

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION OFFICER REPORT

Date of Meeting	15 th October 2026
Application Number	PL/2026/01392
Site Address	Castle Farm Bungalow, Hillworth Road, Devizes, SN10 5HD
Proposal	Change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a children's home (Use Class C2) accommodating up to four children.
Applicant	MR Jithin Babu
Town/Parish Council	Devizes CP
Electoral Division	Devizes South ED
Type of application	Full planning permission
Case Officer	Joe Leesam
Reason for the Application being reported to Planning Committee	Called in by Cllr Hoult in the event the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of Castle Farm Bungalow from a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3 to a children's home within Use Class C2 accommodating up to four children. No external alterations, extensions or other operational development are proposed.

The site lies immediately outside the defined settlement boundary of Devizes but is closely related to the built-up area and has access to the services and facilities available within the town. The proposal would reuse an existing residential building and would not result in isolated or sporadic development in the countryside.

The principal considerations are the effect of the proposed use upon neighbouring amenity, the suitability of the property for the proposed level of occupation, and the implications for highway safety and parking. The proposed use would remain residential in character and would operate within a managed and supervised environment. No unacceptable amenity impacts have been identified. The Council's Highway Officer raises no objection, and sufficient off-street parking is available within the site.

The proposal is considered to accord with the Development Plan when read as a whole. Planning permission is therefore recommended, subject to conditions requiring commencement within three years, compliance with the approved plans, and limiting the use to a children's home accommodating no more than four children, while allowing the property to revert to a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3.

2 PLANNING CONDITIONS

2.1 Conditions

The application is acceptable subject to conditions covering the following matters:

- Commencement within three years;
- Compliance with the approved plans; and
- Restriction of the use to a children's home accommodating no more than four children, while allowing the property to revert to a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3.

3 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY (PSED)

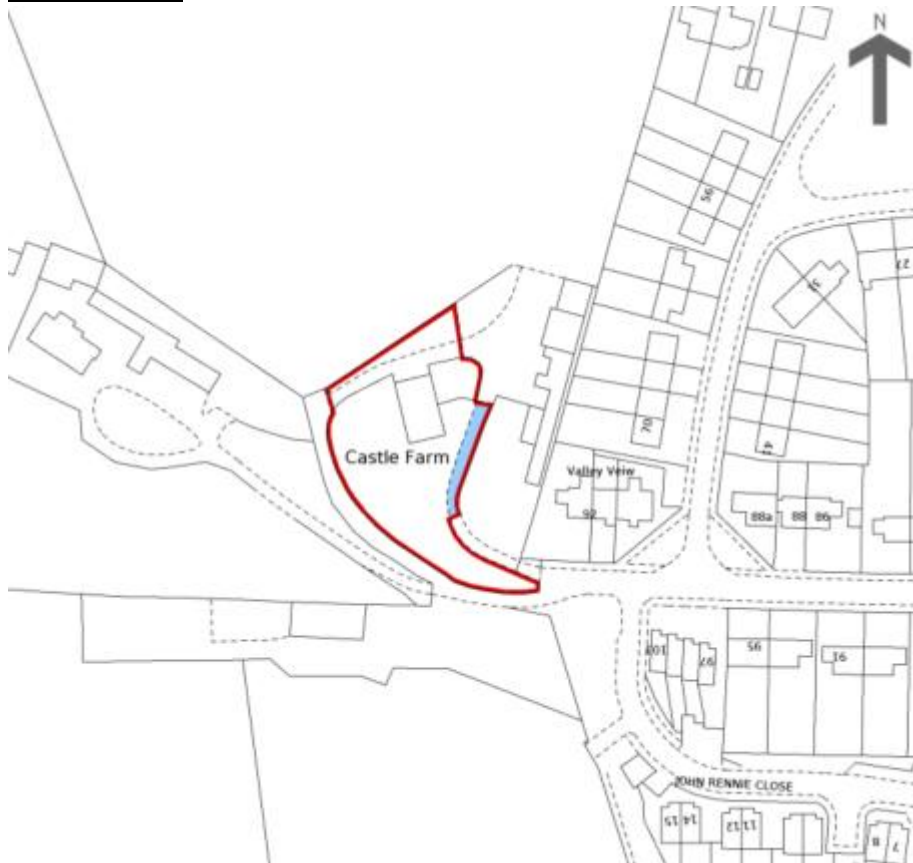
In reaching this decision, due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal would not result in any unlawful discrimination and that any impacts on protected groups have been appropriately considered as part of this assessment.

