

Change of use from Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to a mixed use of Class C3 (dwellinghouse) and Class C2 (children's residential home) at 26 Pluto Road, Eastleigh, SO50 5GD

Written by Emma MacWilliam MSc MRTPI – July 2025

1. Introduction

This statement supports a planning application for the change of use from Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to a mixed use of C3 (dwellinghouse) and Class C2 (children's residential home) for up to two children aged 7-18 years at 26 Pluto Road, Eastleigh. It demonstrates that the development aligns with adopted Local Plan policies and the NPPF.

2. Site Context

The site is located on the west side of Pluto Road, and is occupied by a detached two storey four bedroom end of terrace house with a rear conservatory. Access is from Pluto Road, with parking to the frontage and the property has a garden situated to the rear. The surrounding area has a medium density of residential development. Properties on the surrounding streets are similar in terms of age, footprint, scale and massing, architectural style and materials.



Application property from Pluto Road



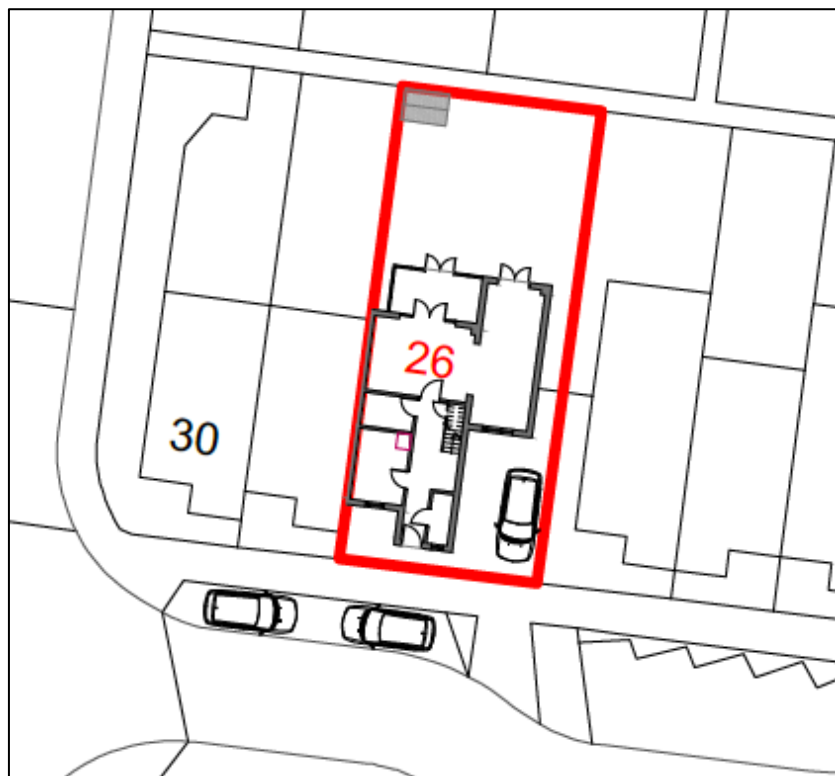
Rear of property and rear garden

3. Current Proposals

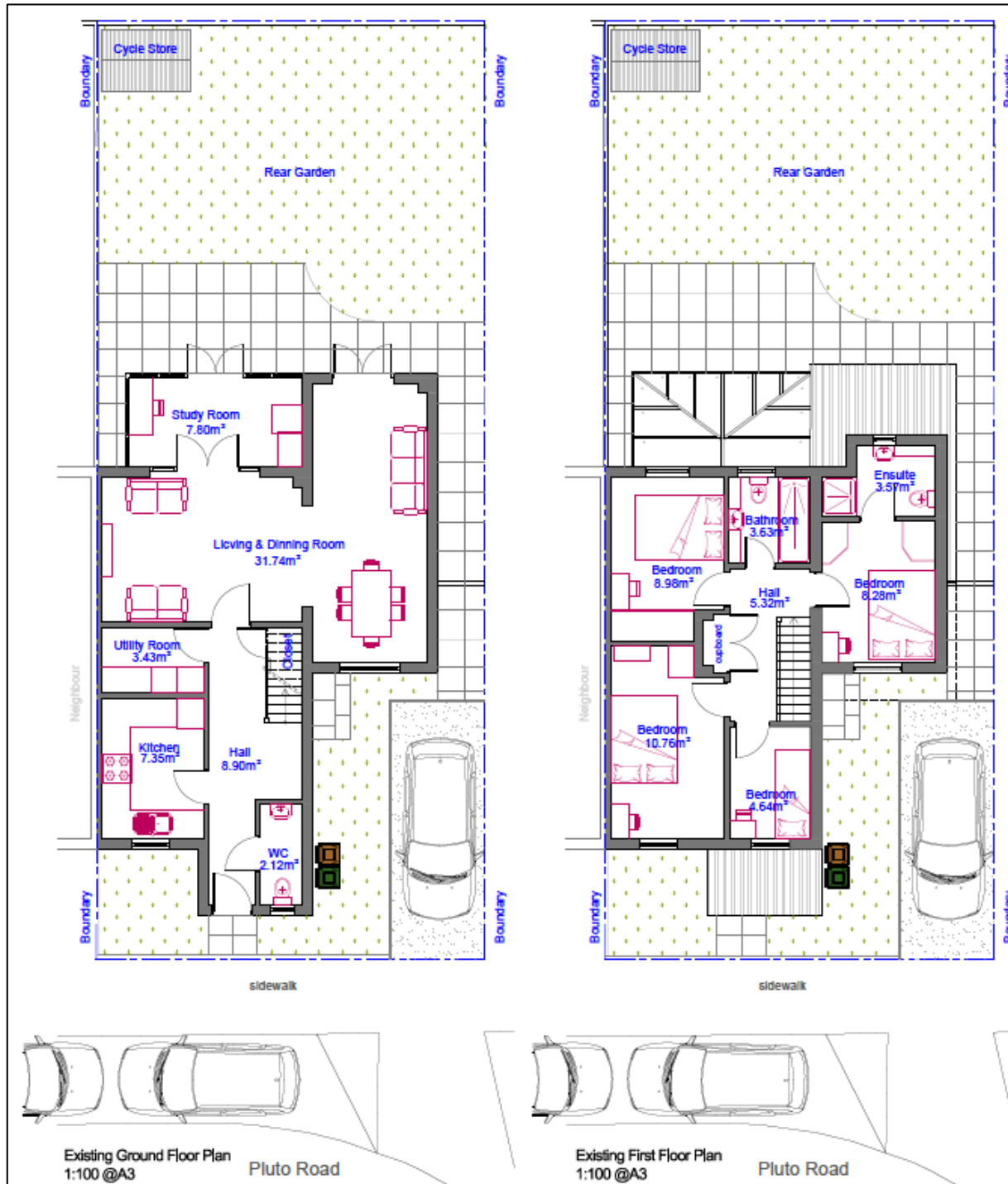
This application seeks to convert the property from a Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to a mixed use of C3 (dwellinghouse) and Class C2 (children's residential home) for children aged between 7-18 years. No internal or external alterations are proposed to the building and there are no amendments to the garden or parking / access as part of this application.

The home would be occupied by up to two children and a maximum of two carers at any one time. The children would be living at the property permanently, and carer/s would be present on two day blocks. The occupants would live at the property like a family unit in a single household, with the carers cooking meals and looking after the children in all other respects to provide them with a settled and stable home life. The children and carers would have a bedroom each, and would share the main bathroom, kitchen, living / dining room and garden.

The property may be visited infrequently by other professionals on an appointment basis, but there would not be frequent visitors over and above the two children and two staff.



Site Plan



Floor Plans

4. Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The starting point for any planning application in England should be consideration of its acceptability in terms of the NPPF. The current NPPF clearly states that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).

