

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared on behalf of: Last Chipendo / Diana Chipendo – DMC Consulting Services Ltd

Site address: 73 Beaumont Drive, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9NN

Application reference: GB/20250016

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 Last Chipendo and Diana Chipendo of DMC Consulting Services Ltd in support of planning application GB/20250016. The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of 73 Beaumont Drive, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9NN from Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (residential institution) for use as a small children's home accommodating a maximum of two children.

The statement sets out the planning policy context, assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies, and demonstrates that permission should be granted. The proposal is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) and the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014). There are no material planning considerations that would justify refusal.

2.0 Site and Surrounding Context

The application site is a semi-detached dwellinghouse situated on Beaumont Drive in the Northfleet area of Gravesend. Northfleet is an established residential neighbourhood forming part of the wider Gravesend urban area in the Borough of Gravesham. The property occupies a standard residential plot with a front driveway, a rear garden, and an area for parking to the rear.

The surrounding area is characterised by two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings typical of mid-twentieth century residential development in North Kent. The street scene is uniform and domestic in character. The site is well connected to local services and amenities, with schools, shops, healthcare facilities and public transport links accessible within the immediate locality.

No external alterations are proposed to the building. The property will remain outwardly indistinguishable from any other dwelling on the street, preserving the established character of the neighbourhood. A dropped kerb has been installed at the front of the property with the approval of Kent County Council's Vehicle Crossing team, providing access to two front driveway parking spaces. A further parking space is available at the rear, giving a total of three spaces.

3.0 Description of the Proposed Use

The proposal is for the use of the property as a registered children's home under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the Children Act 1989. The home will accommodate a maximum of two children between the ages of ten and seventeen, with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Placements will be long-term in nature, providing settled, community-integrated homes for children in the care of a placing local authority.

The home will be staffed twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year, maintaining a ratio of two staff members per child. During the day shift (07:00 to 19:00), a maximum of four staff will be on site; during the night shift (19:00 to 07:00), two staff members will be present. Staff will work extended shifts of twenty-four to forty-eight hours to minimise shift changeovers and maintain the consistency of care that is essential for children with EBD and SEMH needs.

The home will not commence operation until Ofsted registration has been granted in full. The Ofsted registration process provides a comprehensive independent assessment of the home's suitability,

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staffing, policies, and management arrangements, operating as a separate and robust regulatory layer entirely distinct from the planning system.

4.0 National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

The current National Planning Policy Framework was published on 17 August 2026. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and provides the primary national policy framework against which this application falls to be assessed.

4.1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy S3 of the Framework establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development as a cornerstone of the planning system. Policy S4, which applies to development proposals within settlements, provides that such proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. The application site is located within the established urban settlement of Northfleet and Policy S4 accordingly applies. There are no adverse effects of sufficient weight to displace the presumption in favour of approval.

4.2 Specialist Community-Based Accommodation

Policy HO9(b) of the Framework specifically addresses specialist community-based accommodation and sets out that such development proposals should be supported by a management plan or other supporting evidence which shows how the development will provide a safe and secure environment for residents, and should be located where residents will be able to access frequently-used services easily and safely. This application satisfies both requirements: the accompanying Care Management Plan, Operational Management Statement, and Security Statement collectively provide the management evidence required, and the site's location within an established residential neighbourhood offers good access to schools, healthcare, shops, and public transport.

4.3 Meeting Housing Needs

Policy HO7 of the Framework directs that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community. Policy HO1(2)(f) explicitly identifies looked-after children and those requiring specialist community-based accommodation as a group whose needs local planning authorities are required to assess. There is a recognised national shortage of children's residential placements, with over 83,000 children currently in care in England and demand for appropriate residential provision continuing to outstrip supply. This proposal directly addresses that identified need and is entitled to the substantial weight directed by Policy HO7.

4.4 Relationship with Other Regulatory Regimes

Policy DM7 of the Framework is directly relevant to this application. It provides that planning decisions should not seek to duplicate or extend controls imposed by separate regulatory regimes, and that decision-makers should assume, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that those regimes will operate effectively. The Ofsted registration regime for children's homes is comprehensive and robust. Standards of care, staffing, safeguarding, and management are all independently assessed and

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monitored by Ofsted. The planning system should not seek to duplicate those controls. The appropriate test is land use impact, not regulatory compliance, and on that test this proposal is clearly acceptable.

4.5 Ministerial Statement — May 2023

The Written Ministerial Statement of May 2023 (HCWS795) remains a material consideration of significant weight. The Statement explicitly supports the establishment of small, community-integrated children's homes in residential areas, recognising the benefits to looked-after children of living in normalised, domestic settings within their communities rather than in larger institutional settings at a distance from family and community connections. This proposal is precisely the type of provision the Ministerial Statement was designed to support.

5.0 Local Policy Context

The development plan for Gravesham Borough comprises the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014) and the saved policies of the Local Plan First Review (1994). A new Local Plan 2042 is at an advanced stage of preparation but has not yet been submitted for examination and accordingly carries limited weight in the determination of this application.

The Core Strategy does not contain a specific policy relating to children's homes or residential institutions. The proposed use falls to be assessed against the Core Strategy's general policies relating to residential amenity, character, and sustainable development. The proposal does not conflict with any of those policies. No external alterations are proposed; the property will remain entirely domestic in appearance; the operational profile of the home is consistent with that of a family household; and the level of activity and vehicle movements generated will be low and unremarkable.

6.0 Material Considerations

6.1 Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed use will not give rise to any adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The home accommodates a maximum of two children and the staffing, operational model, and management approach are all designed to maintain a quiet, domestic, well-managed household. The extended shift pattern of twenty-four to forty-eight hours substantially reduces the frequency of staff vehicle movements and associated activity. There will be no commercial deliveries, no institutional signage, no external alterations, and no activity of a kind that would disturb the settled, residential character of Beaumont Drive.

6.2 Highways and Parking

The application benefits from three parking spaces: two to the front of the property, served by a newly installed approved dropped kerb, and one to the rear. KCC Highways confirmed in their consultation response of 13 November 2025 that three spaces are acceptable for the proposed staffing levels of up to four staff on site during the day shift. Revised plans showing all three spaces with dimensions will be submitted prior to the committee hearing. An electric vehicle charging point and cycle storage are provided to the rear, consistent with sustainable transport objectives.

6.3 Crime Prevention and Security

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Kent Police's Designing Out Crime Officer provided a CPTED consultation response in January 2025 making four recommendations relating to boundary treatments, CCTV, lighting, and door and window security standards. The applicant confirms a commitment to implement all four recommendations, subject to the grant of planning permission. This is addressed in detail in the accompanying Security Statement. It is submitted that a planning condition securing implementation of the CPTED measures would be appropriate should the committee resolve to grant permission.

7.0 Conclusion

This application for full planning permission for the change of use of 73 Beaumont Drive, Northfleet from Class C3 to Class C2 for use as a small children's home is well-founded in national and local planning policy. The proposal is consistent with Policies S3, S4, HO7, HO9(b), and DM7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) and is supported by the Written Ministerial Statement of May 2023.

The proposed use will have no adverse impact on the character of the area, the amenity of neighbouring residents, or the local highway network. It will contribute directly to meeting an identified and acute national need for children's residential placements and will provide two children with a safe, stable, community-integrated home. Permission is respectfully sought.