

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared on behalf of: Zeeshan Deen

Site address: 12 St Ronans Road, Reading, RG30 2QE

Application type: Full Planning Permission

Prepared by: Inhaus Planning, Suite Ra01, 195-197 Wood Street, London, E17 3NU

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Inhaus Planning on behalf of Zeeshan Deen in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for the change of use of the dwelling at 12 St Ronans Road, Reading, RG30 2QE from Use Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to Use Class C2 (residential institution), to facilitate its operation as a small residential children's home for up to 2 looked-after children.

The proposed home will provide high-quality, stable, therapeutic residential care for up to 2 children aged 7 to 18 presenting with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) and Learning Disabilities (LD). The home will be operated in a manner that is wholly domestic in character, visually indistinguishable from surrounding residential properties, and managed in accordance with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, the Children Act 1989, and the statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department for Education, 2026).

This statement sets out the planning context for the proposal, demonstrates compliance with national and local planning policy, and establishes that the proposed development represents a sustainable, socially beneficial use of the site that will make a meaningful contribution to addressing the acute national shortage of suitable residential placements for looked-after children.

2.0 Site and Context

The application site is situated at 12 St Ronans Road, Reading, RG30 2QE. The property is located within an established residential neighbourhood in the RG30 postcode area of Reading, characterised by a mix of semi-detached and terraced dwellings set within a mature suburban context. The immediate streetscene is residential in character, with properties of similar scale, massing and appearance forming a coherent and well-established neighbourhood.

The site benefits from good access to local public transport. Reading benefits from an extensive bus network serving the RG30 area, and Reading railway station provides direct services to London Paddington, Oxford, Bristol and beyond. The locality is well served by local amenities including shops, schools, health facilities and open space, all within walking distance of the application site.

No external alterations are proposed. The dwelling will retain its existing appearance in its entirety, with no changes to fenestration, roof profile, external materials or boundary treatments. The proposed change of use will therefore be imperceptible to neighbours and passers-by.

3.0 Proposed Use and Operational Details

The proposal seeks permission to operate the property as a small residential children's home for up to 2 looked-after children aged 7 to 18. Residents will present with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) and Learning Disabilities (LD). The home will be registered with Ofsted under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 prior to

receiving any young person, and will operate in full compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes.

The staffing structure will comprise a Registered Manager, Deputy Manager and Residential Support Workers. A minimum staffing ratio of 2:1 will be maintained during daytime hours, reducing to 1:1 overnight, with the sleep-in room on the first floor providing the sleep-in facility required by the Regulations. Staff will work extended shift patterns, significantly reducing the volume of staff arrivals and departures relative to a shift-based workplace. At any given time, typically two members of staff will be present in the home.

The home will accommodate one off-street parking space and three cycle storage spaces. The operational profile of the home is closely analogous to that of a large family household. Vehicle movements generated by the use will be modest and will not exceed those that would reasonably be expected to arise from a family of comparable size occupying the dwelling in its C3 use.

Residents will live in the home as their primary residence and will attend education placements arranged by the placing local authority. The home will operate continuously, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, in accordance with regulatory requirements.

4.0 Care Provision and Safeguarding

The applicant is an experienced children's social care operator with a commitment to delivering outstanding outcomes for the most vulnerable children in England. The proposed home has been specifically designed to provide a stable, nurturing and therapeutically informed environment for children with complex needs arising from Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) and Learning Disabilities (LD).

All care practices within the home will be governed by the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, the Quality Standards for Children's Homes, the Children Act 1989, and the statutory guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026). The Registered Manager will hold a minimum Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare, and all staff will receive comprehensive training in safeguarding, behaviour support, trauma-informed care and first aid.

The small scale of the home - accommodating just 2 children - is a deliberate and therapeutically informed choice. Research consistently demonstrates that smaller homes achieve better outcomes for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs, allowing for greater individualisation of care, stronger therapeutic relationships with key workers, and more effective integration into the local community.

5.0 Parking and Traffic Considerations

The application site benefits from one off-street parking space. The proposed use will generate vehicle movements consistent with those of a standard family dwelling. Staff working extended shifts will arrive and depart at predictable intervals, typically twice per 24-hour period per shift change, rather than generating the frequent movements associated with a conventional workplace.

