

**Report to:** PLANNING COMMITTEE      **Date of Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022

**Subject:** [DC/2022/00454](#)  
[College Green Rest Home, 14 College Road, Crosby L23 0RW](#)

**Proposal:** Change of use from former Care Home to C2 drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre

**Applicant:** Ms F Price      **Agent:** Mr David Lamb  
Substance Rehabilitation Ltd      Platt White Partnership

**Ward:** Victoria Ward      **Type:** Full Application

**Reason for Committee Determination:** Petition endorsed by Councillor Byrom and called in by Councillor Byrom

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## Summary

This application seeks planning permission to change the use of a former care home to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

The main issues to consider include the principle of the development and impacts on the character of the area, living conditions and highway safety.

It is concluded that the proposal complies with adopted local plan policy and, in the absence of any other material considerations, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

**Case Officer**      Diane Humphreys

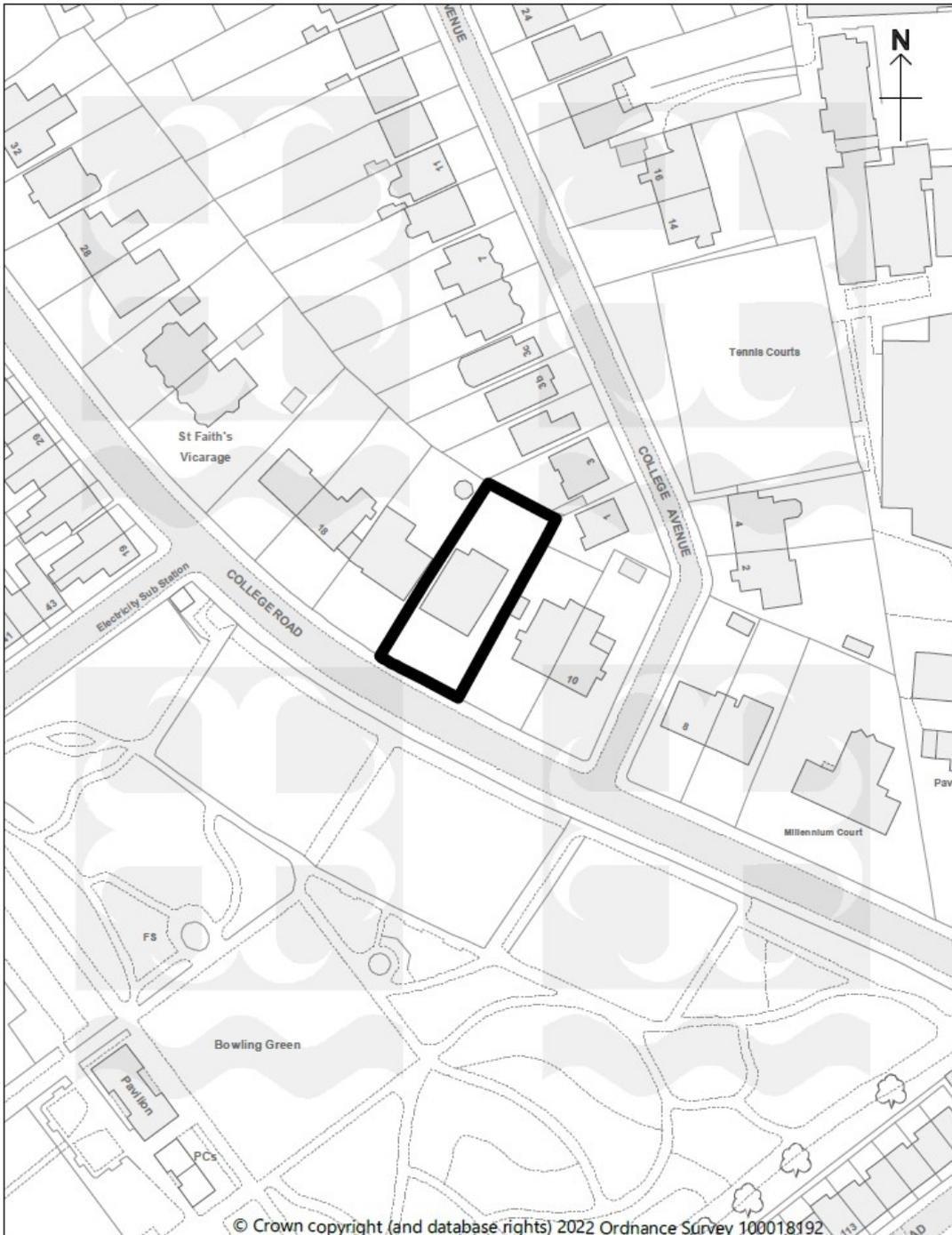
**Email**      [planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@sefton.gov.uk)

