

# **PLANNING AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION AND APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF A VACANT FORMER RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME, (INCLUDING ASSOCIATED DWELLING, ANNEXE, OFFICE AND GARAGING,) TO FORM A SCHOOL / EDUCATIONAL FACILITY AND CHILDREN'S CARE HOME

CUMBERWORTH LODGE, MAIN STREET, HAXEY, DONCASTER, SOUTH YORKSHIRE, DN9 2NB



FEBRUARY 2026

## CONTENTS

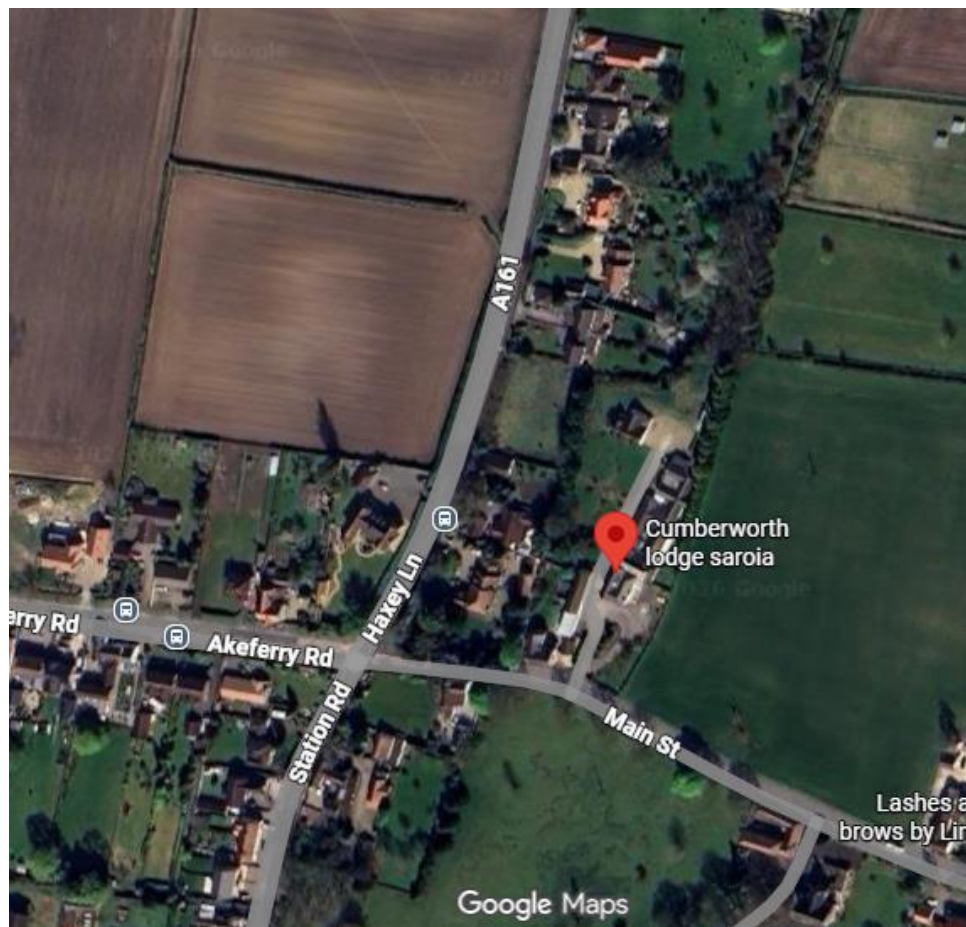
- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS
- 3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY
- 4.0 CURRENT PROPOSAL
- 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT
- 6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING A CONSIDERATION OF DESIGN & ACCESS
- 7.0 CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

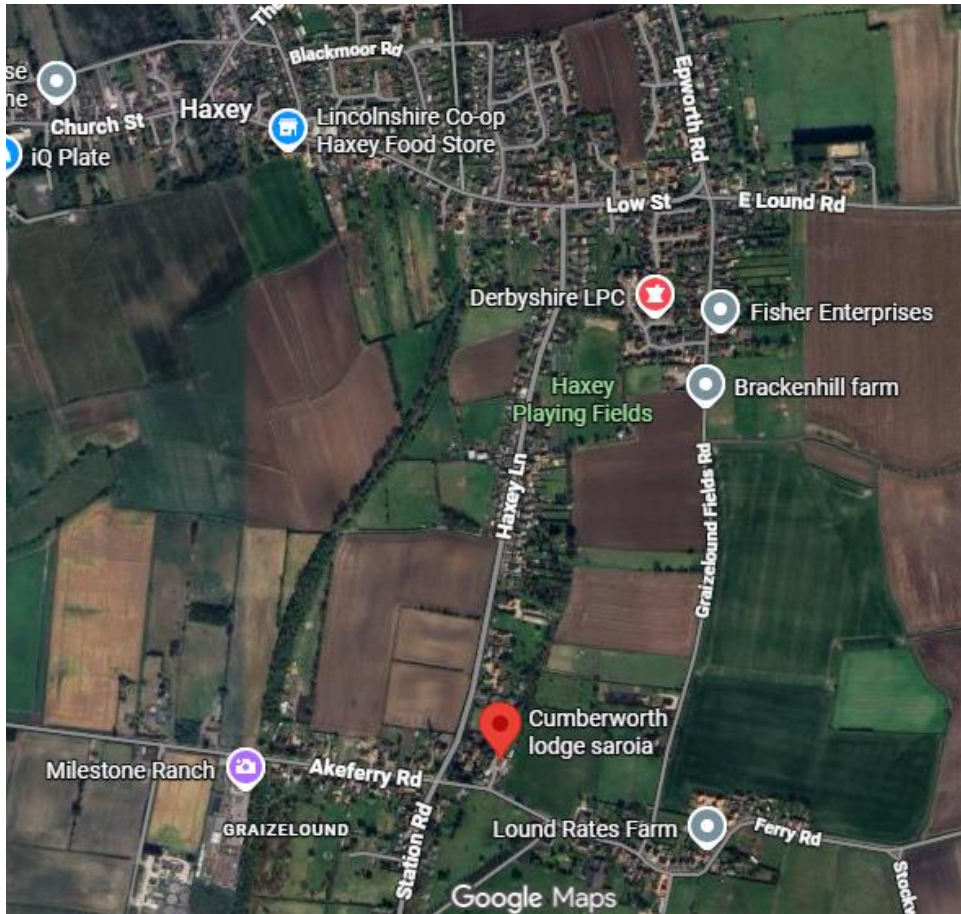
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a Full Planning Application and Application for Listed Building Consent by 'Safe Haven Support Care and Education Group', for the change of use of a former residential care home, associated six-bedroom dwellinghouse, annexe and office / residential building, to create a school / educational facility and children's care home. This facility will be provided through the change of use of and operational development at Cumberworth Lodge, Main Street, Graizelound, Haxey, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN9 2NB.
- 1.2 This Statement will seek to describe the Site and its surroundings, and will set out the known planning history of the Site and local area. This Statement will also set out the background to 'Safe Haven Support Care and Education Group', and summarise the business and management model and details of the proposed development at this location. It will then move on to consider the prevailing planning policy framework and assess this proposal against the relevant national and local planning policies. Against this background, this Statement will conclude that the proposed development accords with all material planning considerations and that this justifies the approval of planning permission for this scheme.
- 1.3 Within this Statement is also a Design & Access Statement, which sets out the detail of the minimal changes proposed within the Site to facilitate this development, which have been carefully considered in the context of the Grade II Listing at Cumberworth Lodge and the surrounding historic landscape setting and character.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement should be read alongside the other supporting plans and documents, comprising:
- Site Location Plan
  - Site Plans
  - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
  - Existing and Proposed Elevations
  - Topographical Survey
  - Tree Report
  - PEA Report and BNG Assessment
  - Heritage Statement
  - Transport Statement
  - Structural Engineers Note

