

22nd December 2023

Dear Resident,

Re: The Limes

We are writing to share with you, KCC's plans for The Limes.

We would like to apologise for not being able to do so before now but on-going legal and funding discussions between KCC and Central Government means there is limited information that can be shared at this point. Nonetheless, we are aware of recent media reports so wish to share with you now, what we can.

In July, the High Court ruled Kent County Council (KCC) must take "every possible step" to increase its capacity to accommodate and look after all unaccompanied asylum-seeking (UAS) children arriving in the county. The legal process is ongoing, as are the funding discussions with Central Government.

KCC must comply with the Court ruling. As a result, KCC is required to identify accommodation which can be utilised to support UAS children at pace.

The Limes has been selected as one of the properties that will support the service for the following reasons:

- Internal spaces are already configured in a layout that can provide a home for children.
- It is located to enable children to reside within a community, which they can participate in.
- The layout and location is similar to existing temporary accommodation for children before they move to other Local Authorities under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS)

We have now commenced some early enabling works at The Limes to help ensure we are able to open the accommodation prior to UAS children arriving in the spring/summer period. As a result, you will start to see increased activity at the site.

Operation

KCC currently operate two existing Reception Centres which provide temporary accommodation and care for such children, while they await transfer to other Local Authorities under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The Limes will follow the same model with children expected to be at the centre for only a short period of time until they are transferred on the NTS to other Local Authorities. The centre will be run and supported by KCC staff with a 24 hour staff and security presence on site.

Whilst the children are in KCC's care, they are provided with a comfortable and nurturing environment. This includes meeting their basic care needs (food, clothing, toiletries) and providing a weekly program of education and activities to support their well-being until they move to the care of another local authority. As demonstrated by our already established sites, we do not anticipate any disturbances to the local area and will work with residents to address any concerns. We hope you will support us in promoting the children's wellbeing and sense of belonging within the community when the site opens next year.

Construction

Construction activities are expected to be taking place on site until September 2024.

We have worked closely with our contractors to ensure we minimise noise and disruption to the local area. For example, deliveries will be taking place outside of school drop off and pick up periods to prevent congestion.

In order to ensure safe access for our initial deliveries and to protect any vehicles parked on the road, we initially set out some temporary parking restrictions outside our property. In order to minimise further impact, we hope to implement time-based restrictions that will not be enforceable during evenings and weekends. We apologise for the inconvenience this may cause, but hope you will support us in providing safe access and a clear line of sight for our delivery drivers. We intend to remove the restrictions as soon as possible upon completion of the works.

Enquiries

We hope this information provides some reassurance regarding The Limes. We will keep you updated on the construction and operation of the site going forward.

We hope that we have been able to provide some information in relation to the site and will be in touch in the new year.