In particular, regard has been had to age and disability as protected characteristics. The proposal is for a children's home and is not restricted to children with a particular disability or care need. The application has therefore been assessed on the basis of the proposed land use and its planning impacts, rather than the individual characteristics of future residents.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

4.1 Site location



4.2 Site description

The application relates to Castle Farm Bungalow, a detached residential property with accommodation provided within the main building and an attached two-bedroom annexe. The building is finished principally in red brick beneath a clay-tiled roof. The main part of the property contains five bedrooms, with a further two bedrooms within the annexe.

The property occupies a substantial residential curtilage, including a driveway and off-street parking area capable of accommodating at least six vehicles. The site lies immediately outside the defined settlement boundary of Devizes but is closely related to the existing built form of the town.

Open land lies to the north and south of the site. The property shares boundaries with Gilletts Farm and the neighbouring funeral director's premises, including its chapel of rest. Other residential properties are located nearby.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1.

4.3 Site Photographs



5 PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the existing dwellinghouse within Use Class C3 to a children's home within Use Class C2 accommodating up to four children.

No external alterations, extensions or other operational development are proposed. The submitted information indicates that four bedrooms would be used by children, with additional bedrooms within the main building and annexe available for staff undertaking sleep-in shifts.

The existing sitting room, dining room, kitchen, bathrooms and external amenity space would be shared by residents and staff.

The home would operate as a managed, family-style residential environment. Staffing levels would respond to the care needs of the children, with the applicant indicating that between two and three staff would typically support three children. Overnight provision would comprise sleep-in staff or waking-night supervision where required.

5.1 Proposed Floorplans



6 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

K/10976 – Extension. Approved with Conditions 15th September 1987.

K/18762 – Single storey extension to form chapel of rest. Approved with Conditions 8th May 1992.

E/09/0851/CLE - Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness - existing use. Use of land for a funeral director business (including parking/garaging of vehicles, workshop for own vehicles, chapel of rest, offices and stores). Approved 25th August 2009.

E/09/1034/FUL - Attached double garage conservatory and garden store. Approved with conditions 22nd September 2009.

7 RELEVANT PLANNING LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

7.1 National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [NPPF - GOV.UK](#)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- National Design Guide [National design guide - GOV.UK](#)

7.2 Development Plan:

The Development Plan for the purposes of determining this application comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan and other adopted Development Plan documents insofar as their policies are relevant to the proposal.

In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted **Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)**, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 12: Spatial Strategy for the Devizes Community Area
- Core Policy 46: Meeting the Needs of Wiltshire's Vulnerable and Older People
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 61: Transport & Development
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network

Appendix D of WCS

Link to various documents:

[Planning and building control - Wiltshire Council](#)
[Wiltshire Core Strategy - Wiltshire Council](#)
[Saved policies from District Local Plans - Wiltshire Council](#)

7.3 Draft Wiltshire Local Plan

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, on 30th June 2026 Wiltshire Council published a notice of intention to prepare a new local plan for Wiltshire. The next stage is a Scoping Consultation which commences on 2nd September 2026. This plan is at a very early stage and currently carries no weight for decision making.

7.4 Neighbourhood Plan:

- Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan July 2015

Link to Neighbour Plans:

[Neighbourhood planning - Wiltshire Council](#)
[Latest progress - Wiltshire Council](#)

7.5 Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)

7.6 Other Relevant Policies and Documents:

- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015

Link to documents:

[Wiltshire Design Guide - Wiltshire Council](#)
[Wiltshire Local Transport Plan - Wiltshire Council](#)

8 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The views of consultees are material considerations in the determination of the application. However, the decision-maker must exercise their own planning judgement. Where consultees raise concerns or recommend conditions, these have been considered and are addressed within the assessment section of this report.