There is no single definition of 'sustainable development', however in planning terms paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three overriding objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places; and

c) an environmental objective to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 60 says that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

Paragraph 63 makes it clear that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different community groups should be reflected in planning policies.

To promote development of a good mix of sites LPA's should support the development of small and medium sized windfall sites through policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes (Paragraph 70).

Paragraph 128 advises that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing, and the availability of land for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services as well potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.*

Paragraph 131 highlights the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to the planning and development process. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 135 confirms that development should: a) function well and add to the overall quality of the area; b) be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping; c) be sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. Part d) identifies the need to establish or maintain a strong sense of place, creating attractive, welcoming and distinctive places.

Part e) identifies the need to optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks.

Part f) states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Paragraph 139 states that significant weight should be given to development which promote high levels of sustainability or helps raise the standard of design generally in an area, provided they fit in with the form and layout of the surroundings.

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2022)

Policy DM1 - All development should not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenities of both new and existing residents and the character and appearance of urban areas. Development should make efficient use of the site, taking full and proper account of and being compatible with the context including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood. Part h states that development should create accessible communities that cater for all.

Policy DM13 – requires all development to have safe and convenient access to the highway network, not to cause or increase danger to road users or have a significant detrimental impact on the operation or safety of the highway network.

Policy DM14 - New development will be required to provide off-highway parking which is adequate in terms of highway safety/traffic management. Provision will take account of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Council's Residential Parking Standards SPD minimum standards.

Policy DM24 relates to creating a mix of housing. It says that development should contribute to the overall mix of housing in the Housing Market Area, considering the context and character of the site.

5. Planning Case

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and Policy CS1 of the Local Plan place a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is also of relevance that Strategic Policy 2 of the Local Plan is to ensure that people have access to a range of housing types and tenures that meet their needs.

The site lies in the built-up area and within easy access to schools and other facilities. The property would be owned and managed by Highland Care Solutions, an experienced care provider who operate other similar C2 children's homes.

Although the use of the property would appear to be similar to that of a single family house as exists, the children's home use falls within Use Class C2 in planning terms by reason of the fact that the resident children and adults would not be related, and the children are in need of care by virtue of their ages. This care would be provided by trained support workers.

The children's home would provide safe and comfortable non-institutional environment for the children to work towards achieving their full potential in life. The objective is to provide individualised support to each child using a therapeutic approach to care. The children are supervised 24/7 by appropriately trained staff, and they live together as a family would in an environment which is based on ordinary life principles. The property would provide safe and comfortable living conditions for the staff and children, has plenty of outside space and is situated in residential area with good access to links to the local transport and community.

The proposed use of this property as a children's home would deliver a form of housing that meets a specific housing need for children and their carers that require accommodation within an urban location close by to shops, services and leisure facilities, providing that the housing needs of those individuals in the area are being met. The applicant wishes to apply for a mixed use so that the property could be used as a family dwellinghouse again at any point in the future without the need to apply for planning permission to change it back to this use, and as such a family home would not be fully lost as a result of the proposals.

The development would complement the mix of residential tenure within the surrounding area. There would be no obvious visual evidence that the use of the property has changed from C3 to C2, so it would continue to contribute to the residential character and local distinctiveness of the street and surrounding area as it does now.

The proposal would therefore contribute to the wide range of homes and mix of tenure on offer to the local community, catering to the needs of a vulnerable group of the community and supporting the objectives of the Local Plan and requirements of Policies DM1 and DM4 and Paragraphs 8, 60, 70 and 128 of the NPPF. The principle of the proposed change of use in this location is therefore acceptable.