**Telephone**      0345 140 0845

Application documents and plans are available at:

<http://pa.sefton.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=R8IRLANWH8V00>

## Site Location Plan



## The Site

The application site comprises a two storey detached property with third storey rooms located within the roofspace and served by dormer windows. The property lies on the north side of College Road opposite Victoria Park and is otherwise surrounded by residential properties.

## History

S/24277 Change of use from residential to a home for the elderly mentally infirm and the erection of a fire escape at the side and a single storey extension at the rear of the property. Approved 03 July 1985

S/1988/0805 Erection of a two storey extension at the rear of the existing rest home. Approved 19 October 1988

S/1989/0760 Extension to the existing fire escape (Alternative to Ref: 88/0805/S, approved 19/10/88), Approved 18 October 1989

S/1989/1111 Erection of a lift shaft extension to the side of the existing rest home. Approved 14 February 1990

## Consultations

### **Local Plans Manager**

No objection

### **Adult Social Care Manager**

No objection

### **Highways Manager**

No objection subject to a condition

### **Environmental Health Manager**

No objection

### **Police Architectural Liaison Officer**

No objection

### **Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service**

No objection

## Neighbour Representations

### Objections

A petition to speak at Planning Committee in opposition to the development has been submitted and is endorsed by Councillor Byrom. Some 25 of the signatories are residents of College Road and College Avenue.

The petition is made on the following grounds:

- The centre will face Victoria Park which is well used by families, children and elderly people and there are a number of schools nearby
- Reviews provided by clients of the company's Liverpool centre give cause for concern.

Approximately 64 individual written objections have also been received from residents of Crosby and Waterloo raising the following concerns:

### Safety Concerns

- Lack of safety and security for local residents, park users and school children
- Children and vulnerable adults are at risk
- Lack of detail on type of patients, security measures and how the property will be managed

### Living Conditions

- Anti-social behaviour, noise and disturbance and increase in crime and fear of crime
- Patients likely to resort to crime
- Nuisance lighting

### Location/Suitability of Use

- Unsuitable location close to park where drug dealing already takes place
- Inappropriate location more suited to town or city centre or rural location
- Will lower the appeal of the area
- Is there a demand when Merseycare already have two facilities in Waterloo?
- Should be kept for elderly care
- No need for this use in this area

### Highways Issues

- Extra traffic and lack of car parking
- Strain on access/egress for emergency vehicles

## Other Issues

- Lack of consultation with local residents
- Strain on the local authority
- Devaluation of house prices and impact on house sales
- Clients will be given priority for housing
- Pressure on local services
- Company has no track record and has negative reviews

## **Support**

Over 100 individual written support emails and letters have been submitted by residents of Crosby and the wider South Sefton area as well as some further afield in Liverpool and beyond. These make the following points:

- Positive community centred initiative
- People should be supported
- Ashamed residents are complaining
- Will benefit local people as well as those from further afield
- Supporting people in a pleasant environment will help them get better
- Better than flat developments
- Should show staff and residents we are a caring society
- Real need for this type of resource
- Job creation
- Once the facility is open locals won't notice the comings and goings
- Guaranteed ongoing use of a character property
- People will be paying for the facility not dealing in drugs or drinking alcohol
- Addiction is indiscriminate
- Will help to reduce crime, domestic abuse, and neglect of children
- Remember the campaign against the previous change of use to a care home

## **Policy Context**

The application site lies within an area designated as primarily residential in the Sefton Local Plan which was adopted by the Council in April 2017.