Devizes Town Council: Object. Concerns raised regarding the suitability of the location, potential amenity impacts and the adequacy of information submitted.

WC Highways: No objection.

The consultee responses have been carefully considered. Whilst significant weight is afforded to specialist technical advice, the decision remains a matter for the Local Planning Authority and the officer assessment below reaches an independent planning judgement on the issues raised.

9 SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

Each material planning issue raised is addressed within the assessment below.

9.1 Letter of Objection

Total letters of objection received: 1

- Concerns regarding the suitability and sustainability of the proposed operator.
- Concerns that children may be placed from outside Wiltshire and that the proposal may not meet an identified local need.
- Concerns regarding the compatibility of the use with the neighbouring funeral directors' chapel of rest.
- Reports of existing noise, disturbance, trespass and anti-social behaviour in the vicinity, with concerns these issues could increase.
- Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in the area.
- Concerns that the location is unsuitable for the proposed use.
- Concerns regarding the size and suitability of the bungalow to accommodate the proposed level of occupation.
- Concerns that insufficient information has been submitted to properly assess the proposal.

9.2 Letter of conditional Support

Total letters of conditional support received: 1

- The respondent raises no objection on the understanding that the property would accommodate severely disabled children requiring 24-hour care.
- Preference that the facility serves children and families from within Wiltshire.
- Concerns that the property may be undersized for the proposed level of occupation.
- Concerns regarding potential noise and anti-social behaviour should the property be occupied by able-bodied children, based on previous experiences at the site.

10 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the NPPF (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

The assessment below considers each of the main issues identified above. Each topic is assessed in turn with reference to the relevant policy context, the evidence submitted, consultee responses, and all other material considerations, before a conclusion is reached.

10.1 Key issues

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle;
- The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
- The effect on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and the living conditions of future residents;
- Highway safety, traffic generation and parking provision;
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain; and
- Other matters raised in representations.

10.2 Principle of Development

10.2.1 Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the settlement strategy for Wiltshire and seeks to direct development to the most sustainable locations. Core Policy 57 requires development to create a high standard of place and respond positively to local character, whilst ensuring that proposals do not result in unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity.

The National Planning Policy Framework supports the creation of healthy, inclusive and safe communities and recognises the need to deliver community facilities and services to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Core Policy 46 supports the provision of specialist accommodation that responds to identified care and support needs. Although the policy principally addresses the accommodation needs of vulnerable and older people, its objective of enabling appropriate specialist accommodation is relevant to the proposed care-related use.

The principal issue in this case is whether the proposed change of use is acceptable in principle, having regard to the character of the area, the site's location and accessibility, and the impact of the proposed use on surrounding land uses.

10.2.2 Planning History

The planning history of the site and adjoining land has been reviewed.

Previous permissions relate principally to extensions and ancillary buildings. The established funeral director's use and chapel of rest are relevant to understanding the mixed-use context of the site and its surroundings. However, none of the previous decisions establishes a policy objection to the proposed change of use or otherwise prevents the proposal from being considered on its individual planning merits.

10.2.3 Assessment

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a children's home (Use Class C2) accommodating up to four children.

The site lies immediately adjacent to, but outside, the defined settlement boundary of Devizes. Notwithstanding this, the property is closely related to the built form of Devizes and benefits from access to the services, facilities and employment opportunities available within the town. The site cannot reasonably be regarded as an isolated countryside location and is therefore considered to occupy a sustainable location for the proposed use.

The proposal relates solely to the change of use of an existing building, and no external alterations, extensions or other operational development are proposed. The proposal would not result in the loss of a community facility, employment use, designated heritage asset, public open space or any other protected land use.

The proposed use would provide residential care accommodation for up to four children. Such accommodation performs an important social and community function, providing specialist residential care provision to meet identified care and support needs. The proposal is therefore

broadly consistent with the objectives of Core Policy 46 and there is no policy objection in principle to the provision of a children's home in this location.

