

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0632 Full planning permission

Address: 120 KENDRICK ROAD, READING, RG1 5DP

Proposal: Change of use of the existing property from Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (Residential Children's Care Home) for up to two children.

Applicant: Mr Martin Mupandare

Received date: 12/05/2026

Target Decision date: 22/07/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two storey semi-detached property located on the western side of Kendrick Road. There is hard standing to the front used for parking.



The application site lies outside, but adjacent to, the Kendrick Road Conservation Area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for the change of use of 120 Kendrick Road, Reading, from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a children's residential care home (Use Class C2). The home would provide residential accommodation for up to two children aged between 5 and 17 years who require care.

The property would operate as a residential home where the children live on a full-time basis. Day-to-day activities would include attending school or other educational provision, participating in recreational activities, completing homework, undertaking household tasks and engaging in normal domestic routines.

The home would be managed by a Registered Manager who would be responsible for the operation of the facility, including safeguarding, regulatory compliance and staff management. Care and supervision would be provided on a 24-hour basis by childcare professionals. Staffing levels would be limited to a maximum of two staff members on site at any one time, with care provided through a shift-based system operating seven days a week.

Family contact sessions would not take place at the property and would be arranged separately through the children's social workers. Visitors to the property would mainly comprise professionals involved in the children's care, welfare and regulation, such as social workers, healthcare professionals, therapists, educational professionals and Ofsted inspectors.

The application states that the property would utilise existing parking provision and that vehicle movements would principally be associated with staff shift changes and professional visits. The operation would involve the use of standard domestic refuse and recycling collections, with management

arrangements in place relating to property maintenance, neighbour liaison and the handling of complaints.

The original supporting information submitted with the application contained discrepancies regarding staffing levels, which led to some uncertainty as to the number of staff that would be present at the property. References to up to seven staff members related to the total number of employees associated with the operation of the home rather than the number of staff present on site at any one time. Following discussions, the applicant has submitted additional information confirming that a maximum of two staff members would be present at the property at any one time, with staffing provided on a shift basis to ensure 24-hour care and supervision.

Although the use would be very similar to that of a house within the C3(b) dwelling houses (where up to six residents live together as a single household and receive care), Ofsted rules state that the applicants must apply for and secure a planning permission for it to be able to operate a C2 Childrens' Home use. Hence, the applicant's need to apply for and be granted planning permission for the change of use.

Plans and document reviewed:

Operational Statement received 22 Jul 2026
H-0923 Proposed block plan received 22 Jul 2026
Response to Council comments received 22 Jul 2026
H-0923 Existing block plan received 22 Jul 2026
Cover Letter and Support Statement received 12 May 2026
Location Plan received 12 May 2026
Floor Plans received 12 May 2026
Parking Plan received 12 May 2026

Planning History:

No relevant planning history

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Transport Development Control

No Objection subject to conditions

Environment Protection team

Due to the small scale nature of the proposed use, I have no comments or objections.

Thames DOCO

No objection subject to condition securing security measures.

Public Consultation



A site notice was displayed at the application site and another at the junction between Christchurch Road and Kendrick Road on the 9/7/26 giving neighbours 21 days' notice. Additional information was received and two new site notices were put up on the 31/7/26 giving a further 21 days' notice.

The original site notice displayed was for a different site, this was an administration error which was subsequently rectified, with the site notices replaced and giving 21 days from the date of the new site notice. As a result of this action, interested parties were afforded the full statutory consultation period in respect of the application. Furthermore, when taken as a whole, the overall period for public consultation exceeded the minimum 21-day requirement prescribed by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Officers are therefore satisfied that adequate publicity has been undertaken and that the procedural requirements relating to public consultation have been met.

A total of 39 objections were received, the issues can be summarised as:

The adequacy of the public consultation process, including the display of an incorrect site notice, absence of neighbour notification letters, conflicting consultation dates, and requests for the consultation period to be re-run or extended.

The loss of an existing family dwellinghouse and concerns regarding compliance with Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Concerns that the proposal would erode the stock of family housing and set a precedent for further similar conversions.

The suitability of a three-bedroom semi-detached dwelling for use as a children's residential care home.
Out of character

Concerns regarding the intensity of the use

Concerns that the proposed use would generate increased activity compared with a typical family home, including staff presence, shift changes, professional visits and servicing activity.

Concerns regarding noise

Concerns regarding loss of privacy and impacts on neighbouring residential amenity.

Concerns regarding parking provision, traffic and impact on highway safety

Concerns regarding the adequacy of cycle parking and refuse storage arrangements.