## **Assessment of the Proposal**

### **Introduction**

The proposal seeks to use the former 18 bed care home as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation

centre. The service is available to private fee paying clients who are required to reside at the centre for the duration of their treatment which can be for 1 week up to 3 months but usually 1 to 4 weeks. The service is for adults and will employ up to 25 staff with approximately 9 members of staff present at any one time.

The main issues to consider include the principle of the development and impacts on the character of the area, living conditions and highway safety.

### **Principle**

The site is within a primary residential area as defined in the Sefton Local Plan. The principle of a residential institution providing drug and alcohol rehabilitation is acceptable in this location under Local Plan policy HC3 'Residential Development and Primarily Residential Areas' subject to other considerations. These include impacts on living conditions of neighbouring residents and the character of the area, issues which will be considered below. The proposed change of use from a vacant care home to rehabilitation centre will not undermine Local Plan objectives regarding housing delivery.

Policy HC2 part 4 of the Sefton Local Plan sets out that proposals for residential care accommodation that would result in or exacerbate an existing oversupply will be refused. Adult Social Care have been consulted and advise that this type of service would not affect what the council commissions as it is a private service. It is therefore considered there are no issues of oversupply.

On the above basis, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable.

### **Character of the Area**

The proposal involves minimal change to the building's exterior. In addition, the proposed change of use from one residential institution to another within a primarily residential area is not considered to have a harmful impact on the overall character of the area.

### **Living Conditions**

Many local residents are concerned that the proposed drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre will cause issues impacting on their living conditions such as noise, disturbance, anti-social behaviour and crime including the fear of crime. Other residents are supportive of the proposal. Local Plan policy EQ2 requires that a proposal "protects the amenity of those within and adjacent to the site" (part 2c). It is not considered that the proposal will give rise to significant harm for local residents over and above any issues arising from the property's recent use as a care home. No objections have been raised by the Environmental Health Manager.

The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has been consulted on the application and offers comments relating to security within the building for the residents similar to those given for an apartment block or house in multiple occupation. No concerns are raised about the proposal itself.

### **Highway Safety**

The application has been reviewed by the Highways Manager who raises no objections on highway safety grounds subject to a condition to secure cycle parking facilities.

The existing access arrangements to the site will remain unchanged as part of the proposals. There are currently approximately 9 off-street car parking spaces with no additional car parking areas proposed in connection with this development. The applicant has indicated that there will be 25 full time members of staff, working on a 24 hour rota, with a total of 9 staff present at any one time. Also that clients will not bring their vehicles during their stay. On this basis, the 9 off-street car parking spaces are considered acceptable.

The site is in an accessible location in terms of public transport and amenities, given its proximity to Waterloo District Centre and public transport facilities on College Road and Crosby Road North.

The Highways Manager has confirmed that there is sufficient space for cycle parking facilities within the site and a condition is recommended to secure suitable cycle parking provision for the duration of the use in accordance with the 'Sustainable Travel and Development' Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Other Issues**

Issues such as impacts on house prices, clients being given priority for housing, the company's track record and the need for the use are not material planning considerations in the assessment of this planning application.

### **Planning Balance and Conclusion**

The proposed change of use is acceptable in principle and there is a significant level of support. Whilst local residents are concerned about impacts on their living conditions, highway safety and the character of the area, these are not considered so significant as to justify a refusal on planning grounds for the reasons outlined above.

## **Recommendation - Approve with Conditions**

### **Time Limit for Commencement**

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

Reason: In order that the development is commenced in a timely manner, as set out in Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

### **Approved Plans**

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

Drawing No. 4087/02 Proposed Elevations

Drawing No. 4087/03 Location and Block Plans

Drawing No. 4087/04 Car Parking

Drawing No. 023-02-03-003 rev A Proposed Floor Plans - GF and 1F

Drawing No. 023-02-03-004 rev A Proposed Floor Plans - 2F

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

### **Before the Development is Occupied**

3) The development shall not be occupied until facilities for the secure storage of cycles have been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and they shall be retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that enough cycle parking is provided for the development in the interest of promoting non-car based modes of travel.