Whilst the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary, the proposal does not involve the construction of a new building, the creation of an additional dwelling, or sporadic encroachment into the open countryside. Rather, it represents the continued occupation of an existing residential property for an alternative residential use. In these circumstances, the proposal is not considered to undermine the spatial objectives of the Development Plan.

The acceptability of the proposal therefore turns principally on the detailed effects of the development, including its impact upon the character of the area, neighbouring amenity, highway safety, parking provision and the suitability of the property to accommodate the proposed use.

Subject to satisfactory consideration of these matters, assessed elsewhere within this report, the proposed change of use is considered acceptable in principle.

10.2.4 Neighbourhood Plan

The site lies within the area covered by the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst the Plan primarily concerns housing growth and housing site allocations, Policies H2 (Built Environment and Sustainability) and ESD1 (Environment and Sustainability) seek to ensure that development integrates appropriately with its surroundings and does not result in harm to the character of the area. Subject to detailed consideration of neighbouring amenity, highways and parking matters, the proposal is not considered to conflict with these policies.

10.2.5 Conclusion

The proposed change of use is acceptable in principle. Although the site lies immediately outside the defined settlement boundary, the proposal would reuse an existing residential building closely related to the built-up area of Devizes and would not result in an additional dwelling or sporadic encroachment into the countryside. Subject to the detailed considerations addressed below, the proposal is not considered to conflict with the spatial objectives of the Development Plan.

10.3 Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area

10.3.1 Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respond positively to local character and the surrounding built and natural environment.

The NPPF seeks to achieve well-designed places that function effectively and respond appropriately to their context. The Wiltshire Design Guide provides further guidance concerning locally responsive and context-sensitive development.

10.3.2 Assessment

The application site comprises an existing detached bungalow and associated residential curtilage situated on the edge of Devizes.

No external alterations, extensions or operational development are proposed as part of the application. The proposal relates solely to the change of use of the existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a children's home (Use Class C2) accommodating up to four children.

As no changes are proposed to the scale, form, appearance or layout of the existing building, the proposal would not alter the visual appearance of the site or its contribution to the character of the surrounding area. Existing landscaping, boundary treatments and the general appearance of the property would remain unchanged.

Whilst public representations have raised concerns regarding the proposed use of the site, no objections have been made in relation to the visual appearance of the development. In any event, the proposed change of use would not result in any physical alterations that would adversely affect the character or appearance of the locality.

The proposal is therefore considered to preserve the existing character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and is consistent with the design objectives of Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant guidance contained within the NPPF.

10.3.3 Conclusion

As no external alterations or operational development are proposed, the development would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant design objectives of the NPPF.

10.4 Impact on Amenity of nearby properties

10.4.1 Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (criterion vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and land uses and ensure that it does not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of existing occupiers.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires development to be appropriate for its location, taking account of its likely effects on health, living conditions and the environment. In particular, it seeks to ensure that development creates places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and avoids giving rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers.

In assessing the effects of development on residential amenity, regard has been had to matters including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, overbearing impacts, noise and disturbance, and the quality of accommodation proposed for future occupiers.

These policies provide the framework for assessing the amenity impacts of the proposed development.

10.4.2 Assessment

In assessing the proposal, regard has been had to the relationship between the application site and neighbouring properties, the information submitted by the applicant, third-party representations, and all other material planning considerations.

The site comprises an existing detached bungalow with a separate annexe and associated residential curtilage. The property shares boundaries with neighbouring residential properties, Gilletts Farm, and a neighbouring funeral director's chapel of rest. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of residential and commercial uses with open countryside beyond.

No external alterations, extensions or operational development are proposed as part of the application. The proposal relates solely to the change of use of the existing dwellinghouse to a children's home accommodating up to four children. The applicant advises that the property will operate as a small family-style children's home, with children occupying four bedrooms and staff accommodation provided within both the main dwelling and annexe. Shared living accommodation would remain within the existing sitting room, dining room, kitchen and bathroom facilities. The applicant advises that no alterations to the internal layout are required and that the property is capable of accommodating the proposed use within its existing arrangement.

