

Planning Committee

Application Address	4 Richmond Park Crescent, Bournemouth, BH8 9BU
Proposal	Change of use from an HMO (Sui Generis) to a hostel - Regulation 3. Retrospective application
Application Number	7-2025-22076-B
Applicant	BCP Council
Agent	BCP Council
Ward	Queen's Park Councillor Sharon Carr-Brown and Councillor Alasdair Keddie
Report Status	Public
Meeting Date	25 September 2025
Recommendation	Grant Planning Permission
Reason for Referral to Planning Committee	The application was made by BCP Council for a BCP Council owned building
Case Officer	Darren Henry
Is the proposal EIA Development?	No
For the purposes of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 has the application been subject to an appropriate assessment	No

Description of Development

1. Planning consent is sought for Change of use from a HMO to a supported living hostel. No care provision is provided, such as doctors or physios, or meals provided. As such, this will be a change of use from Sui generis to use class C2: Residential Institution.
2. Please note that this application is done retrospectively.
3. It is proposed that the property will use no more than 7 bedrooms for single people on a temporary basis. The site has accommodated the same number of residents for many years and there are sufficient amenities to accommodate those residing in the 7 rooms.
4. Following a risk assessment of potential occupants, careful consideration is given to placing suitably assessed occupants at the accommodation. If it turns out that a resident's needs are

not being met, the resident will then be referred to an accommodation with a more supportive structure.

Site and Surroundings

5. The property is a detached two storey building that was previously occupied as a seven bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (use class Sui generis). It now consists of a seven-bed hostel for supported living (use class C2), which is owned and managed by BCP Council. This application is therefore a retrospective application for its conversion to a supported living hostel.
6. The site lies adjacent to the corner plot at a crossroads abutting both Richmond Park Crescent and Richmond Park Road with Bennett Road on the opposite side.
7. The properties in the immediate vicinity of the site are of a similar style but with hipped roofs although the properties in the wider vicinity are of a mixed design, particularly along Richmond Park Road in a Southerly direction.
8. All of the properties in the vicinity are detached and the majority have been converted to flats due to the size of the buildings. Each has an evenly spaced gap between them.
9. The properties in the vicinity all have low boundary walls to their frontage, some with the addition of low hedges, or are open plan in nature. This leads to a spacious look when viewed from the street. Vehicular access to the site is via a driveway from Richmond Park Crescent.

Relevant Planning Applications and Appeals:

10. No previous applications of relevance.

Constraints

11. None on the site, though there are TPOs on the adjacent site.

Public Sector Equalities Duty

12. In accordance with section 149 Equality Act 2010, in considering this proposal due regard has been had to the need to —
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Other relevant duties

13. For the purposes of this application, in accordance with section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998, due regard has been had to, including the need to do all that can reasonably be done to prevent, (a) crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and (c) re-offending in its area.
14. For the purposes of this report regard has been had to the Human Rights Act 1998, the Human Rights Convention and relevant related issues of proportionality.

Consultations

15. Environmental Health – No objections - concerns about noise issues have been addressed in the supporting statement.
16. Highways – No objection
17. Planning Policy – No comments received
18. Waste and Recycling – No objections.

Representations

19. Site notices were posted in the vicinity of the site on 3rd January 2025 with an expiry date for consultation of 24th January 2025.
20. 20 representations were received objecting to the proposal, as well as a 25 signature petition. The representations received have raised the following issues:
 - Inappropriate for the area
 - Many disruptions in the area – it is changing
 - Safety concerns
 - Overlooking concerns
 - Concerns over crime
 - Should consider who they place in the hostel
 - Is an area of family homes
 - Management is inadequate
 - Has not worked in this setting
 - has been lots of disturbance
 - were no issues when it operated as an HMO

Many responses also mentioned de-valuation of properties, which is not a material planning consideration.

Key Issues

21. The main considerations involved with this application are:
 - Housing mix
 - Impact on character and appearance of the area
 - Impact on neighbouring amenity
 - Impact on living conditions of future residents

- Impact on highways and parking
- Impact on protected trees.

22. These points will be discussed as well as other material considerations below.

Policy Context

23. The following policies are considered to be of relevance:

Core Strategy (2012)

- CS41: Design Quality
- CS4: Surface Water
- CS6: Delivering Sustainable Communities
- CS16: Parking Standards
- CS18: Encouraging Walking and Cycling
- CS24: House in Multiple Occupation

District Wide Local Plan (2002)

- Policy 6.17 – Houses in Multiple Occupation and Hostels

Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Residential Extensions: A Design Guide for Householders – PGN (2008)
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) – PGN
- BCP Parking – SPD.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF.