Concerns regarding the lack of sufficient operational information

Concerns regarding the age range, needs and nature of care to be provided for future residents.

Concerns regarding the suitability of the internal accommodation and whether the property can adequately accommodate residents and staff.

Concerns regarding the absence of a detailed management plan for the operation of the home.

Concerns regarding inconsistencies inaccuracies and contradictions within the application documents, including discrepancies relating to staffing levels, parking provision, floor plans, site details and operational information.

Concerns regarding the experience, suitability and location of the proposed operator and the operator's long-term commitment to the property.

Concerns regarding the economic viability and cost-effectiveness of the proposed operation.

Concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on neighbouring property values and marketability.

Requests that the application be determined by the Planning Applications Committee rather than under delegated powers.

Officer Comment:

Officers acknowledge that a number of representations raised concerns regarding inconsistencies within the application documentation, particularly in relation to staffing levels, parking provision and the day-to-day operation of the proposed children's home. During the course of the application, discrepancies were identified within the supporting information submitted by the applicant. In response, additional information and clarification were requested by officers and subsequently provided by the applicant. This included confirmation that a maximum of two members of staff would be present on site at any one time, together with further details regarding the operation of the home, parking arrangements and management of the facility.

Officers also acknowledge concerns regarding the original site notice, which incorrectly referred to a different planning application. Once this error was identified, a replacement site notice was displayed and a further period of public consultation was undertaken. As a result, neighbouring residents were provided with an additional opportunity to comment on the proposal, and the overall consultation period exceeded the statutory requirements set out within the relevant legislation. Accordingly, officers are satisfied that interested parties have had adequate opportunity to review the amended information and make representations on the application.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 policies:
CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
H6 Accommodation for Vulnerable People
H7 Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
TR3
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

SPD: Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

5. APPRAISAL

The main considerations are:

Principle of Development
Impact on neighbour amenity
Highways
Heritage
Community Safety and Security
Other Matters Raised by Representations
Consultation and Decision-Making Process

Principle of Development

The lawful and existing use of the site is as a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3). The proposal seeks a change of use to a children's residential care home (Use Class C2) accommodating up to two children aged between 5 and 17 years requiring care, together with on-site staff supervision. As such, the proposal would result in the loss of an existing family dwelling.

Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan seeks to resist the loss of family-sized dwellings unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. In this case, whilst the proposal would technically result in the loss of a family dwelling, it would provide specialist residential accommodation for vulnerable children with care needs, a form of accommodation that makes an important contribution to meeting identified social and community needs. The supporting information submitted with the application demonstrates that the service operates most effectively within, as far as possible, a usual domestic residential environment, providing a stable and homely setting that closely reflects normal family life and supports the wellbeing and development of the children in care. The scale of the operation, accommodating only two children and a maximum of two staff members on site at any one time, would retain the residential character of the property and ensure that the building continues to function in a manner closely aligned with that of a dwellinghouse.

The proposal would contribute towards the provision of accommodation and care facilities for vulnerable groups, consistent with the objectives of Policy H6, whilst also providing a community service that addresses an identified need. The applicant has provided evidence of the demand for this type of accommodation, and officers are satisfied that there is a demonstrable need for such facilities. In these circumstances, the social benefits arising from the provision of specialist residential care for children are considered to outweigh the loss of a single family dwelling.

Taking these factors into account, officers consider that exceptional circumstances exist to justify the loss of the dwelling in accordance with Policy H7. The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable and the proposal is compliant with Policies H7, H6 and OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, subject to compliance with all other relevant development plan policies and material planning considerations.

Impact on neighbour amenity

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires that “Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook ...”

Additionally, policy EN16 states that “development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution.”

The proposal involves the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to a children's residential care home accommodating a maximum of two children. No external alterations are proposed as part of the development and the property would retain the appearance of a dwellinghouse within the surrounding residential area. As such, the proposal would not give rise to any additional overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overbearing impacts or harm to outlook when compared to the lawful use of the property as a dwellinghouse.

The application property is a semi-detached dwelling and therefore shares a party wall with a neighbouring residential property. Concerns regarding potential noise and disturbance have been carefully considered. However, the proposed use would accommodate a maximum of two resident children and would operate in a domestic environment. The daily activities undertaken by the occupants, including sleeping, eating, studying, socialising and participating in leisure activities, would be residential in nature and comparable to those expected within a family home. Whilst some degree of sound transmission between adjoining properties is inevitable within a pair of semi-detached properties, it is not considered that occupation by two children would result in a materially more intensive or noisier form of

residential occupation than could reasonably be expected from the use of the property as a Class C3 dwellinghouse.