A number of third-party representations have raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposal upon neighbouring amenity. These concerns principally relate to:

- Noise and disturbance.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Comings and goings associated with the use.
- The suitability of the property to accommodate the proposed number of children and staff.

These matters are considered below.

10.4.3 Overlooking and loss of privacy

As no extensions, external alterations or additional openings are proposed, the proposal would not alter the existing relationship between the application property and neighbouring land.

The change in occupation would not materially alter the established window relationships between the application property and neighbouring land. No materially harmful increase in overlooking or loss of privacy is therefore anticipated.

10.4.4 Loss of light and overshadowing

The proposal does not involve any physical alterations to the building and would therefore not result in any loss of daylight, sunlight or increased overshadowing to neighbouring properties.

10.4.5 Overbearing impact and sense of enclosure

As no built development is proposed, there would be no change to the scale, massing or physical presence of the building. The proposal would therefore have no overbearing impact and would not create any additional sense of enclosure for neighbouring occupiers.

10.4.6 Noise and Disturbance

The principal amenity issue arising from the proposal relates to the potential for increased activity associated with the operation of the children's home.

The applicant advises that the home would accommodate a maximum of four children and would operate as a family-style household. Children of school age would attend education off-site and would otherwise participate in normal household and community activities. Staffing arrangements would vary according to the individual needs of the children placed at the property. The applicant advises that staffing levels are determined through individual care plans and risk assessments and that, for four children, a minimum of two to three staff would typically be on shift. Overnight supervision would be provided through either sleep-in arrangements or waking night staff where required by individual care plans.

The applicant further advises that activity associated with the home would principally comprise staff shift changes, school journeys, appointments and normal household movements. Visitor numbers are expected to be limited, with any visits from professionals or family members generally being pre-arranged. Vehicle movements are expected to remain limited and broadly comparable with those associated with a large family dwelling.

The concerns raised by neighbouring residents regarding noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour have been carefully considered. However, the proposal relates to a managed and supervised residential care environment accommodating a limited number of children. Whilst the proposed use would differ from that of a single dwellinghouse and would constitute a material change of use, the scale of the proposal is limited, with accommodation for no more than four children within an existing domestic property. The proposed use would therefore continue to operate in a manner broadly compatible with the surrounding residential context. The scale of the proposal is modest and there is insufficient evidence before the Local Planning Authority to conclude that the use would generate levels of activity, noise or disturbance that would result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

Concerns regarding potential future anti-social behaviour are noted. However, planning applications must be determined on the basis of the land use proposed rather than assumptions regarding the behaviour of future occupants. In this regard, the proposed use would operate under professional supervision and management arrangements and there is no substantive evidence that the proposal would inevitably give rise to unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring occupiers.

Having regard to the scale of the operation, the limited number of residents proposed and the managed nature of the use, the proposal is not considered likely to give rise to unacceptable noise and disturbance.

The relationship with the adjoining funeral director's premises and chapel of rest has also been considered. The chapel of rest is a sensitive neighbouring use; however, the proposal would involve a small children's home accommodating no more than four children within an existing building. Whilst residents may make use of the existing garden and external amenity space in the same manner as occupants of a dwellinghouse, no physical alterations, extensions or intensification of the outdoor areas are proposed. There is no substantive evidence that the proposed use would materially prejudice the operation of the adjoining business, or that the adjoining use would prevent acceptable living conditions being provided for future residents.

10.4.7 Internal and external living conditions

Third-party concerns have been raised regarding whether the property is capable of accommodating the proposed number of residents.

The submitted information demonstrates that the property contains four bedrooms for children together with dedicated staff accommodation within the main dwelling and annexe. The property benefits from shared internal living accommodation and a substantial external curtilage. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the building is capable of accommodating the proposed use without resulting in an over-intensive form of occupation.

The proposal is therefore considered capable of providing an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupants.