Background

24. Homelessness of all forms across the Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole (BCP) area has increased significantly in recent years. Local authorities have a legal duty to assist those experiencing homelessness. Providing suitable and safe temporary accommodation is an important element of meeting that duty whilst providing support to people who are experiencing traumatic and challenging circumstances.
25. In 2018, 4 Richmond Crescent was acquired by BCP (legacy Bournemouth Borough Council) for use as temporary accommodation. It was acquired as a House in Multiple Occupation, providing 7 rooms of temporary accommodation for singles and couples. BCP has since introduced enhanced services to provide 24/7 support and supervision to residents of the building who are housed there on a temporary basis. Other improvements were also made inside the property to create a more homely and trauma-free and informed environment.

26. Enhanced staff presence has enabled closer and better management of the building which has in turn improved the standard of accommodation offered to its residents with better opportunities for direct communication and two-way engagement. Clients generally have a greater level of engagement, which has resulted in positive outcomes, specifically moving out of homelessness more quickly than was previously the case. This improved throughput contributes greatly to reducing BCP's reliance on B&B use and helps clients alleviate their homelessness & rough sleeping.
27. The supported living arrangements include the availability of a staff member 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Residents will benefit from staff during working hours, provided by BCP Housing, and on-site attendance during out-of-hours through appointed contractors. There will be a minimum of one full-time staff member on-site Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm and a contractor on site at all other times including evenings, night times and weekends. Typically, daytime staff will be accompanied by other professionals, from statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations of the BCP Homelessness Partnership, providing advice, support and help to those recovering from homelessness.
28. With regards to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), BCP Council has developed robust management procedures and levels of security to deal with this effectively, if and when, ASB does surface. At other temporary accommodation sites within the BCP area, ASB is not an issue with many tenants and therefore low levels of ASB are experienced. The Intensive Housing Management Officer does not anticipate this site to be any different, noting that BCP Council has a wealth of experience in dealing effectively with any ASB.

Planning Assessment

Principle of conversion

29. Policy 6.17 of the saved policies of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan 2002 covers HMOs and hostels, and notes that they will be permitted subject to the following criteria being met:
- i. The proposal is compatible with the existing character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring residents will not be adversely affected by noise, overlooking, lack of privacy or general disturbance, having regard to the nature of the use and level of activity which would likely be generated;
 - ii. In the case of the conversion of an existing property, unless its existing use is non-residential and it is adjacent to other appropriate non-residential properties, it should be a substantial detached building which at present provides a minimum of seven habitable rooms, a kitchen and adequate bathroom and toilet facilities.
 - iii. The property has a defined garden or amenity area capable of being used for activities associated with residential use and of a size appropriate to the number of occupiers and the location of the property. There should also be an adequate area provided for the storage of refuse.
 - iv. On site car parking requirements will be assessed taking into account:
 - The scope for parking to be successfully designed into the scheme
 - The anticipated demand for parking
 - Highway safety and the free flow of traffic
 - The availability of public transport in the area.

30. With regard to part i), as no changes are proposed to alter the external appearance, there would be no additional impact to the character and appearance of the area when compared to its former use; as such criterion i) is fulfilled.
31. Regarding criterion ii), the building is a substantial detached building that comprises present provides a minimum of seven habitable rooms, a kitchen and adequate bathroom and toilet facilities, so this criterion is met.
32. The property also has a defined garden capable of being used for activities associated with residential use and of a size appropriate to the number of occupiers and the location of the property. There is also an adequate area for the storage of refuse. Therefore, it is considered that criterion iii) is met.
33. Regarding criterion iv), the parking requirements are considered acceptable, and there would be no highway safety impacts from the proposal. Furthermore, there is sufficient public transport in the area, being just off of Richmond Park Road and within walking distance of Charminster along Richmond Park Road; as such, criterion iv) is satisfied.

Impact on character and appearance of the area

34. Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Core Strategy 2012 and the Residential Design Guide seek to ensure that all development and spaces are well designed and of a high quality. Development should, through its scale, density, layout, siting, character and appearance be designed to respect the site and its surroundings, provide a high standard of amenity to meet the day-to-day requirements of future occupants, and contribute positively to the appearance and safety of the public realm.
35. The proposal is for a retrospective conversion of the building with no additions or external alterations to the building to be made. It is therefore considered that the proposal has not resulted in any impacts on the character and appearance of the area, as no external alterations have been made. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Core Strategy 2012.