Character and Appearance

As no internal or external alterations are proposed for the property in order to facilitate the change of use then there would be no impact upon the visual amenity of the street scene nor the character and appearance of the area in these respects. The building would not appear outwardly any different to the four bedroom family home than it currently is. As such there would be no conflict with Local Plan Policy DM1 or Paragraphs 128, 131, 135 or 139 of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

An assessment as to the impact upon neighbouring amenities is required under Local Plan Policy DM1 and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

The proposed change of use from a C3 dwelling house to a c2 children's home would respect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and those of the occupants of the property itself. Habitable rooms such as bedrooms, living and dining areas benefit from large areas of glazing to provide outlook, natural light and assist with warming of the house. The internal arrangement of the property is a functional and pleasant space for day to day living and to meet the needs of the occupants.

The fact that no internal or external alterations are proposed to the dwelling means that the amenities of neighbouring properties will be preserved, in terms of outlook, privacy and light. The proposed use of the property would not give rise to any additional noise or disturbance than would already occur as its current use as a four bedroom family home, which could be occupied by up to three children and parents as a family unit.

In consideration of the points above, the proposal would accord with Paragraph 135 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy DM1 by way of preserving residential amenity.

Parking and Access

The existing access onto Pluto Road would remain unaltered. As such there would be no adverse impact upon highway safety. Nor would there be a material increase in trip generation or traffic than the existing use of the property as a four bedroom family home.

The house would have a car to be used during the week to take the children to school, clubs, appointments etc as well as take them out on day trips on the weekends. Staff would be encouraged to use public transport / walk /cycle as schools and other clubs / facilities would all be local. Adequate car parking to the property frontage would be retained to meet the needs of the proposed use of the property with one to two staff / carers being present on site at any one time. There is also unrestricted on street parking along Pluto Road.

In these respects, the development aligns with local Plan Policies DM13 and DM14 and the Parking Standards SPD.

Ecology and Biodiversity

It is not considered that there will be any adverse impact upon any ecological features or any protected species or habitats as a result of the proposed change of use. There would be no conflict with the requirements of Paragraphs 180, 185 and 186 of the NPPF or Local Plan Policies G3 and DM11 in this respect.

Energy and Resources

Local Plan Policies DM2, DM3 and DM3 discuss environmentally sustainable development, adaption to climate change and zero or low carbon energy. As the proposed change of use would not require any alterations or extensions to the property then no additional design, construction methods or materials in relation to sustainable development, adaption to climate change and zero or low carbon energy are required. The orientation, siting and design of the habitable room windows already enable natural light throughout the day and evening to reduce reliance on artificial heating and lighting sources. In these respects the development aligns with the requirements of Policies DM2, DM3 and DM3 and NPPF Paragraphs 159 and 162.

Flooding and Drainage

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, and as such is not at risk from flooding. As the proposed change of use would not require additional building footprint or hardstanding than already exists there will not be any increase in surface water run-off over and above that which currently exists. As such no measures to manage surface water run-off from the site are required in connection to the proposed development. There would be no conflict with the requirements of Paragraphs 159 or 173 of the NPPF or Local Plan Policies DM5 or DM6 in this respect.

6. Conclusion

The proposed use of this property as a mixed use of C3 dwellinghouse and Class C2 children's residential home for up to two children aged 7-18 years would deliver a form of housing that meets a specific housing need for children and their carers / staff that require accommodation within an urban location close by to shops, services and leisure facilities, ensuring that the housing needs of those individuals in the area are being met. Furthermore, the development would complement the mix of residential tenure within the surrounding area.

The proposal would therefore contribute to the wide range of homes and mix of tenure on offer to the local community, catering to the needs of a vulnerable group of society and supporting the objectives of the Local Plan and the NPPF. The principle of the proposed change of use in this location is therefore acceptable.

There would be no obvious visual evidence that the use of the property has changed from C3 to C2, so it would continue to contribute to the residential character and local distinctiveness of the street and surrounding area as it does now.

Residential amenity would be preserved. There would be no increased surface water run off as a result of the development. Parking and access provision is satisfactory.

The proposals therefore comply with the relevant policies of the NPPF and Local Plan. As such it is anticipated that planning permission will be granted.