10.4.8 Limitation of the approved use

This assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the description of development before the Local Planning Authority, namely a children's home accommodating a maximum of four children. A materially larger or different institutional use within Use Class C2 could give rise to effects that have not been assessed as part of this application. A condition is therefore necessary to restrict the use to a children's home accommodating no more than four children. The condition would allow the property to revert to use as a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3, as that use would be compatible with the established residential use of the property.

10.4.9 Conclusion

No unacceptable effects would arise in respect of privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight or overbearing impact because no physical alterations are proposed. Having regard to the limited scale of the use, its managed and supervised nature, and the recommended condition restricting occupation to no more than four children, the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable noise, disturbance or other amenity impacts. The proposal would also provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupiers and therefore accords with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

10.5 Highway Safety and Parking

10.5.1 Policy Context

Core Policy 60 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to reduce the need to travel, encourage sustainable transport choices and ensure that development does not generate unacceptable impacts on the transport network.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users and states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

These policies require consideration of the suitability of the existing access arrangements, parking provision, traffic generation and any implications for highway safety.

10.5.2 Assessment

The application site is served by an existing access from Hillworth Road and benefits from a substantial area of off-street parking within the site curtilage.

The proposal relates solely to the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to a children's home accommodating up to four children. No alterations are proposed to the existing access arrangements, and no highway works are required to facilitate the development.

Third-party concerns have been raised regarding the suitability of the location for the proposed use and the potential for increased activity associated with the occupation of the site.

In support of the application, the applicant has advised that the home would operate as a small family-style children's home accommodating a maximum of four children. Vehicle movements would principally comprise staff arrivals and departures, school transport where required, routine shopping trips and occasional journeys associated with appointments and community activities. The applicant advises that vehicle movements are not expected to be materially greater than those associated with a large family dwelling. The property benefits from parking provision sufficient to accommodate staff and visitors entirely within the site.

The Council's Highways Officer has considered the proposal and raises no objection. The consultation response confirms that, given the small scale of the proposal and the availability of adequate on-site parking within the curtilage, no highway concerns are identified.

Having regard to the scale of the proposed use, the existing lawful use of the site as a dwellinghouse and the availability of substantial on-site parking provision, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a material increase in traffic generation or give rise to highway safety concerns. The existing access arrangements are considered satisfactory and there is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would result in severe impacts upon the local highway network.

Whilst staff shifts and school transport may generate additional vehicle movements at certain times of the day, the scale of the proposal is limited, and such movements are not considered sufficient to justify a refusal on highway safety grounds.

The site is located adjacent to the built-up area of Devizes and has reasonable access to services and facilities within the town. The proposal would therefore continue to occupy a sustainable location.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would provide appropriate parking provision, would not prejudice highway safety and would not result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network.

10.5.3 Conclusion

Having regard to the limited scale of the proposed use, the submitted operational information and the consultation response from the Council's Highway Officer, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network. Adequate off-street parking is available within the site and no alterations to the existing access arrangements are required. The proposal therefore accords with Core Policies 60, 61 and 62 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant transport provisions of the NPPF.

10.6 Ecology and Biodiversity

10.6.1 Policy Context

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development protects and enhances biodiversity and ecological networks.

The NPPF requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing biodiversity and minimising impacts on habitats and species.

The statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement does not apply where development satisfies the de minimis exemption. This applies where development does not affect priority habitat and affects less than 25 square metres of non-priority onsite habitat and less than 5 metres of onsite linear habitat.

10.6.2 Assessment

The application seeks the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to a children's home. No external alterations, extensions, engineering works, vegetation clearance, alterations to the curtilage or other operational development are proposed.

As no physical works are proposed, no onsite habitat would be affected. The proposal therefore falls within the de minimis exemption to the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

The development would not result in the loss or alteration of any habitat, trees, hedgerows, watercourses or other ecological features. Furthermore, no changes are proposed that would affect ecological connectivity or biodiversity value within or adjoining the site.

Given the nature of the proposal, there would be no material ecological impacts arising from the development and no requirement for biodiversity mitigation, compensation or enhancement measures.

