

<b>DMC2024 -10</b>	<b>Application for planning permission</b>
<b>Application No:</b>	<b>23NP0107</b>
<b>Proposed Development</b>	<b>Change of Use of Residential Dwelling (Use Class C3) to Children's Home (Use Class C2) at Burnhead, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 9PJ</b>
<b>Applicant Name</b>	<b>A Wilderness Way Ltd</b>
<b>Reason for DMC Decision</b>	<b>Deferred from January 2024 DMC</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Grant conditional planning permission</b>

### **Addendum to Committee report**

#### **Introduction**

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the committee report prepared for the January 2024 Development Management Committee and the meeting's minutes which summarises the members' discussion about the proposal, as well as summarises the public speaking heard at the January meeting.
- 1.2 The application was deferred at the January DMC meeting for the receipt of further information relating to the local need for the development and proposed security arrangements at the site.
- 1.3 Full details of the additional information submitted can be found under the document tab, with the documents titled *Additional Information 2024 ...* and include a covering letter, a Wilderness Way supporting evidence document and a Wilderness Way Statement of Purpose (Kielder). Generic risk assessments and a site specific risk assessment for Cawfields have also been provided and can be viewed in full online : <https://nnpa.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/23NP0107>

#### **Local need for the development**

- 2.1 Further information has been submitted to highlight that Burnhead was chosen as a suitable property because it meets the established requirements of A Wilderness Way (AWW). Notably rural locations with established trade links within a commutable distance, low crime activity, availability of detached properties not within housing estates, accessible venues for outdoor and adventure activities and areas not served by significant public transport links for additional safeguarding.
- 2.2 Information submitted by the agent states that there have been 929 referrals to the applicant to care for children from 11 neighbouring councils (including Northumberland) over the past 12 months. The information submitted confirms the applicant has received positive feedback from all direct neighbours of Northumberland and Durham County Councils. The benefits of the service AWW provides was recognised, and Local Authority sufficiency statements identified a lack of and a requirement for specialist solo occupancy services such as those provided by AWW.

- 2.3 It should be noted that section 22G of the Children Act 1989, states that Councils have a duty to take steps to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for looked after children within their Local Authority Area. This is reflected within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) and Written Ministerial Statement (May 2023), where Local Authorities should give due weight to, and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs.

**Safety concerns/proposed security arrangements**

- 3.1 The applicant confirms that Ofsted monitors the quality of life and care being offered to the children on placement, and ensures the service is run in accordance with the relevant regulations. The applicant is registered by Ofsted under a model referred to as Multi-Build Registration (MBR) which enables the registration of up to four homes to accommodate up to a maximum of six children. Burnhead would be included within the Statement of Purpose for Kielder following registration. The registration is required under regulation 16 of the Children's Home (England) Regulations 2015 and would be updated annually. The applicant confirms there will only ever be one child at Burnhead at any given time.
- 3.2 As previously discussed, children would be given care at all times by two trained staff. Any child cared for at the home would have their own ongoing risk assessment to meet their specific needs. A risk assessment would highlight any potential risks to themselves, other people or to the wider community. Controls would be put in place to minimise those identified risks. Generic risk assessments and a site specific risk assessment have been submitted by the applicant for information, to illustrate the assessment process for activities by the children being cared for.
- 3.3 No further security arrangements are proposed within the planning application. Should any security changes require planning permission, the applicant would be advised by officers to apply, and any future planning application would be considered on its own merits.

**Summary**

- 4.1 Officers are satisfied that a local need for the scheme has been identified by the applicant that would accord with national and local policy as well as the written ministerial statement.
- 4.2 In relation to the safety of a child affected by the planning application, officers advise that this can be a material planning consideration. As outlined at the January Committee meeting, planning case law confirms the best interests of the child are likely to be consistent with those of their parent or other carer who is involved in the decision-making process; and, unless circumstances indicate to the contrary, the decision maker can assume that that carer will properly represent the child's best interests. Having considered the additional information provided, officers consider the safety arrangements for the child and wider public would be considered by existing regulatory regimes regarding Children's Homes, as well as the applicant's own risk assessments.

**Recommendation:**

- 5.1 Members are recommended to **grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives** outlined from pages 9 to 11 on the January DMC papers.

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