



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2025

by N Bromley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 October 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/D4635/W/25/3369885

145 Merridale Road, Wolverhampton WV3 9RL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ashlee Homes Supported Living Ltd against the decision of City of Wolverhampton Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00657/FUL.
 - The development proposed is use of the property as a children's home.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for use of the property as a children's home at 145 Merridale Road, Wolverhampton WV3 9RL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00657/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers: A025/067/P/01 and A025/067/P/02 Revision D.
 - 3) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification) the premises shall only be used as a residential care home for up to three children, along with the appropriate care support staff, and for no other purpose (including any other use falling within Class C2 of the Order) but may revert back to C3 (dwellinghouse) on cessation of the use.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Ashlee Supported Living Ltd against the decision of City of Wolverhampton Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposed development on the provision of family housing in the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a large, detached dormer bungalow located within the urban area. The house is set within a large plot and occupies a prominent position

on a busy road junction. The property has a large rear garden and an ample amount of parking to the front, set behind a tall fence and gates. The surrounding area is residential, characterised by a mix of house types and tenures.

5. Policy HOU1 of the Black Country Core Strategy, 2011 (BCCS), seeks the delivery of sustainable housing growth. An objective of the policy is the creation of a network of cohesive, healthy and prosperous communities.
6. Paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of housing land can come forward where it is needed, and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that the overall aim of boosting the supply of homes is to meet an area's identified housing need, including an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
7. The Framework, at paragraph 63, also requires the housing needs for different groups in the community to be assessed and reflected in planning policies. This includes the needs of looked after children. Evidence of need of this group should be assessed with reference to the relevant local authority's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy.
8. With four bedrooms, the appeal property is of a type and size that could accommodate a family. However, my attention has not been drawn to any policies within the Development Plan which seek to prevent the loss of family houses. Likewise, although the Council highlight that there is currently a significant demand for new houses in Wolverhampton and a significant undersupply of land for new housing, there is limited evidence to suggest that there is a lack of family housing in the area. I am also mindful that a children's home would be retained as residential accommodation, albeit specifically for the care of children. Therefore, the proposal would maintain housing in the area, contributing to the effective mix and types of homes locally.
9. Furthermore, even though the Council suggest that they do not currently have a need for anymore private children's homes, a copy of the Council's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy has not been provided. In addition, although the Council identify that there are over 30 private homes already in the city and that most of these have children from other local authorities, no supporting information has been provided to corroborate the claim. Indeed, the appellant's evidence indicates otherwise.
10. For the above reasons, and on the evidence before me, I am not persuaded that the proposal would result in the unacceptable loss of family housing. Instead, it would contribute to providing residential accommodation for looked after children and add to the mix of housing types in the local community.
11. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable effect on the provision of family housing in the area. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with Policy HOU1 of the BCCS, and it would support the housing objectives of the Framework.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have also, in the interests of certainty, attached a condition specifying the approved plans.

13. Given that use Class C2 includes a range of other uses, and the appellant has confirmed that the appeal proposal seeks permission for a specific C2 use that will provide care for three children, a condition to restrict the use to that which is being applied for is necessary to adequately control the use of the site and to protect the amenity of the area, given other uses within use Class C2 could potentially give rise to other planning harms.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

N Bromley

INSPECTOR