## 2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Application Site comprises a previously developed Site known as Cumberworth Lodge, which lies on the northern side of Main Street, within the area known as Graizelound, which itself forms part of the larger village of Haxey, located to the east of Doncaster. The Site currently accommodates a range of buildings, which have, to some extent, been altered and extended, to provide space available to accommodate a (now redundant) residential care home (with ancillary staff accommodation, office space and garaging / storage).
- 2.2 The Site is accessed via an existing driveway from the northern side of Main Street, which leads into a substantial area of car parking at the frontage of the Site. The buildings associated with the former care home are positioned along the eastern side of the landholding, and extend a significant way to the north, beyond which is a further area of staff car parking. These buildings are largely two storey structures, within some smaller elements of single storey and are white painted render, with grey tiled roofs.
- 2.3 Within the western part of the Site, and close to the Site entrance is a detached garage building, beyond which is a large area of lawned and planted gardens, which have been used by care home residents for outdoor leisure and exercise. Within the far northern part of the Site is a detached, six-bedroom house, which has been utilised as staff accommodation and office space to serve the needs of the former care home use, which ceased to operate early in 2025.
- 2.4 The Site is wholly enclosed by robust hedgerow and tree planting, which largely screens the property and which provides a pleasant green interface between the built environment of Graizelound and the open countryside, which lies to the east of the Site. To the west and north, the Site is bound by residential properties, which, in this location, generally comprise larger, detached properties, set within substantial, planted residential curtilages.
- 2.5 The extent of the Application Site, and its relationship with the built environment of Graizelound and Haxey, along with its extent of enclosure, are depicted on the Google Earth images provided overleaf.



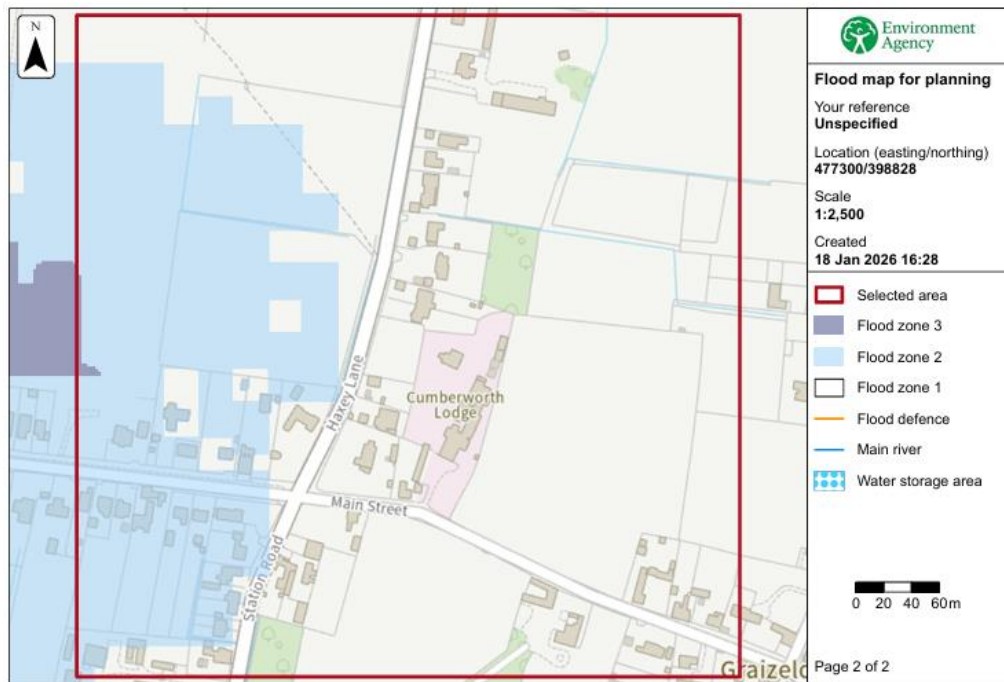


- 2.6 The original building within the Site – Cumberworth Lodge (along with a screen wall attached to the north of this building) dates from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century, but has been altered internally and externally, with extensions and alterations made throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Owing to the historic nature of the original Lodge and attached screen wall, these structures within the Site are Grade II Listed.

