

Yardley Liaison Group

Meeting on May 28th, 2020 *via MS Teams*

Present

Chairman of Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council - Cllr Simon Gittins (SG)
Vice Chairman of Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council - Cllr David Spicer (DS)

Shropshire Councillor and Cabinet Member for
Children's Services - Cllr Ed Potter (EP)
Shropshire Councillor for Ruyton and Baschurch - Cllr Nick Bardsley (NB)

Interim Assistant Director Children's Social
Care and Safeguarding - Sonya Miller (SM)
Yardley Project Manager - Rick Singh (RS)

Welcome and Introductions

SM and NB thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

Chair

NB was appointed Chair

Background to Yardley Planning Application: 20/01988/COU

SM explained the thinking behind the SC policy adopted in February 2019 to expand residential provision for Shropshire's Looked After Children (LAC). Although the Council had excellent foster carers with wide ranging skills, foster care was not always available and some LAC needed residential care. The Council had already opened two additional homes near Montford Bridge and in Nesscliffe. Yardley would be the third once planning permission and Ofsted registration had been obtained. Currently there were 60 LAC placed in residential care with private providers, most outside Shropshire, in some cases a considerable distance away. This was undesirable both for the children and costly in time for Children's Services, financially and in terms of staff making visits.

SM confirmed that it had never been and it was not intended to establish a secure unit at Yardley. In Shropshire we have very low numbers of children in secure, currently none.

RS added that he had not specifically been looking for property in Ruyton XI Towns. There was a wide area of search, but Yardley was potentially a most suitable residential home - large enough and with plenty of space outside for recreation. He was originally tasked with searching for a home for 4 children,

however when looking at the facilities at Yardley it allowed for more. But there were no plans to construct additional buildings.

Planned provision for LAC at Yardley

SM and RS confirmed that plans had changed since the publication of the Briefing note on March 24th. This is due to the cohort of children who need their plans progressed changes over time.

The Supporting Statement submitted with the Planning Application (20/01988/COU) set out an intention to provide a home for 4 x children, aged 14/15/16. SM added that the Ofsted Registration would be for LAC aged 11-17.

RS added that it is normal practice within the homes to only have a maximum of a 5 year gap in age between the children.

SG and DS expressed surprise that there had been such a significant change and sought assurance that there would not be further changes in the Council's plans.

NB asked that the Supporting Statement should be amended:

- to make clear exactly what provision was planned
- to explain that consultation over the planning application *would not replace the further consultation required prior to the application to Ofsted for Registration. This second phase of consultation would probably take place in September/October 2020.*

RS Action amend Supporting Statement.

Educational needs of LAC at Yardley

NB asked for confirmation that there would be no primary school age children at Yardley. SM confirmed this, explaining that some of the teen-age LAC might be at a significant stage in their secondary education elsewhere in Shropshire, e.g. year 10 and would continue to attend there rather than transferring to the Corbet. This would necessitate staff members taking LAC to and from that school. We have a very good relationship with Corbett School and they provide excellent support to LAC – if we were to have a child attend there.

Staff present at Yardley

SM confirmed that, in addition to the 3 x staff mentioned in para 2.1 of the Supporting Statement, 2 overnight and there will be a Registered Manager and Deputy Manager “on site” (Para 5.6) although they will not be there all week. There would additionally be visits from social workers to each of the LAC. These are every few weeks, not daily or weekly.

Cooking and cleaning would NOT require additional staff but would be undertaken by the residential social work staff at Yardley.

Vehicle parking and traffic movements

EP suggested that additional parking (and turning provision) for cars would be needed - but there was ample space for this if the existing car parking area was extended. He also felt that staff and any visitors should be advised that, when leaving Yardley *a left turn only was required . Attempting to turn right was clearly dangerous*. This was easily agreeable and would be proactively promoted with staff and visitors.

SM explained that the pattern of shifts could be arranged so that cars arriving and leaving would do so *outside the usual morning and evening rush hours*.

SM explained that the garage would naturally also be used for parking.

****Apologies all, Sonya misunderstood some comments from another manager regarding the parking facilities at the property. There is no garage on site, the garage was converted into the annex.** ** There is a garage, it is more a shed / garage structure. The original garage was converted, but there is a garage that will facilitate the parking of one car and another in front of it – this was confirmed during site visit on Monday 8 June 2020.**

SM was aware of the significant highway issues and the concerns raised locally in earlier planning applications. Team meetings and training sessions would be arranged away from Yardley.

Site visits

It was agreed that members of the Liaison Group should attend site visits to be arranged by RS. There would be two site visits to minimise congestion during the visits and to maintain social distancing. NB suggested that input from Mark Wooton (Highways Development Management) would be wise.

RS Action arrange two site visits

Additional membership

DS asked if it might be wise to invite a representative of interested neighbours to attend future meetings. NB was happy with the suggestion provided all neighbours could agree on a single representative. The Group agreed.

DS Action secure agreement from neighbours on a representative - to be invited to next meeting.

RS added that Children's Services have good relationships with the neighbours of all the other homes including the new ones in Montford Bridge and Nescliffe and that it is normal for residents to have concerns when something different, which is perceived in a negative way, comes to their area.

RS identified that neighbours of the 2 other properties did initially have concerns, however they were discussed at consultations and Shropshire Council have been flexible in working with neighbours and hope to have good relationships with the neighbours of Yardley House in the future. There are regular quarterly meetings at the Montford Bridge and Nesscliffe homes. All the managers know the neighbours and work with them if there are any issues. We would wish to do the same with the neighbours of Yardley.

Next meeting

NB suggested that there should be another meeting of the Group soon after the Parish Council meeting on June 9th. The Parish Council would not submit its response to the Planning Application until after its July meeting.

RS Action suggest convenient dates for the next meeting – post June 9th

NB 200605