Impact on neighbouring amenity and living conditions of future residents

36. Policy CS41 states that *"The Council will seek to ensure that new developments, including changes of use, enhance the character, local distinctiveness, cultural identity, amenities of future occupants and neighbouring residents"*.

Neighbouring amenity

37. There are 2 immediate neighbouring properties situated either side of the application site.

2 Richmond Park Crescent:

38. This neighbouring property is situated at the street corner of Richmond Park Crescent and Richmond Park Road, and lies to the southwest of the application site, with the front elevation facing towards Richmond Park Road.
39. No external alterations are proposed, and all windows therefore will be in the same position as they were under the original C3 residential use and former HMO use.

6 Richmond Park Crescent

40. This neighbouring property is situated to the northeast of the application site. No external alterations are proposed, and all windows therefore will be in the same position as they were under the original C3 residential use and former HMO use.

Future residents

41. There have been no alterations to the bedrooms since their use as an HMO, all of which were considered to be of an appropriate size to meet the requirements of an HMO.
42. The minimum sleeping room floor area for one person (over 10 years old) is 6.51 sqm, as set out in the Houses in Multiple Occupation and residential property licensing reform: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities, whereas the Nationally Described Space Standards requires single bedrooms to be a minimum of 7.5sqm.
43. All bedrooms in the accommodation are compliant with the minimum NDSS for single occupancy and each have ensuite facilities
44. The rear garden has ample space and is suitable for the number of residents at the supported living accommodation
45. All bedroom and habitable rooms provide a high standard of amenity with a sufficient level of natural light and outlook. The communal facilities and outside amenity space are all considered to be of a sufficient size and scale to be appropriate for their purpose.

Nuisance Noise

46. With regards to noise, the Management Plan for the accommodation states that the *"The Council works closely across all departments, including Environmental Protection and the ASB Team, who have a wealth of experience and knowledge in addressing issues of noise and ASB across all communities within the BCP area. Both teams have close links with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Police Community Support Officers"*.
47. Like other temporary BCP accommodation sites, there will be designated areas and agreed rights and responsibilities relating to the use of the outdoor amenity space to minimise the impact on the other residents and neighbours. These rights and responsibilities will include:
- For use by Residents.
 - Staff monitoring.
48. Environmental Health Officers have been consulted and have not raised any concerns, stating that "Concerns about noise issues have been addressed in the supporting statement" (The Management Plan).

Overall

49. The Case Officer considers that proposal provides acceptable standards of living for both the neighbours and the future residents and is in accordance with Policy CS41.

Impact on highways and parking

50. This application refers to the retrospective conversion of an existing building into a 7-bedroom hostel, plus office and a meeting room. The previous use was a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The site is located in Parking Zone D.
51. Whilst the application is retrospective and internal alterations have been made, no works outside have taken place. As such, the front access remained as previous existing and there are three car spaces available.
52. As the BCP parking standards SPD does not have a specific criterion for hostels; however, for HMOs which are a similar class, one parking space is required for residents. The site contains a large forecourt to the front of the building which is not split into marked bays; however, there is sufficient space for three cars to the front of the curtilage. The Local Highways Authority have been consulted and have no objections, stating that the current parking provision is acceptable. Furthermore, *“As the requirements for a Sui Generis HMO and hostel are the same and the building is not going under extensive alterations, and this is a retrospective application and therefore it has been operating like this for some time, no objections are raised on highway grounds by the LHA”*.
53. In light of the above, the Case Officer considers the proposal provides a safe access and complies with Policy CS16 and the BCP Parking Standards SPD.

Impact on protected trees

54. The site lies adjacent to two TPOs on the neighbouring plot at number 2 Richmond Park Crescent. However, as the works are retrospective but also have not involved any excavations, it is considered that there are no impacts from the proposal on protected trees and the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

Biodiversity Net Gain

55. In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), it is now a statutory requirement that major applications received since 12th of February 2024 provide an uplift in biodiversity of 10%, unless it can be demonstrated that an exemption applies.
56. The exemptions are set out in [paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and the [Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Exemptions\) Regulations 2024](#).
57. In this instance the de minimis exemption is applicable.