PHOTOGRAPH 1 –



- 2.7 As stated above, the Application Site is accessed via an existing private driveway from Main Street. This access was designed to accommodate the vehicular and pedestrian movements associated with the former care home use at this Site and is therefore suitable to serve the proposed children’s care home and school envisaged through this Application. The existing access allows excellent visibility onto the adopted highway in both directions and has a design and dimensions to allow two vehicles to pass at the entry / exit.
- 2.8 The Site is located within the built environment of Graizelound, with this area being characterised by a range of built development, including further dwellings, businesses and community facilities and services to serve this rural community. Within Haxey itself (just 750 metres to the north of the Site), lies a Co-Op Food Store, public house, nursery school, pharmacy, playing fields and sports facilities and church.
- 2.9 The Site falls within Flood Zone 1 as depicted on the Environment Agencies Flood Map for Planning (replicated below for ease of reference) but does lie within a designated ‘Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest’.



### 3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 There are a substantial number of historic planning applications relating to Cumberworth Lodge, which generally relate to the development of the Site as a Care Home. These Applications are summarised below:

- Reference PA/2025/1033 – Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed change of use from C3 Caretaker’s Dwelling to C3(b) small care home to create a children’s care home. Withdrawn January 2026.
- Reference PA/2024/608 – Listed Building Consent for proposed removal of existing damaged render and re-rendering of property. Conditionally approved August 2024.
- Reference PA/2007/0639 – Planning Permission to erect a 4-bedroom extension to existing care home. Conditionally approved June 2007.
- Reference PA/2007/0640 – Listed Building Consent to erect a single-storey extension to existing care home. Conditionally approved June 2007.

- Reference PA/2004/0498 – Planning permission to erect first floor extension to provide office.  
Conditionally approved May 2004.
- Reference PA/2004/0499 – Listed building consent to erect first floor extension to provide office in office building.  
Conditionally approved May 2004.
- Reference PA/2003/1155 – Listed building consent to make alterations and erect extension in connection with conservation to offices and training room.  
Conditionally approved October 2003.
- Reference PA/2002/1903 – Planning permission to change the use of outbuildings to offices and training room including extension.  
Conditionally approved April 2003.
- Reference PA/1999/0515 – Erection of a detached house.  
Conditionally approved July 1999.
- Reference PA/1999/0517 – Erection of bedroom extension to the existing care home.  
Conditionally approved June 1999.
- Reference unknown – Erection of a two-storey domestic extension.  
Approved July 1993.
- Reference 2/1989/0460 – Erection of 8-bedroom extension and a dwelling.  
Approved August 1989.
- Reference 2/1986/0417 – Erection of a dwelling and vehicular access.  
Approved August 1986.
- Reference 2/1984/0331 – Erection of a domestic extension.  
Approved July 1984.

3.2 From the Planning History of this Site, as set out above, it appears that the lawful uses of the land and buildings include:

- Use Class C2 – Residential Institutions (with supporting office space)
- Use Class C3 - Dwellinghouses

#### 4.0 CURRENT PROPOSAL

4.1 The current proposal envisages the change of use of Cumberworth Lodge and its associated buildings and curtilage from a care home (Use Class C2) and dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a therapeutic residential care home (Use Class C2) for up to 3 no. children aged 7 – 16 years, alongside a school (Use Class F(a)) for up to 50 no. pupils, providing specialist education provision. The details of this proposal and the overarching management strategy of the Applicants are set out below:

##### **Summary**

4.2 This proposal outlines plans to establish a specialist day and residential school for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs in Doncaster, co-located with a registered children’s home. The setting will provide a trauma-informed, integrated model of care and education aimed at children aged 7–16 who are either in local authority care or at risk of exclusion due to complex behavioural, social, or emotional difficulties.

4.3 The project’s vision is to nurture each child’s potential by creating a stable, warm, and aspirational environment where therapeutic care and education work hand-in-hand.

##### **Vision Statement**

4.4 To provide a safe, supportive, and ambitious environment that enables children with SEMH needs to heal, grow, and achieve their full potential through integrated care and education.

## **Why This Model Is Needed**

4.5 In Doncaster, the number of children and young people requiring SEMH support is rising, particularly among those who are looked after or have experienced trauma and instability. Local data highlights a gap in specialist provision for children with complex needs who are frequently excluded from mainstream education or experience multiple placement breakdowns. This integrated model of an SEMH school and children's home aims to:

- Address the local shortage of high-quality SEMH placements;
- Reduce out-of-area placements, supporting Doncaster's "children closer to home" agenda;
- Provide educational stability and wraparound therapeutic care for Doncaster's most vulnerable children; and
- Align with Doncaster Council's priorities around early intervention, inclusive education, and improved care outcomes.

## **Proposed Model**

4.6 School Provision:

- Age Range: 7–16
- Capacity: 50 pupils
- Ofsted Registered Independent Special School
- SEMH and additional needs (e.g., ADHD, ASD, trauma-related behaviours)
- Curriculum: Broad and balanced with emphasis on emotional regulation, life skills, and vocational opportunities
- Staffed by experienced SEN teachers, behaviour specialists, and on-site therapeutic professionals

4.7 Children's Home Provision:

- Type: Residential Children's Home (Children Act 1989 regulated)
- Capacity: 3 places
- Age Range: 7–16
- 24/7 care provided by a therapeutic care team using trauma-informed, attachment-aware approaches
- Emphasis on stability, safety, emotional development, and education re-engagement

4.8 Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

- All staff will be subject to enhanced DBS checks and robust safer recruitment procedures.

- An embedded Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will oversee safeguarding across both settings.
- The service will meet Ofsted Education and Ofsted Social Care standards, with regular internal audits, staff training, and reflective practice.
- Therapeutic oversight will be provided by a consultant clinical psychologist.

### **Partnerships and Community Integration**

- 4.9 We intend to work closely with:
- Doncaster Children’s Services Trust and the Local Authority SEN team
  - Doncaster Virtual School
  - NHS CAMHS and community health services
  - Social workers, IROs, and educational psychologists
  - Local employers, community organisations, and FE colleges

### **Governance and Management**

- 4.10 The setting will be operated by Ambitions First Group, led by a senior team with experience in residential care, special education, and clinical psychology. A governing board will ensure accountability and high standards across education, care, and safeguarding.