10.6.3 Conclusion

As the proposal involves no external alterations, engineering works, vegetation clearance or changes to the curtilage, it would not result in the loss or alteration of any habitat or ecological feature. The development falls within the de minimis exemption from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and no ecological harm has been identified. The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the biodiversity objectives of the NPPF.

10.7 Other Issues

Following the submission of the application, the description of development was amended to clarify that the proposed children's home would accommodate a maximum of four children. The applicant also provided additional information, including floorplans and operational details, to assist in the assessment of the proposal. This information did not alter the nature of the development proposed, increase its scale, or introduce any new form of development. Rather, it clarified the operation and occupancy of the proposed use and enabled a more robust assessment of the matters raised through the consultation process.

Concerns have been raised regarding the corporate structure and commercial sustainability of the proposed operator, the number of companies registered at the operator's address, the absence of an identified Wiltshire Council commissioning requirement, and the possibility that children may be placed from outside Wiltshire.

The commercial standing of the operator and the commissioning of individual care placements are not determinative land-use planning considerations. Similarly, the geographical origin of future residents does not alter the planning character of the proposed use or its environmental effects. These matters therefore attract little or no weight in the determination of the application.

The operation and regulation of the children's home, including care standards, safeguarding arrangements and registration requirements, are principally matters for the relevant regulatory bodies. The existence of those separate regimes does not remove the need to assess the land-use planning effects of the proposal, which have been considered within this report.

Reference has also been made to discarded nitrous oxide canisters and existing anti-social behaviour in the wider area. These concerns are acknowledged, but there is no substantive evidence demonstrating that the proposed supervised children's home would cause or materially worsen those existing circumstances.

Accordingly, no other material considerations have been identified that alter the conclusions reached elsewhere within this report.

11 PLANNING BALANCE

In accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal would provide residential care accommodation for up to four children within an existing building. The provision of this accommodation performs a social and community function and attracts positive weight.

Although the site lies immediately outside the defined settlement boundary, it is closely related to the built-up area of Devizes and has access to services and facilities within the town. The proposal would reuse an existing residential building, would involve no operational development and would not result in an additional dwelling or sporadic encroachment into the countryside. It would therefore not undermine the spatial strategy of the Development Plan.

No material harm has been identified in respect of the character and appearance of the area, ecology, highway safety or parking. The potential operational effects upon neighbouring amenity have been carefully considered and are acceptable, subject to a condition limiting the use to a children's home accommodating no more than four children.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the Development Plan when read as a whole. No material considerations indicate that planning permission should be withheld.

12 CONCLUSION

The proposed change of use is acceptable in principle and would provide residential care accommodation for up to four children within an existing building closely related to Devizes.

No unacceptable impacts have been identified in respect of the character and appearance of the area, neighbouring amenity, highway safety, parking provision or biodiversity. The concerns raised by neighbouring occupiers and the Town Council have been carefully considered but do not demonstrate planning harm sufficient to justify refusal.

Subject to conditions requiring commencement within three years, compliance with the approved plans and limiting the use to a children's home accommodating no more than four children, while allowing reversion to a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3, the proposal accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole.

The application is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

13 CONDITIONS

The conditions below have been assessed against the six tests applicable to planning conditions and are considered necessary, relevant to planning and to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

1. Time Limit for Commencement

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Ground Floor and First Floor Plan (Received 18/08/2026)
- Email from the applicant providing operational details received 09/07/2026)
- Application Form (Received 19/05/2026)
- Location Plan *WT280775* (Received 27/02/2026)

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Use Restriction

The use of the property known as Castle Farm Bungalow shall be limited to a children's home within Use Class C2 accommodating no more than four children (excluding staff) at any one time, or as a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3.

Any other use within Use Class C2 shall not take place without the prior grant of planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: The Local Planning Authority has assessed the impacts of a children's home accommodating no more than four children. Any materially larger or different Use Class C2 use could result in impacts that have not been assessed as part of this application. The condition is therefore necessary in the interests of neighbouring amenity and to enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the nature and intensity of the use.