, who would all be in either education or an employment start up programme, who require personal support and training to allow them to live independently, once they leave 114 – 116 Walmersley Road.

In terms of the physical makeup of the properties, 5 of the 6 self-contained flats would be retained, whilst the existing flat that forms the ground floor of 114 Walmersley Road, would be converted into office accommodation for care staff. The staff would also have access to the existing welfare facilities that are available.

Overall, the proposed use would allow the care staff, over a maximum 2 year period, to assess and to provide the young people with necessary skills and guidance, which would include semi-independent 114 – 116 Walmersley Road.

This would include a range of needs to acquire the necessary skills to move successfully to more independent living and to develop the responsibilities associated with adulthood.

The personal and general support programmes would include cooking, budgeting, personal hygiene and finding employment or college opportunities as well as keeping their home safe and secure. As with most types of care in the community, some additional controls would be introduced as part of the management of the site, meaning that alcohol and non-prescription drugs will be strictly prohibited and any misuse will result in the placement being terminated immediately.

A curfew of 23:00 from Sunday to Thursday and midnight on Friday/Saturday would be strictly enforced (supported by CCTV), so as to ensure there are no problems associated with noise or disturbance.

8. STAFFNG AND DAY TO DAY CARE

In terms of day to day care that would be associated with the use, this planning application is made on the basis that the proposed residential use of 114 – 116 Walmersley Road., including the level of comings and goings, would fundamentally remain the same.

In particular, we would highlight the proposed use and day to day operations would mean that;

- There would be 3 members of staff on during the day and 2 at night (sleeping nights), along with a maximum of 5 young people who would occupy the 5 flats at any one time;
- There would also be occasional visits from the health visitor, social worker or through OFSTED inspection, and;
- There are no requirements for specialist catering, medical provisions or social care visitors.

9. DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES

- Car borne journeys would be limited to care staff and occasional visits (see bullet points above) only;
- The sustainable location of the site means that staff can be encouraged to come to work by public transport, to car share or to cycle to work;
- Residents would eat breakfast, lunch and dinner in the house, meaning there are no requirements for any specialist catering;
- Residents would attend school, higher education or work based placements as part of their care;
- Sleeping arrangements would be in the bedrooms as per the proposed floor plans;
- There would be no business activities on site or any commercial activities that would change the character of the dwelling house;
- The use of the garden area would remain incidental to the enjoyment of the property.

10. RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AND AMENITY

114 – 116 Walmersley Road would operate in much the same way as the existing flatted accommodation, and we would highlight that there are no changes to the buildings character, nor would there be any anti-social uses or activities attached or associated with the proposed use.

Whilst there is a material change of use of the flatted accommodation from Use Class C3 to Use Class C2, we do not consider that the residential character of the properties would change, nor would the residential uses that is proposed have any detrimental impact on surrounding residential amenity.

11. CAR PARKING AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

Burys Unitary Development Plan Document requires new development to provide adequate on-site parking and safe and adequate vehicular access to/from the site.

In this particular case, the use of 114 – 116 Walmersley Road for 6 self-contained flats successfully operated

without the need for any off-street car parking, and we consider that it is important to note that the lack of any off-street car parking in this location has not resulted in any adverse impacts on highway or pedestrian safety.

Further to the above, the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework provides the most up to date planning guidance in relation to highway matters. In particular, paragraph 111 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual impacts on the road network would be severe.

In this case, and in terms of traffic movement and car parking, the proposed use of 114 – 116 Walmersley Road would be fundamentally the same as the existing use in terms of numbers of traffic movements use, and we consider that this would not result in an unacceptable level of harm towards highway safety or have a severe impact on the surrounding highway network.

12. PLANNING CONCLUSIONS

Whilst the proposed development involves a material change of use of the flatted accommodation, we consider that the proposed use of 114 – 116 Walmersley Road, so as to provide a maximum of 5 young people with the personal and social skills needed to make them able to independently live on their own, would be fundamentally the same in day to day terms as the use of the properties, and would cause no demonstrable harm towards residential amenity or highway safety.

In terms of the local policy framework (UDP Policy H4) sets out the following priorities for Bury Council to:-

- Meet housing needs in moving from acting as a provider of housing, **towards enabling other organisations to provide needs based housing**, although this situation may change within the period of the Plan;

- Identify that such housing will be required to cater for a wide range of groups, including the elderly, the disabled, **those leaving institutional care**, single parent households, low income groups, the homeless and people who are generally having difficulty entering the housing market as first time buyers;
- **Increase the development of needs based housing** through negotiations and agreements with the private and independent sectors, and will be particularly concerned to use the provisions of PPG3 - Housing (replaced by the NPPF), which allows the Council to seek the building of affordable housing as part of substantial housing developments and;
- Encourage the development of sites with characteristics which make **them particularly suitable for needs based housing, for example those close to town centres, public transport, day centres, places of employment, and other local community facilities.**

Further to the above, whilst we recognise that all planning applications are to be dealt on their own merits, we consider that the proposals for the site are fundamentally the same to those described in allowed appeal decision APP/H4315/W/20/3265183 (48 Knowsley Road, St Helens), which is attached to support the consideration of this planning application.

Overall, and taking all the material planning considerations into account, we consider that the proposals for 114 – 116 Walmersley Road comply with the provisions of UDP Policy H4. Whilst Policy H4 is relatively old, it is still consistent with national planning policy guidance that is set out in section 5 of the 2021 NPPF.

As such, and given the compliance of the proposed development with the aforementioned policy framework, we consider that the proposed development is a sustainable form of development as described in paragraph 8 of the 2021 Framework. Planning permission should therefore be granted for the proposed development