- 4.11 We aim to:
- Reintegrate children into education and reduce exclusions
  - Improve emotional well-being, self-regulation, and life skills
  - Offer long-term stability to children with multiple previous placement breakdowns
  - Deliver high rates of progression to post-16 education or training
  - Achieve ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ ratings from Ofsted

### **Operational Development**

- 4.12 With regard to physical changes to the Site and the buildings therein, it is anticipated that only minimal changes will be required to the existing built fabric. Specifically, the Listed Cumberworth Lodge itself will remain as existing, with just a small extension envisaged to the existing dwellinghouse, to provide a staff office at ground floor level (to replace an existing kitchen of similar dimensions).

- 4.13 In order to adhere to the recommendations of OFSTED, it may be necessary in due course to install a camera security system and movement-sensitive external lighting; however, it should be stressed that such systems are exactly the same as those installed by many householders. If considered necessary, these matters can be detailed and controlled through a suitably worded planning condition. Internally, the property is being renovated and updated where appropriate, including the installation of fire doors where necessary to adhere to Building Control and OFSTED requirements.
- 4.14 The existing garden land which surround the property will continue to be provided as an enclosed garden space for use as outdoor play, sports and recreation for future residents and students. Existing tree and hedgerow planting will also remain and will not be impacted by this proposal. The perimeter hedgerow planting which bounds the Site will also be retained and protected, with a new 2.4 metre perimeter fence to be installed just to the inside of this hedgeline.
- 4.15 The existing point of access and driveway into the Site will continue to be utilised to serve this development and will remain unaltered, with the dimensions and design being suitable to meet the needs of this proposal. The existing driveway will continue to lead to an area of hardstanding, thereby providing 15 no. car parking spaces, for use by visitors, whilst further staff parking (comprising an additional 12 no. spaces) will also be provided within the rear (northern) part of the Site, as per the existing arrangement. There will remain adequate space within the Site for vehicles to turn and manoeuvre, and the access remains suitable for larger vehicles required for deliveries and servicing.

## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (according to section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of having a planning system that is genuinely plan-led. Where a proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan it should be approved without delay, as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development at Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.

- 5.3 Where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

#### The Development Plan

- 5.4 For the purposes of this Planning Application, the adopted Development Plan for the Local Planning Authority is the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy (adopted June 2011) and the Housing and Employment Land Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted March 2016), along with the Saved Policies of the 2003 Local Plan. These documents seek to set out the strategic approach to new development in the District and identifies the main land use allocations and policies to be utilised in the development control process.

- 5.5 Of particular relevance to this Planning Application are the following policies:

- Spatial Policy CS1 (Strategic Strategy for North Lincolnshire) of the Core Strategy provides that rural settlements will be supported as thriving sustainable communities with a strong focus on retaining and enhancing existing local services to meet local needs. Development will be limited and should take into account levels of local service provision, infrastructure capacity and accessibility. In the countryside, support will be given to development for, *inter alia*, small-scale employment opportunities, particularly on previously used land or in existing rural buildings.

- Policy CS5 – Delivering Quality Design – states that all new development in North Lincolnshire should be well designed and appropriate for their context. It should contribute to creating a sense of place. The council will encourage contemporary design, provided that it is appropriate for its location and is informed by its surrounding context. Design which is inappropriate to the local area or fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of the area will not be acceptable.

- Spatial Policy CS6 confirms that the Council will seek to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment, as well as the character and setting of historic buildings.

- The Core Strategy does not set out a standalone policy dedicated exclusively to education, but it recognizes educational infrastructure as a critical component of community development.

- Core Strategy Policy CS22 (Community Facilities and Services) and Policy CS24 (Health Care Provision) seek to support the provision of new community facilities, or the improvement of existing community facilities, which meet the needs of local residents, along with the implementation of health care provision in North Lincolnshire, subject to other relevant plan policies.

#### Saved 2003 Local Plan Policies

- Policy RD9 - Re-use and/or Adaptation of Rural Buildings for Residential Use in the Open Countryside – States that proposals for the conversion of rural buildings in the open countryside for residential use will only be permitted if:

i) the building is of architectural or historic importance to the rural scene and is of substantial and permanent construction capable of conversion without major alteration;

ii) it can be demonstrated that residential re-use or adaptation is the only way to retain a building in viable continued use and/or secure the retention / improvement of the building; and

iii) the development will not create a need for new buildings to house activities displaced by conversion;

iv) the general design of the conversion retains and respects the original character of the building and is in keeping with its surroundings. Any extension should respect the scale and appearance of the original building; and

v) the development will not lead to the loss of habitat for protected species.

- Policy T1 – Location of Development – states that development proposals, which generate a significant volume of traffic movement, will be permitted provided that they are located:

i) in the urban area of Scunthorpe and Bottesford, Barton upon Humber, Brigg, and the areas identified for development at the South Humber Bank and Humberside International Airport; and

ii) where there is good access to rail, water and air transport, or to the North Lincolnshire Strategic Road Network; and

iii) where there is good foot, cycle and public transport provision or where there are opportunities for foot, cycle and public transport to be provided.

- Policy T2 – Access to Development – states that all development must be provided with a satisfactory access.

- Policy T19 - Car Parking Provision and Standards Provision will be made for car parking where it would:

- i) meet the operational needs of businesses; or
- ii) essential to the viability of a new development; or
- iii) improve the environment or safety of streets; or
- iv) meet the needs of people with disabilities; or
- v) be needed by visitors to the countryside;

and comply with Appendix 2 - Parking Provision Guidelines.

- C2 - Community Facilities in Minimum Growth Settlements and Rural Hamlets and Villages in the Open Countryside – states that proposals which would lead to the loss of key village services, (Uses falling under Classes A1, A2, A3, C1, C2, D1 and D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987), including the change of use of vacant premises to uses outside these classes located in rural local centres will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that these facilities are not economically viable and that all options for their continuance have been fully explored, and/or an accessible replacement facility exists elsewhere in the local centre.

- Policy LC14 - Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest - The Isle of Axholme is designated as an area of Special Historic Landscape Interest. Within this area, development will not be permitted which would destroy, damage or adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the historic landscape, or any of its features. Development required to meet the social and economic needs of rural communities and small tourist, and outdoor sport and recreational development will be permitted provided such development is related to the historic landscape and its features. A high standard of design and siting in new development will be required reflecting the traditional character of buildings in the area and the character of the historic landscape and using materials sympathetic to the locality. Schemes to improve, restore or manage the historic landscape will be sought in connection with, and commensurate with the scale of, any new development affecting the area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.