The proposal would also involve staff attending the site on a shift basis. During the assessment of the application, officers have had regard to the likely activity levels associated with the proposed use. Whilst there would be staff present and occasional visits from professionals involved in the children's care, welfare and education, the overall level of activity associated with a home accommodating two children is not considered likely to exceed that associated with a large family household to a degree that would cause material harm to neighbouring amenity.

The acceptability of the proposal has been assessed on the basis that the home would accommodate no more than two resident children and no more than two members of staff on the site at any one time. To ensure that the use remains of a scale compatible with the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, a planning condition is recommended restricting the number of resident children and staff accordingly.

Taking all of the above into account, officers are satisfied that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and would comply with Policies CC8 and EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Environmental Protection have been consulted and raise no comments or concerns due to the small-scale nature of the proposal which is comparable to a typical family household.

Highways

RBC Highways have been consulted and raise no objections to the proposal.

Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD seek to ensure that development provides an appropriate level of parking, cycle parking and servicing provision and does not result in an adverse impact on highway safety or the operation of the local highway network.

The application site is located within Zone 2 (Primary Core Area) of the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD, an area with good access to public transport and local services.

There are no specific parking standards within the SPD for children's residential care homes. In assessing the proposal, the Highway Authority has applied the standards for nursing homes and similar C2 uses. The application property benefits from three existing off-street parking spaces. Whilst the operator employs a number of staff across its wider rota, the application has been assessed on the basis that no more than two staff members would be present on site at any one time and that the home would accommodate no more than two resident children. Given the limited scale of the operation and the availability of three off-street parking spaces, it is considered that sufficient parking provision exists to serve the proposed use.

Kendrick Road and the surrounding roads are subject to parking controls, including double yellow lines and controlled parking bays. Family visits would not take place at the property and visitor numbers are anticipated to be low. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable pressure on on-street parking provision or prejudice highway safety.

The site benefits from an existing vehicular access and parking area, both of which are lawful and capable of serving the proposed use. No alterations are proposed and there is no evidence to suggest that the existing arrangements are inadequate. As such, conditions requiring vehicle parking or access provision are not considered necessary.

The submitted plans indicate cycle parking provision in the form of two Sheffield stands. Whilst the Highway Authority has requested details of covered cycle storage by condition, insufficient information has been provided at this stage regarding the form and design of any cover. Given the limited scale of the use, together with the existing provision of cycle parking being the existing shed, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to impose a condition requiring further details however a condition will be included securing the provision.

Refuse and recycling storage is shown adjacent to the site access. The proposal would continue to operate from an existing 'house' and the collection requirements would remain comparable to those associated with a typical residential property. It is therefore not considered necessary to impose a condition in relation to refuse and recycling provision.

Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposal would provide adequate parking and servicing arrangements and would not result in any additional impact on the operation or safety of the highway network. The proposal therefore complies with Policies TR3, TR5 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD.

The Highway Authority has also recommended conditions relating to parking permit eligibility and notification of future occupiers. However, these matters do not fairly and reasonably relate to the development and are not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. As such, they do not meet the tests for planning conditions and are not recommended.

Security

Thames Valley Police were consulted on the application and advised that insufficient information has been provided regarding the existing or proposed security arrangements for the children's residential care home. The Police have suggested that details of security measures, including those required by Ofsted, access controls and CCTV provision, should be secured through a planning condition. They have also highlighted the potential safeguarding benefits of monitored access and egress systems and CCTV coverage of entrance points.

The comments from Thames Valley Police are acknowledged. However, any planning condition must satisfy the six tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, namely that it is necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Given the small-scale nature of the proposal, which involves the occupation of an existing dwellinghouse by a maximum of two children with no external alterations proposed, it is not considered that a condition requiring the submission and approval of a comprehensive security scheme would meet these statutory tests, particularly in relation to necessity and reasonableness.

Furthermore, many of the matters raised by Thames Valley Police relate to the operational management of the children's home, safeguarding procedures and compliance with statutory care standards. These matters are principally regulated through separate legislation and oversight regimes, including the registration and inspection requirements of Ofsted and associated children's social care regulations. Such matters fall outside the scope of the planning system and cannot reasonably be controlled through planning conditions where they do not relate directly to the use and development of land.

In addition, there is no evidence before the Local Planning Authority that the proposed use would give rise to crime, disorder or community safety concerns that would justify the imposition of additional planning controls. The proposed use would remain residential in character and operate on a modest scale. As such, whilst the observations of Thames Valley Police are noted, it is considered that the issues raised are more appropriately addressed through the operational requirements of the care

provider and the relevant regulatory frameworks rather than through the planning process. No objection is therefore raised on community safety grounds.

