



Derry City & Strabane  
District Council

Comhairle Chathair  
Dhoire & Cheantar  
an tSrátha Báin

Derry Cittie & Strábane  
Destríck Cooncil

DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



## PLAN STRATEGY

Development Management Advice Note 13 (DMAN) 13 – Creches, Day Nurseries  
and Preschool Playgroups, DRAFT- June 2025

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/subsites/ldp>



## **DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032**



#### **Development Management Advice Note (DMAN) 13**

#### **Creches, Day Nurseries and Pre-School Play Groups**

**DRAFT – June 2025**

**Any references to policy contexts should be read as referring to the  
most recent legislation and policy.**

## CONTENTS

	Page
1) Introduction	4
2) General Guidance and Definitions	4
3) Planning Application Requirements	5
4) Applications in Non-Residential Areas	5
5) Applications in Residential Area	6
6) Applications in Non-Residential Areas	7
7) Applications for Listed Buildings	8
8) Access	8
9) Car Parking	8
10) Proliferation of Uses	9
11) Imposition of Conditions	9
12) Rural Areas	9
13) Department of Health Requirements	9



Derry City & Strabane  
District Council  
Comhairle  
Chathair Dhoire &  
Cheantar an tSrátha Báin  
Derry Cille & Strábane  
Distric Council

## **DMAN 13 Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-School Playgroups:**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The purpose of this Development Management Advice Note is to give general guidance to intending developers, their professional advisors and agents. This advice deals with the Planning issues that arise concerning applications to establish crèches, day nurseries and pre-school playgroups and sets out the criteria which the Council will take into account when determining such proposals.
- 1.2. Any legal views expressed in this note have no statutory force and should not be relied upon as an authoritative interpretation of the law.

### **2. General Guidance and Definitions**

- 2.1 Early Years Teams are specialist teams of social workers within the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. They are responsible for the registration, inspection, monitoring and support of childminders and day care providers.
- 2.2 Registered Childminders are self-employed carers who look after children in their own homes. They must be registered with the local Health and Social Care Trust (HSC Trust) if they are paid to look after children they are not closely related to for more than two hours in the day. The HSC Trust will want to be satisfied that the standard of facilities provided are satisfactory and that the children are being given proper care.
- 2.3 There is no specific definition given in Planning legislation of the term "crèche", "day nursery" or "pre-school playgroup" however the following is a broad description which would cover the uses. Day Nurseries are usually privately run and provide care for children aged from six weeks to five years old. All must be registered and annually inspected by Early Years Team in your local HSC Trust.
- 2.4 Playgroups offer short daily sessions of care and learning through play for children aged two to four years old.
- 2.5 In a crèche, young children are cared for during the day while their parents or carers do something else on the same premises, for example working, shopping or at classes.
- 2.6 Persons who wish to use their own homes for child minding will not normally require Planning permission where the number of children is restricted to 3 or less. Other factors such as hours of operation, size of premises, potential traffic hazards, etc, may however have important implications in particular situations and in such cases a Planning application may be necessary. Where the number of children exceeds 3



Planning permission may be required depending on local land use circumstances. In either case therefore it is advisable to contact The Council Planning Department seeking a determination as to whether the submission of a Planning application is considered necessary.

### **3. Planning Application Requirements**

- 3.1 Crèches, day nurseries and pre-school play-groups fall within Class D1: Community and Cultural Uses of the 'The Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2015. The Council reserves the right to grant Planning permission subject to a condition that no further change of use shall take place within the class without the express grant of Planning permission.
- 3.2 Obtaining permission to use a building for a crèche, day nursery or pre-school playgroup involves applying for full Planning permission for change of use. In order to allow the Council to make a full assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of the immediate area, all future applicants will be required to provide information on the following:-
- the proposed number and age range of children to be catered for;
  - the proposed number of staff, the ratio of staff to children and the maximum number of staff on the premises at any given time;
  - hours and days of opening;
  - an indication of the internal floorspace arrangements and for external play space provision (both soft and hard surfaces);
  - a block layout plan indicating proposed car parking provision, landscaping and screening proposals, the means of access and internal vehicle manoeuvring space.

### **4. Applications in Non-Residential Areas**

- 4.1 There has been pressure for crèche, day nursery and pre-school playgroup facilities to be provided in or near existing work places. The Council considers that a location in an Economic Development area would be a particularly sensitive issue, with potential to impact negatively on the primary ED use of the area. Developers would need to ensure that such a location is ancillary, complementary, compatible, etc. as well as being acceptable in terms of the environmental impacts of adjacent uses, traffic hazards and potential dangers from industrial plant or machinery. (Refer in particular to the Justification & Amplification text in Policy ED 4 in the LDP Plan Strategy.)

- 4.2 In areas of predominantly commercial land uses or areas of mixed commercial and retail uses, the provision of a crèche, day nursery or pre-school playgroup would normally be acceptable subject to the consideration that such a use would not usually be allowed to break up an otherwise continuous shopping frontage. In some instances, it may be possible for the use to locate on the upper floors of a building thus overcoming this objection. In areas of mixed land use, the effects of the proposal on any residential properties will be considered in the same way as proposals in wholly residential areas. (Refer in particular to Policy RP 8 and RP 10 in the LDP Plan Strategy.)