- Policy HE5 - Development affecting Listed Buildings - The Council will seek to the preservation, restoration and continued use of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. When applications for planning permission relating to a listed building or listed building consent are being assessed, the primary consideration will be the need to preserve or enhance the fabric and character of the building.

Permission or consent will not be granted unless it has been demonstrated that the proposed works would secure this objective. The Council will encourage the retention and restoration of the historic setting of listed buildings.

#### Other Material Considerations

##### The National Planning Policy Framework, 2024

- 5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in December 2024, has replaced all previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS) in respect of the consideration and determination of planning applications. The heart of the NPPF is set out within Paragraph 11, which stresses the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In decision making, this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.7 Paragraph 8 sets out the three key dimensions to the delivery of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and it is stressed that these fundamental roles cannot be undertaken in isolation, owing to their mutual dependency. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.
- 5.8 Paragraph 9 stresses that plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas and to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

- 5.9 Paragraph 61 states 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 it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. 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.
- 5.10 Paragraph 63 continues, stressing that within the context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- 5.11 Paragraph 82 confirms that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.
- 5.12 Paragraphs 83 and 84 – Indicate that, in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside, unless particular circumstances apply, including:
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets
  - c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting; or
  - d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building.
- 5.13 Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable (inter alia):
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- 5.14 Paragraph 89 continues, stressing that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 5.15 Paragraph 98 states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
- (a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
  - (b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;
  - (c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
  - (d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
  - (e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
- 5.16 Paragraph 109 states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision making.
- 5.17 Section 11 of the NPPF focuses upon the need for planning policies and decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

- 5.18 Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places – This section of the NPPF is applicable to all development proposals, to ensure that high quality buildings and places are created. It is also stressed that “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 131).
- 5.19 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should aim to (inter alia):
- (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
  - (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
  - (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
  - (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- 5.20 Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – This section of the NPPF seeks to ensure that heritage assets are appropriately considered to ensure that they are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Written ministerial statement (23 May 2023)

- 5.21 A written ministerial statement (which is a material planning consideration) was issued by the then Housing Minister specifically relating to the planning system and children’s care homes. This stated (inter alia) that:

“the planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society.”

... “local planning authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and reflect this in planning policies and decisions.” ...

“In two tier authorities, we expect local planning authorities to support these vital developments where appropriate, to ensure that children in need of accommodation are provided for in their communities”.

## 6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

6.1 As set out above, this proposal envisages the change of use of a vacant former residential care home, together with its associated dwelling, annexe, office accommodation and garaging, to form a school / educational facility and children's care home. The first part of this Statement seeks to assess the proposal against the relevant development plan and national planning policy, with specific focus on the principle of development, having regard to the site's location, planning history, existing lawful use, heritage status, and the strategic objectives of the local planning authority.

### **Lawful Use**

6.2 Initially, it is stressed that Cumberworth Lodge benefits from an established lawful use as a care home, which falls within a broader category of institutional and community uses. The proposed change of use to a children's residential care home and independent special school represents a closely aligned and compatible use, retaining the Site's core function of providing care and support to vulnerable individuals.

6.3 The lawful use of the Site as a residential care home (Class C2) establishes a long-standing institutional use involving:

- Residential occupation
- Staff presence
- Servicing, parking, and visitor activity

6.4 The proposed use as a school / educational facility and children's care home represents:

- A continued community and institutional function
- A use that remains within or closely related to Class C2 and education-related uses
- A level of activity that is comparable in nature and scale to the former care home use

6.5 The proposal does not introduce a materially different or intensified use in land use terms. Rather, it represents a logical and sustainable evolution of the Site's existing function, with the existing buildings and wider Site use remaining 'residential' in nature.

## **Efficient use of Land**

6.6 Local and National policies support the efficient re-use of land and buildings, particularly where this:

- Prevents long-term vacancy and dereliction
- Makes effective use of existing assets
- Avoids unnecessary greenfield development

The Site has been vacant for a sustained period, and without a viable new use, the buildings are at risk of deterioration, which would be contrary to both local and national policy objectives.

6.7 The proposed development:

- Secures a beneficial and viable long-term use
- Retains the existing built form
- Minimises environmental impact by avoiding demolition and redevelopment

This approach aligns fully with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2024).

6.8 Core Strategy Policies CS22 and CS24 explicitly support development that provides or enhances educational and community facilities, particularly where such facilities meet identified needs and make use of existing buildings. These policies explicitly support and promote development that:

- Supports vulnerable groups
- Enhances access to care, education, and support services
- Strengthens community infrastructure

6.9 The proposed school and children's care home delivers clear social and community benefits, including:

- Provision of specialist education and care facilities
- Employment opportunities
- Re-use of an existing institutional building in a sustainable manner

6.10 At national level, the NPPF (2024) places significant weight on development that promotes healthy and inclusive communities (Section 8) and supports strong social infrastructure, including schools and care facilities. The principle of the proposed use is therefore strongly supported by both local and national policy.

## Heritage Considerations and Listed Building Context

6.11 While detailed heritage impacts are addressed separately, the principle of re-use of a listed building is a material consideration. Both national and local policy strongly emphasise that keeping heritage assets in viable use is fundamental to their preservation. In this case, the proposed change of use:

- Retains the building in active institutional use, broadly comparable to its former residential care home function;
- Avoids the need for subdivision into multiple uses or dwellings, which could lead to greater internal intervention and heritage harm;
- Provides a sustainable future that supports ongoing maintenance and stewardship.
- Local policy and the Core Strategy support development that safeguards heritage assets through sensitive re-use, even where such development lies outside settlement boundaries, provided it respects the building's significance and setting.

Accordingly, the principle of development is consistent with the statutory duty under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and with NPPF heritage policy.

### Conclusion on matters of principle

6.12 In this case, the proposal does not seek new residential or commercial development on undeveloped land. Instead, it proposes the re-use of a previously developed, purpose-built institutional building, historically and physically capable of accommodating a care or educational use. The use of the Site as a care facility and small-scale, specialist educational establishment is therefore not alien to its established character or function.