Residents are children and young people who will not drive, and will travel predominantly by foot, bicycle or public transport in the company of staff. Professional visitors, including social workers and health professionals, will attend the home on a pre-arranged basis and at low frequency. The overall traffic generation of the use will not be materially greater than that of the existing C3 residential use and will not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on highway safety or local traffic conditions.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (December 2024) is clear that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. No such impacts arise from this proposal.

6.0 National Planning Policy Framework

The proposed development accords with the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework in a number of important respects, as set out below.

Paragraph 62 of the NPPF requires that local housing need assessments are used to inform strategic policies on the supply of homes. Paragraph 63 of the NPPF explicitly requires that planning policies address the needs of particular groups in the community, specifically including looked-after children. The footnote to paragraph 63 directs decision-makers to the relevant local authority's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy as evidence of this need. The proposed development directly addresses the identified sufficiency gap for looked-after children in England.

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lives. The provision of a stable, secure and therapeutic residential home for vulnerable children directly furthers this objective by providing the settled, community-based environment that promotes long-term wellbeing and positive outcomes.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF supports the effective use of land, encouraging area-based approaches that promote sustainable, well-designed development. The proposed use makes efficient and appropriate use of an existing residential property within an established neighbourhood, without any physical alteration to the building or its setting.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are sympathetic to local character, and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. The proposed home, operating quietly and domestically within a residential setting, fully meets these criteria.

The May 2023 Written Ministerial Statement (HCWS795) set out the Government's clear commitment to supporting the development of accommodation for looked-after children through the planning system. The Statement is explicit that the planning system should not act as a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society, and that decision-makers should give significant weight to the acute national shortage of suitable residential placements. This Statement remains a material consideration of considerable weight in the determination of this application.

7.0 Local Policy Context

The development plan for Reading Borough Council comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019 (the Local Plan), which sets out policies for the development and use of land in Reading up to 2036. A Local Plan Partial Update was submitted for examination in May 2025 and is a material consideration, albeit carrying limited weight at this stage pending the Inspector's report.

Policy CC1 of the Local Plan enshrines the presumption in favour of sustainable development, consistent with national policy. The Council has committed to working proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.

Policy H6 of the Local Plan relates to accommodation for vulnerable people within the C2 use class. The policy supports provision of residential care accommodation where it is appropriately located within residential areas with access to local services and public transport. The application site is situated within an established residential area in West Reading with good access to public transport and local amenities, and fully satisfies the locational criteria of Policy H6.

Policy CC7 requires development to be of high design quality and to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area. No external alterations are proposed as part of this application. The character of the streetscene and the established residential appearance of the property will be entirely preserved.

Policy CC8 requires that development does not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties. As set out in the accompanying Noise and Anti-Social Behaviour Mitigation Plan, Good Neighbour Plan and Care Management Plan, the proposed home will operate quietly and in a manner wholly consistent with the residential character of the area. No unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties are anticipated.

Policy TR5 of the Local Plan addresses car and cycle parking provision. The parking and cycle storage provision at the application site is appropriate for a two-resident children's home operating on a domestic scale, and is consistent with the low vehicular demand generated by the use.

8.0 Conclusion

This application seeks Full Planning Permission for the change of use of 12 St Ronans Road, Reading, RG30 2QE from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential children's home (Use Class C2), providing care and accommodation for up to 2 looked-after children aged 7 to 18 with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) and Learning Disabilities (LD). The home will operate under the oversight of Ofsted and in close liaison with Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council.

The proposal accords with national planning policy as set out in the NPPF (December 2024), in particular paragraphs 62, 63, 96, 115, 130 and 135, and with the Written Ministerial Statement of May 2023 (HCWS795). The development is compliant with the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, in particular Policies CC1, CC7, CC8, H6, TR3 and TR5.

The proposed development will provide a vital, community-integrated residential placement for some of England's most vulnerable children, contributing directly to the resolution of the acute national sufficiency gap. There is no material harm to the character, amenity or safety of the neighbourhood. Planning permission is respectfully sought and Inhaus Planning invites the Local Planning Authority to determine this application favourably and without delay.