

Application: 22/35765/FUL

Case Officer: Vanessa Blake

Date Registered: 28 March 2022

Target Decision Date: 27 June 2022
Extended To: 29 July 2022

Address: Former University Halls of Residence, Stafford Education and Enterprise Park, Weston Road, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST18 0AB

Ward: Milwich

Parish: Hopton and Coton

Proposal: Change of use from student accommodation to asylum seeker accommodation

Applicant: Serco Ltd

Recommendation: Approve, subject to conditions

Supplementary Report - Observations/representations received since completion of report

Additional neighbour responses:

28 representations of objections from 8 additional addresses (including 2 from outside the Borough), additional material planning considerations summarised below:

- The building has not been fully occupied for years
- Staffordshire has reached its limit of acceptance of asylum seekers
- The accommodation would be unmanaged by authorities
- Occupation by students is not the same as asylum seekers – students lived here in term time and spent considerable amounts of time away from the accommodation for lectures and socialising etc
- Stafford currently has a housing shortage
- Stafford already has a lot of homeless people
- Impact upon human rights

1 representation of support from 1 address outside the Borough, additional material planning considerations summarised below:

- Existing building is suitable for proposal, requiring no external development
- Stafford currently has no provision for housing asylum seekers
- Proposal is more appropriate than housing asylum seekers in hotels

1 neutral representation from Staffordshire County Council Director of Children and Families, additional material planning considerations summarised below:

- Impact on the local area, community and services are likely to be considerable

- Mitigation measures need to be secured to control the impacts
- Further information is required regarding early years and post 16 education
- Asylum seekers in the DA will increase demand on local services, asylum seekers are likely to have more challenging health needs than students. The local health providers should confirm what impacts need to be mitigated
- Planning conditions or obligations are required to make good the assumptions made in the submission, including: temporary use until 2029, internal alterations completed before occupation, provision of outdoor space before occupation, submission for approval of a site management plan and compliance at all times, maximum bedspace and occupant numbers, provision of adequate car parking spaces and bicycle storage, provision of shuttle bus service, provision of on-site health care provision for the IA, provision of education (including early years, primary, secondary and post 16), implementation of covid and infectious diseases management systems
- SCC should be a party to any related S106 planning obligation

Additional observations:

The majority of the additional responses repeat comments already received and these comments have been addressed in the main committee report.

The comments from Staffordshire County Council Director of Children and Families are noted. The majority of the comments relate to the management of the facility which is not a material planning consideration and could not be controlled by the planning system. It is also noted that Staffordshire County Council Education Team did not request any conditions or obligations. It is therefore not considered necessary or reasonable to include any additional conditions or obligations to the recommendation.

It should be noted that the facility would be subject to other controls outside of the planning system.