

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Council's original planning guidelines concerning the suitability of properties for day nursery use and outdoor amenity space requirements for day nurseries were first adopted in 1993 and subsequently revised periodically. The following guidance was revised in the autumn of 2000 and was adopted by Council on the 29th January 2001 after public consultation. The Supplementary Planning Guidance seeks to amplify Policies 5.30 and 5.31 of the Deposit District Wide Local Plan. The contents of this guidance and the policies in the Local Plan will be used as material planning considerations in applications for day nurseries and playgroups. Regard will, however, be given to the physical circumstances and the individual site conditions of each application.

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 This guidance note provides planning advice for people who wish to set up playgroups and day nurseries. Advice should also be sought from the Council's Social Services Directorate as they have requirements that will need to be complied with as well. For the purposes of this guidance the term "day nursery" includes "playgroup".
- 3 There is a need in the town for the provision of pre-school child-care facilities. Playgroups help the development of children. The availability of facilities also allows parents to maintain jobs or resume careers.
- 4 Planning permission is usually needed to set up child-care facilities. However, there are exceptions.

It is not necessary to obtain planning permission, for example, if the facility is being run from a public hall.

Likewise, Registered Childminders working from home are unlikely to need planning permission.

It is therefore best to check with the Planning Services Division before proceeding.

- 5 The Council's planning policy is to encourage the establishment of day nursery facilities in suitable premises close to places of employment within the town. Care has to be taken, however, if it is intended to establish premises in residential areas. In the latter case, planning permission will only be granted where the use will not have an adverse effect on the area through noise, appearance, or the level of traffic generated. Because most problems are likely to arise from establishments in residential areas this guidance note primarily relates to the setting-up of day nursery facilities in residential properties, although the general principles are applicable to other properties. It is the intention of the Council to have regard to the physical circumstances and the individual site conditions of each application in applying this supplementary planning guidance.
- 6 The Council operates a general policy of retaining the town's stock of small family housing, outlined in Policy 6.16. Therefore only properties with a gross external floor area in excess of 140 sq.m. and with a minimum of six habitable rooms will be considered as suitable candidates for conversion. Day nurseries will normally be restricted to the ground floor, the total conversion of a house being resisted.
- 7 One of the most common problems arising from day nurseries is noise

disturbance to neighbours. For this reason, planning permission is unlikely to be granted in semi-detached or terraced housing.

- 8 Adequate provision of suitable outdoor play space is considered a necessity. For guidance, applicants should be seeking a minimum of 100 sq.m for 12 children or less. This should increase to 150sq.m for premises with more than 12 children attending. In order that the children's safety is ensured and that neighbours amenities are protected, the play area should be screened, enclosed and physically separated from any drive, parking areas or roads, and neither should the garden immediately abut a neighbours living room.
- 9 A figure of 20 children will normally be considered the maximum for day nurseries in residential areas. Large buildings with extensive gardens in roads characterised by hotels, educational establishments and other commercial uses rather than houses, may be considered more appropriate locations for day nurseries accommodating more than 20 children.
- 10 A concentration of day nurseries within a short stretch of the same road or adjacent roads is likely to be resisted where it would change the character of the area or create parking or traffic problems. Day nurseries will normally be required to provide on-site parking for cars at a rate of one space per member of staff, plus provision for the occupiers of the residential accommodation within the building. Where feasible an in/out driving/ parking facility for dropping off and collecting children within the site will be encouraged.

- 11 Any planning consent will usually be limited to a temporary period of one year, in the first instance, to enable the Council to assess the impact of the day nursery on the immediate neighbourhood. Any consents will also be conditioned to limit the maximum number of children attending at any one time and to control the hours of use of the day nursery.