Other Matters Raised by Representations

A number of objectors have raised concerns regarding the experience and suitability of the proposed operator, the financial viability of the business model, the location of the operator's registered office outside Reading, and the tenure arrangements relating to the property. Concerns have also been raised regarding the nature of the care to be provided, the age and background of future residents, safeguarding arrangements, continuity of care, Ofsted requirements, operational management procedures and the future operation of the home.

Whilst these matters are acknowledged, they are not material planning considerations or are subject to separate legislative and regulatory regimes. The care, welfare and safeguarding of children residing within the home would be regulated through the statutory registration and inspection framework administered by Ofsted and relevant children's social care legislation. Similarly, the suitability, experience and business arrangements of the operator are not matters that can be given weight in determining a planning application.

Concerns have also been raised regarding potential impacts on property values and the saleability of neighbouring properties. These are not material planning considerations and therefore cannot be taken into account in the determination of the application.

Some representations question whether the proposal represents value for money to the public purse and whether alternative forms of accommodation or care provision would be more appropriate. The planning system is not responsible for assessing the procurement, funding or cost-effectiveness of social care services, and these matters carry no weight in the planning balance.

A number of representations express concern regarding potential crime, anti-social behaviour, residents absconding from the property, disputes involving visitors, or other speculative impacts. No substantive evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed use would give rise to such issues. In any event, concerns relating to the personal characteristics of future occupants cannot be afforded weight in planning decisions. The application must be assessed on the merits of the change of use proposed rather than assumptions regarding the behaviour of future residents.

Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the proposal on the adjacent Kendrick Road Conservation Area. However, the site lies outside the Conservation Area and the proposal involves only a change of use with no external alterations to the building. The dwelling would retain its existing appearance and there would be no impact on the character, appearance or setting of the Conservation Area. The proposal therefore complies with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy EN5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Concerns have been raised regarding the accuracy of information submitted with the application, including references to parking provision, staffing levels and floor plans. Officers acknowledge that some discrepancies were identified during the course of the application. Additional information and clarification was subsequently sought from the applicant, and the application has been assessed on the basis of the amended and updated information now before the Local Planning Authority. Taking this into account, officers are satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to enable a determination of the application.

Consultation and Decision-Making Process

A number of representations raise concerns regarding the public consultation undertaken on this application and the proposed decision-making process. Officers acknowledge that the original site notice displayed in connection with the application incorrectly referred to a different planning application. Once this error was identified, it was rectified through the display of a replacement site notice and a further period of public consultation was undertaken. As a result, interested parties were afforded the full statutory (21 day) consultation period, and the overall consultation period exceeded the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority is therefore satisfied that the application has been publicised in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements and that interested parties have been provided with a reasonable opportunity to make representations.

A number of objectors have also expressed concerns that notification letters were not issued. There is no statutory requirement for both site notices and neighbour notification letters to be undertaken. The Council is required to comply with the publicity requirements set out in the Development Management Procedure Order, within Reading Borough, site notices only are displayed and officers are satisfied that those requirements have been met in this instance. Furthermore, given the additional consultation undertaken following the replacement site notice, residents were provided with a further opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the application being determined under delegated powers rather than by the Planning Applications Committee. The application is not categorised as Major development and there is no automatic requirement for it to be considered by Committee. The Council's Constitution sets out the circumstances in which applications are referred to Committee. Ward Members were afforded the opportunity to request that the application be called in for Committee determination in accordance with the Council's procedures, but no such request was made. The decision-making route is therefore a matter governed by the Council's adopted constitutional arrangements and is not a material planning consideration in the assessment of the proposal.

Finally, suggestions that determination under delegated powers represents a less democratic process are not accepted. Delegated decision-making forms an established and lawful part of the planning system and enables the Council to determine planning applications in accordance with adopted policy, material planning considerations and statutory requirements. Whether determined by officers under delegated authority or by Planning Applications Committee, all planning decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority and must be based upon the same planning policies and material considerations. Accordingly, no weight is attached to objections relating solely to the decision-making process.

6. CONCLUSION

The development is considered acceptable with no harmful impacts on residential amenities. The development has been assessed against the policies within the Reading Borough Local Plan the policies of the NPPF, guidance in the PPG, and other material considerations including third party representations. It has been concluded that the development would not result in any harm that would justify refusal in the public interest. The decision has been taken in compliance with the requirement of the NPPF to foster the delivery of sustainable development in a positive and proactive manner.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Granted subject to conditions