6.13 Importantly, Local Plan policy recognises that the re-use of rural buildings for community, institutional or specialist uses may be acceptable where it avoids abandonment, dereliction or decay, particularly for listed buildings where active use is essential to their conservation.

6.14 The NPPF (2024) reinforces several principles that are directly relevant to the acceptability of this proposal in principle:

- A positive approach to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, particularly where this supports sustainability objectives;
- Recognition that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, with viable uses identified to ensure their long-term future;

- Support for community facilities and specialist care provision, including education and children’s care, where these meet an identified need and can be accommodated without undue harm.
- 6.15 While the Site lies in the countryside, just beyond the development framework of Graizelound, the NPPF does not impose a blanket restriction on change of use of existing buildings. Instead, it allows decision-makers to balance countryside protection with heritage conservation, social infrastructure provision, and sustainable re-use. In this instance, the proposal aligns with the NPPF’s objective of making effective use of existing buildings while avoiding unnecessary new development.
- 6.16 The Site is not allocated for specific alternative development within the Housing and Employment Land Allocations DPD. As such, there is no policy requirement or expectation that the Site should be redeveloped for specific housing or employment land purposes.
- 6.17 The continued use of the site for institutional and community-related purposes does not conflict with any allocation or safeguarded land designation and represents an appropriate form of windfall development. In principle, the proposed change of use of Cumberworth Lodge to a school / educational facility and children’s care home is fully acceptable and strongly supported by the development plan and national planning policy.
- 6.18 There are no policy objections in principle to the proposed use, and the development plan provides a clear and positive policy framework within which the application should be supported, subject to detailed consideration of heritage, amenity, highways, and technical matters.

#### Design and Visual Impact

- 6.19 The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to the surrounding built and natural environment. Planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities). Furthermore, planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

- 6.20 Policy CS5 indicates that new development should achieve a high standard of sustainable design that both protects and enhances the natural environment and contributes to and sustains the rich local distinctiveness of the area and is of an appropriate form and scale to its context complementing the existing built and landscape environments.
- 6.21 In this case, careful consideration has been given throughout the design process, to ensure that the proposed conversion scheme, with small scale extension and minor alterations, will have no materially greater impact upon the character of the Site or wider area, and that the new development reflects and conserves the character of Graizelound and wider historic landscape setting of the Site.
- 6.22 Indeed, it is clear that this proposal will allow planning gain, by securing the optimum, viable re-use of the historic buildings within the Site, through their sensitive conversion and renovation, therefore offering a visual enhancement to the character and appearance of the locality. Without finding a suitable re-use for Cumberworth Lodge, it remains at risk of falling into disrepair or being a target for anti-social behaviour, thus harming both the fabric of the historic buildings, as well as the wider community.
- 6.23 The Local and National Planning Policies highlighted above provide clear support for the re-use of redundant rural buildings, provided that such development protects and, where possible, enhances the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic beauty and furthermore, that the overarching character of area is maintained.
- 6.24 With this in mind, it is clear that this proposal seeks to re-use the existing dwelling for continued residential use, albeit for a therapeutic care home, rather than as a single family home. As previously stated, this proposed change of use envisages only a small, single storey extension to the existing property, in order to provide a staff office, and therefore the overarching character and appearance of this building will remain unchanged. The school element, (to be accommodated within the former care home buildings, including Cumberworth Lodge itself) does not propose any physical changes to the internal or external appearance of the property, aside from sensitive renovations to the fabric of these buildings.
- 6.25 Similarly, the character of the use itself will not fundamentally alter when compared to the lawful uses of the existing buildings. Indeed, a dwelling of this size could reasonably be expected to accommodate a family with 4 - 5 children, who would generate a similar number of pedestrian and vehicular movements, and who would utilise the property in exactly the same way as that envisaged through this proposal for a children's care home. The use of Cumberworth Lodge itself for a small, specialist educational facility also closes mirrors the former use of this property as a care home, and therefore its character and uses will largely remain unchanged.

- 6.26 The purpose of the home would be to support the children to build their confidence, help them in developing life skills and prepare them for life when they leave the home to fend for themselves. This type of support has been found to be most effective in helping these children to have normal lives and not experience problems in later life. The Applicants have confirmed that the proposed use is to provide a stable home environment for the occupants as their main and sole residence and that the length of stay is generally more than temporary or passing. It would not be a 'half way' house or provide overnight emergency lodgings for example. Local Social Services carry out their own risk assessment of the suitability of premises, involving local police, before children are placed in the home. Unless they are approved by a local authority social services department, children will not be placed in the home.
- 6.27 Based upon the foregoing, it is our submission that this proposal will maintain and preserve the appearance of this Site in its current form, with the proposed development allowing the retention of the existing buildings and the upkeep and care of these structures within this countryside location. The character of the Site, will not be detrimentally impacted through this proposal, but rather, will ensure its long-term management, through the provision of a small-scale children's residential care home and educational facility, thus maintaining the residential / community nature and characteristics of this property and wider curtilage.
- 6.28 Fundamentally, the proposal does not seek to alter the external appearance, scale, or massing of Cumberworth Lodge. The existing architectural form and historic character of the building will be retained, with the original features and design integrity being simply and sympathetically restored. Any internal alterations required to accommodate the proposed use will be designed sensitively, ensuring that the significance of the listed building is preserved. The proposal therefore accords with local and national policy objectives relating to high-quality design and contextual development.

#### Heritage

- 6.29 Core Strategy Policy CS6 and Saved Local Plan Policy HE5, seek to ensure that any development proposal which affects a heritage asset should be assessed against the requirements of the NPPF and that development affecting a Listed Building is appropriately assessed, to ensure that their special architectural and historic interest is protected and maintained.