58. However, the de minimis exemption only applies to development if the following two conditions are met:
- the development must not impact on any onsite priority habitat; and
 - if there is an impact on other on-site habitat, that impact must be on less than 25 square metres (e.g. less than a 5m by 5m square) of onsite habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero and on less than 5 metres of on-site linear habitat (such as a hedgerow)
59. Nevertheless, the applicant, if they consider their development proposal would be within the scope of the de minimis exemption, must state in their planning application form that they consider the proposal to be subject to the de minimis exemption and provide reasons for this.
60. The Applicant claims the de minimis exception on the application form. No physical development will take place and therefore the development will not impact a priority habitat and the development will impact on less than 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat and less than 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows.
61. The Case Officer is satisfied that the de minimis exemption applies and there is no requirement to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain.

Dorset Heathlands & New Forest Mitigation

Heathlands

62. The site is within 5km of a designated Dorset Heathlands SPA (Special Protection Area) and Ramsar Site, and part of the Dorset Heaths candidate SAC (Special Area of Conservation) which covers the whole of Bournemouth. As such, the determination of any application for an additional dwelling(s) resulting in increased population and domestic animals should be undertaken with regard to the requirements of the Habitat Regulations 1994. It is considered that an appropriate assessment could not clearly demonstrate that there would not be an adverse effect on the integrity of the sites, particularly its effect upon bird and reptile habitats within the SSSI.
63. Therefore, as of 17th January 2007 all applications received for additional residential accommodation within the borough is subject to a financial contribution towards mitigation measures towards the designated sites. However, as the number of bedrooms remains the same as it was under its previous use, there is no net gain in bedrooms. Consequently, no capital contribution is required in this instance.

New Forest

64. Formal advice from Natural England (NE) has recently been given to the Council regarding the recreational pressures being placed on the New Forest's European designated sites (SAC, New Forest SPA and New Forest Ramsar site). In light of this, NE has advised that any additional residential development within 13.8km of the New Forest should not be permitted without first securing appropriate mitigation.
65. The New Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy 2023, prepared by Footprint Ecology, demonstrates that additional residential development within 13.8km of the New Forest Designated Sites, where in conjunction with advice from Natural England, it has been recognised that housing growth and increases in bedroom numbers have the potential to generate cumulative impacts upon the integrity of the New Forest. There is a reasonable

likelihood that the occupants of the proposed development would visit the New Forest for recreation purposes.

66. BCP Council's approved mechanism to deliver such compensation is via a s106 legal agreement. The draft New Forest Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy (October 2024) sets out suitable mitigation can be implemented through the collection of SAMMs payments and sets a tariff per net dwelling of £300 for most of the BCP area. The site is outside the 13.8 Km buffer zone, but within the additional buffer zone beyond the 13.8km where development for 200 + dwellings are also subject to making a financial mitigation payment. However, as the proposal is only for 15 dwellings it is not liable to make a financial mitigation contribution towards the New Forest.
67. Whilst the site is within the 13.8km zone, no contributions are required as there is no net gain in bedrooms.

Community Infrastructure Levy

68. The development proposal is located outside Bournemouth City Centre and provides a form of supported living, classed as a C2 use (Residential Institution). The proposal, therefore, is CIL liable. However, as there is no net increase in the number of bedrooms, no levy will be charged.

Planning Balance

65. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to conditions, and will not result in any significant impact upon neighbour amenity, character and visual appearance of the area, highway safety, or result in increased risk of flooding or contamination.
66. Therefore, having considered the appropriate development plan policy and other material considerations, including the NPPF, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this permission, the development would be in accordance with the Development Plan, would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area or the amenities of neighbouring and proposed occupiers and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The Development Plan Policies considered in reaching this decision are set out above.

Recommendation

GRANT permission with the following conditions, which are subject to alteration/addition by the Head of Planning Services provided any alteration/addition does not go to the core of the decision:

Conditions

List of Approved Plans

1. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan, dated the 11th of July 2024

Floor Plans and Layout
Proposed Site Layout 1-500, dated 6th of August 2025
Proposed Site Layout 1-1250, dated 6th of August 2025

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

Adhere to Management Plan

2. The change of use hereby approved shall, at all times, be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Management Plan V1.0, dated November 2024.

Reason: To ensure the facility is well managed

Specific Use Only

3. The development hereby permitted shall only be used for Supported Living and for no other purpose, including any other purposes in Class C2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To preserve the residential amenities of nearby residential properties.

Informatives

BNG

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless: (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan. The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Based on the information available this permission does not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed is relevant".

Working Positively with Applicants

2. In accordance with paragraph 39 of the revised NPPF the Council, as Local Planning Authority, takes a positive, creative and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The Council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions. In this instance:

The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required, other than the submission of better detailed plans.

Background Documents:

Case File – ref 7-2025-22076-B

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

Background Documents