## **5. Applications in Residential Area**

- 5.1 To a limited extent, crèches, day nurseries and pre-school playgroups have operated for some time as part of the overall activities within existing community buildings such as church complexes and community centres. While such premises may often be acceptable to the Council, trends would indicate that such day care facilities are becoming increasingly specialised in nature and operated on a commercial basis.
- 5.2 The Council would therefore anticipate that a substantial proportion of future applications will be for specialised crèches, day nurseries and pre-school playgroups in properties located within residential areas. Such proposals are unlikely to be acceptable in terraced or semi-detached properties in residential areas where the predominant form of occupation is by single families. Detached dwellings may be more acceptable for this type of use, particularly if they are substantial villas set in reasonably large grounds with mature landscaping. In determining the suitability of premises for such purposes, the Council will consider the impact of any proposed development on the existing character and amenity of the area and the implications for parking and road safety. In residential areas, the Council will not normally grant permission for the change of use of an entire dwelling but may give favourable consideration to proposals for the joint use of a property as a residence and crèche, day nursery playgroup.
- 5.3 In considering the impact of the proposal on a residential area, the Council will have particular regard to the scale of operation, potential nuisance and disturbance, and the visual impact of the proposal:

### **(1) Scale of Operation**

One of the main determinants of the acceptability of a proposal will be its scale. Whilst a proposal involving a small number of children might be acceptable in a residential area, one catering for 30 children could have a serious detrimental effect on residential amenity. The Council will therefore wish to be satisfied that the scale of operation is appropriate both in relation to the specific site and the general neighbourhood.

### **(2) Potential Nuisance and Disturbance**

The main source of disturbance is noise generated either by additional traffic attracted to the site, or by the outdoor playing of the children. In considering a proposal the Council will wish to be satisfied that traffic arrangements are satisfactory and adequate outdoor play space is available. Such play space should not be located in close proximity to habitable rooms of any adjacent residential properties. The Council will consider the impact that the proposed hours of operation may have on residential amenity.

### **(3) Visual Impact**

Regard will be taken to the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity and character of the area. The impact on existing landscaping will be considered together with the need for the provision of new or additional landscape treatment on any proposed site.

- Proposals to provide car parking space in front gardens in residential areas are unlikely to be acceptable.
- Parking provision and outdoor play areas should normally be screened from the public road and from adjoining property.
- Careful consideration should be given to materials used on surfaces. As a general rule the hard surfacing of gardens will be discouraged.
- Applications which involve the use of temporary structures such as portacabins will be considered only in the most exceptional circumstances, and if approved the permission will be for a strictly limited period of time. Again, screening from the public road and adjacent properties would be important.
- Extensions to existing buildings will only be permitted where it is clear that the extension would not result in a significant impact on residential amenity.

## **6. Applications in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character**

- 6.1 The proposed conversion to a crèche, day nursery or pre-school playgroup will be considered in the light of Planning policy for such an area. Where the proposal is considered acceptable in principle the detail of the proposed development must have special regard to the special architectural and historic character of the area. Applications will be assessed against HE 5 Conservation Areas or HE 6 Areas of Townscape / Village Character as set out in the LDP.

## **7. Applications for Listed Buildings**

- 7.1 The change of use of a building listed for its special architectural or historic interest to a crèche, day nursery or pre-school playgroup may be acceptable, especially if such a use would help prolong its viable use or enhance its appearance. Alterations or extensions to such buildings will be strictly controlled and proposals which are unsympathetic to the character, structure or appearance of listed buildings will not be permitted. Applications will be assessed against HE4 Listed Buildings and their Settings as set out in the LDP.

## **8. Access**

- 8.1 In keeping with policy TAM 2 of the LDP, permission will only be granted for developments where proposed access does not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic. The proposal must also not conflict with Policy TAM 3 Access to Protected Routes.
- 8.2 If access or sightline requirements result in an unacceptable loss of amenity by the removal of existing landscaping, applications are unlikely to receive favourable consideration. Replanting behind sightlines will normally be a condition of Planning permission. Openings for vehicle access should be kept to a minimum and should not exceed 50% of the site frontage.

## **9. Car Parking**

- 9.1 Off-street car parking should normally be provided to the following standards:-  
Staff parking:

- one space per 3 full-time members of staff;
- one space per 6 part-time members of staff;

Visitor parking:

- one space per 10 children is considered to be adequate.

- 9.2 Whist these set standards will be used as a guide each application will be considered on its merits. Where possible, applicants should consider the provision of a lay-by facility along the frontage of the site. Provision must be made for vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.

## **10. Proliferation of Uses**

- 10.1 The Council is of the opinion that while in many areas the introduction of one or two specialist uses of this nature may be acceptable, a proliferation of such uses can collectively lead to a changed in the overall character of an area. In determining each individual application therefore, the Council will take into consideration the number and location of other non-residential and specialist residential uses and the cumulative effect of these uses on the immediate neighbourhood.



## **11. Imposition of Conditions**

11.1 Where promotion is granted for the provision of a crèche, day nursery or pre-school playgroup, the Council may impose conditions covering the following aspects in particular:

- the total number of children cared for on the site to ensure the business does not expand beyond the capacity of the site;
- the days and hours of opening where necessary to minimise possible adverse effects of any proposal on residential amenity;
- landscaping and screening where appropriate;
- a time-limited permission may be granted where a trial period is considered appropriate.

## **12. Rural Area**

12.1 Proposals for such uses in rural areas will be considered in the context of the Local Development Plan. The Council considers that towns and other smaller rural settlements acting as existing service centres for the surrounding population are the appropriate location for rural crèches, day nurseries and pre-school playgroups. Outside settlements, permission may be granted in a rural area to meet a defined local need. To be acceptable such a proposal would need to be:

- part-use of an existing residential property; the total conversion of a dwelling would not be acceptable;
- acceptable in terms of the visual impact on the landscape, including the impact of car parking and alterations to the access;
- accessed to a road other than a Main Traffic Route.

This policy will also apply in a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area.

## **13. Department of Health Requirements**

13.1 In determining all applications the Council shall have regard to the Department of Health's Minimum Standards, which include strict guidelines on the ratio of staff to children.