- 6.30 The NPPF directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting and the level of detailed assessment should be 'proportionate' to the assets' importance. (Paragraph 207). Paragraph 208 states that the significance any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed.
- 6.31 Paragraph 210 continues, stating that, when determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.32 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.33 Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets, which is consistent with the objectives of the NPPF, provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. The document recognises that elements of a setting 'may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral' (para. 4), and it recommends a systematic and staged approach to the assessment of setting, namely:
- (i) identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
  - (ii) assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
  - (iii) assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
  - (iv) explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm;
  - (v) make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

- 6.34 In this case, it is recognised and acknowledged that the Application Site accommodates Cumberworth Lodge (and Screen Wall Adjoining to North), a Grade II Listed Building, first listed in September 1987. The Historic England Listing confirms that, at the time of Listing, the property was being utilised as a Care Home, and comprises both mid C18 with C19 alterations and rear addition. It then goes on to detail the features and detailing (both internal and external) of historic and architectural significance, and also to highlight the changes and alterations that have been introduced to the building.
- 6.35 Owing to the Grade II Listed status of Cumberworth Lodge, a Heritage Statement has been produced in support of this proposal, which has been utilised to guide the proposed development and to inform the design approach and changes required within the Site to facilitate the proposed development.
- 6.36 Overall however, we would highlight the following:
- The historic and architectural integrity of the Listed Buildings within the Site will be protected and maintained through this proposal, with only minimal changes required to facilitate their re-use as part of this development.
  - The changes envisaged have been designed to ensure that the historic built fabric of Cumberworth Lodge is not impacted, with original features and detailing to be restored and retained.
  - The scale and siting of the proposed new build elements (which are minor in nature) have been designed to ensure that they respect and preserve the setting of the Listed Building and wider historic landscape setting.
  - Furthermore, the new build elements (which are minor in nature) will not introduce development which are dominant or incongruous, or which would detrimentally impact upon the historic legibility of the Site.
  - The overall appearance and design ethos will seek to enhance the character of the Site and to raise the standard of architecture. The design will deliver a simple, uncluttered appearance, with clean lines and a contrast of sustainable building materials, which provide a clear visual contrast between the new elements and the conversion scheme, thereby providing legibility to the built fabric of the Site.
  - The design of the extension will be particularly sensitive in views from the fields to the east. In these views especially, care will be taken to ensure that the new element will have a subservient appearance and scale, to maintain an understanding of the Site within this edge of village location.

6.37 In summary, the submitted Heritage Statement confirms that, whilst Cumberworth Lodge is a Grade II Listed Building, the proposal has been developed in accordance with the statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, and its special architectural or historic interest.

6.38 The proposed change of use:

- Does not require harmful external alterations;
- Retains the building's historic fabric and layout; and
- Secures a viable and sustainable long-term use for the Listed Building and wider Site.

6.39 The continued occupation and maintenance of the building for a care-related purpose constitutes a heritage benefit, ensuring the building's ongoing conservation and management in line with Core Strategy heritage policies and the NPPF.

#### Residential Amenity

6.40 The impact of the proposal on neighbouring residential amenity has been carefully considered. Of critical importance, we can confirm that the use will be:

- Professionally managed and supervised at all times;
- Limited in scale, with controlled occupancy levels;
- Comparable in nature and intensity to the existing lawful care home use;

Fundamentally therefore, noise, activity, and comings and goings are expected to be modest and well managed. The proposal will not result in unacceptable levels of disturbance, overlooking, or loss of privacy, and therefore complies with relevant amenity policies.

#### **Impact on Neighbouring Residential Properties**

6.41 The proposed uses are considered compatible with the surrounding area, which is characterised by residential and low-intensity uses. The nature of a therapeutic children's care home and specialist education facility is inherently controlled and supervised, with activities occurring primarily during normal daytime hours.

6.42 Compared with the former care home use, the proposals will not introduce materially different or more intensive impacts in terms of noise, activity levels or comings and goings. There will be no late-night commercial activity, industrial processes or high-impact uses that could detrimentally affect neighbouring occupiers.

- 6.43 The limited number of resident children and pupils ensures that activity levels remain modest. External spaces will be managed as part of the therapeutic and educational environment, and boundary treatments and landscaping will be retained or enhanced where necessary to safeguard privacy and minimise disturbance.
- 6.44 With regard to the care home element, which will be able to accommodate up to 3 no. children, it should be stressed that the children and carers occupying the property, will do so as a ‘normal’ family home, and will enjoy activities regularly undertaken by a family in their home and garden.
- 6.45 These activities will not create any undue noise or disturbance or other impacts such as odours, impacts upon air quality, or overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing effects. Indeed, when compared to the lawful use of the Site, as a care home and residential dwelling, it is clear that the proposed use of the Site as a small-scale, therapeutic care home will not have any greater impact upon the locality or local population, in respect of all amenity considerations.
- 6.46 The proposed care home and the children residing there will be carefully and sensitively managed, with the intention to provide a safe, warm and family environment. In general terms, the management of the home would also be required to operate within the minimum national standards for children’s homes and staff would be subject to OFSTED regulation and inspections. Moreover, for each child there would be a carer who would accompany that child during any external visits.
- 6.47 In addition, we would stress that the Applicants have carefully assessed the location of Cumberworth Lodge to ensure its suitability for a children’s care home and educational facility, with approaches made to Lincolnshire and Doncaster Children’s Services to ensure that this location was also considered acceptable for the placement of children, following OFSTED registration. Overall, it is considered that this location is indeed suitable for the types of young people that ‘Safe Haven’ are looking to care for.
- 6.48 This location offers “the best of both worlds” for the young people as well as staff, as it is in a semi-rural location which promotes the children’s’ safety and wellbeing, but is also very close to Haxey and Westwoodside, and therefore the young people should not feel that they are isolated from the community.

#### **Living Conditions of Future Occupants**

- 6.49 Furthermore, the proposed change of use, to create a small-scale children’s care home and education facility, has been carefully considered and designed, to ensure that the amenities of those living at this facility are sensitively addressed.

The Applicants have thoroughly assessed the needs of the future residents at this proposed establishment, and therefore the internal layout of the building, along with the external spaces across the Site, have all been designed to ensure that the educational, emotional and social needs of the residents and pupils are met, in a safe, secure, well designed and appealing environment.

- 6.50 The proposals will provide a safe, supportive and high-quality environment for children requiring specialist care and education. The re-use of an existing building within landscaped grounds is well suited to the delivery of therapeutic outcomes, consistent with the NPPF's emphasis on health and wellbeing.
- 6.51 Overall, the development accords with Development Plan policies and the NPPF by maintaining acceptable residential amenity standards for both neighbouring occupiers and future users of the site.

#### Highway and Access Considerations

- 6.52 The North Lincolnshire Core Strategy, particularly policies promoting sustainable transport, seek to ensure that development:
- Provides safe and suitable access for all users;
  - Minimises impacts on the highway network; and
  - Encourages sustainable modes of travel where practicable.
- 6.53 Similarly, saved policies of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan (2003) relating to transport and parking require development to demonstrate that:
- Access arrangements are safe and appropriate;
  - Adequate parking provision is made; and
  - Development does not result in unacceptable highway safety impacts.
- 6.54 The NPPF (2024) states that development should only be refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

#### **Existing Access and Traffic Conditions**

- 6.55 The Site benefits from an established vehicular access onto Main Street, which historically served the lawful care home use. This access arrangement has therefore already been accepted in highway safety terms and has proven to be safe and suitable to serve the needs of the former care home. The access driveway into the Site, which is proposed for re-use to facilitate this development, has good visibility onto the highway, thereby ensuring that cars can enter and exit the landholding safely and without detriment to the free flow of traffic along Main Street.

- 6.56 The proposed development will generate traffic associated with staff, visitors and pupil drop-off / pick-up. However, given the modest scale of the proposals — a maximum of 3 resident children and up to 32 pupils — vehicle movements will be limited and spread throughout the day.

#### **Traffic Generation and Highway Impact**

- 6.57 The level of traffic associated with the proposed uses is not considered to exceed that which could reasonably arise from the former care home use. The specialist nature of the school and care home results in controlled attendance patterns, staffing levels and visiting arrangements.
- 6.58 Any peak-time activity will be managed through operational controls and, where appropriate, a Travel Plan. As such, the proposals will not result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the local highway network, in accordance with the NPPF test.

#### **Parking and Servicing**

- 6.59 On-site parking will be provided in accordance with adopted local standards, taking into account staff numbers, visitors and short-stay drop-off requirements. The provision of on-site parking, totalling 27 no. spaces, will prevent overspill parking on surrounding roads and ensure the continued safe operation of the local highway network.
- 6.60 In addition, the Applicants offer a cycle to work scheme for staff, which many staff members take advantage of, owing to recruitment often taking place from within the local area. Further, the company also promotes a car share incentive for staff members. Non-resident pupils attending the school will commonly be collected by mini-bus by a member of staff, thus further limiting the number of individual car movements to and from the property.
- 6.61 Servicing and refuse arrangements will be managed within the Site, avoiding conflict with pedestrian or vehicular movements.

#### **Sustainable Travel**

- 6.62 The proposals support the principles of sustainable development by:
- Making use of an existing building in an accessible location;
  - Encouraging walking and cycling for staff and visitors where feasible; and
  - Managing travel demand through staff and school travel planning.

This approach is consistent with both local transport policies and the NPPF's objectives for promoting sustainable transport choices.

- 6.63 The NPPF recognises that rural development proposals may not be able to take full advantage of sustainable transport options – in this case, the proposed development need not be wholly reliant upon private car usage and the proposal will not lead to a significant or consequential increase in vehicular activity at this Site. As such, and given the benefits offered for future residents through this semi-rural setting, it is our submission that this Site offers a suitable and sustainable location for this proposed development.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.1 The content of this Statement has demonstrated that this proposal envisages the development of a bespoke and high quality therapeutic children’s home (Use Class C2) and specialist educational facility (Use Class F(a)), through the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and former care home (Use Class C2), known as Cumberworth Lodge, Main Street, Graizelound. This facility is proposed to accommodate a maximum of 3 no. children aged 7 – 16 within the care home, and to provide school places for up to 50 pupils (also aged 7-16).
- 7.2 It has been demonstrated that the proposal will result in only minimal new built development, but rather will fundamentally seek to utilise the existing buildings within the Site. The changes proposed, have been sensitively and sympathetically designed, to ensure that the historic built fabric of the Grade II Listed Cumberworth Lodge is restored, protected and maintained, and that the setting of this heritage asset is also safeguarded and improved. The scheme has also been designed with a high architectural approach, to ensure that the overarching character and appearance of the Site is maintained, with betterment offered through the detailing, materials palette and design standard offered.
- 7.3 It has further been demonstrated that the proposed change of use to provide a specialist form of housing, will meet a local housing need and will deliver an important community facility, which will benefit future residents through its semi-rural location. The proposed re-use of an existing residential property to provide residential accommodation and a specialist educational facility is therefore considered acceptable in principle and accords with the provisions of the Local Plan and NPPF.
- 7.4 The content of this Statement has sought to demonstrate that this proposal will not detrimentally impact upon the character or appearance of the Site, nor upon the character of the wider area. The lawful existing use of the site as a residential care home establishes an accepted baseline, and the proposed therapeutic care home and specialist school will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residential amenity.

7.5 Safe and suitable access can be achieved using the existing access arrangements, with appropriate parking provision and managed traffic movements ensuring no adverse highway safety impacts. The proposals represent a sustainable and appropriate re-use of a vacant care facility, delivering important social and educational benefits while safeguarding residential amenity and highway safety.

7.6 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the proposal has been assessed against the Development Plan as a whole.

The proposal delivers clear and significant public benefits, including:

- Provision of much-needed specialist SEMH education and residential care;
- Support for vulnerable children and young people within the local area;
- Reduction in out-of-area placements;
- Continued use and conservation of a Grade II listed building
- Efficient re-use of an established care facility

No material planning harms have been identified that would outweigh these benefits.

7.7 The Application proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, including the key objective 'to support a prosperous rural economy' and to boost the supply of housing. It also accords with the provisions of the adopted Local Plan, with regard to rural development and in respect of residential amenities, highway considerations and community uses. Furthermore, there are no adverse impacts of this proposal, which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits. The proposed change of use at Cumberworth Lodge represents a sustainable, policy-compliant, and socially beneficial development and as such, we submit, should be approved without delay.