

Directorate of Children's Services

Early Years and Childcare Team
Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU

Planning Policy Team
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
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E-mail: earlyyears@reading.gov.uk

Date: 21 April 2026

Your contact is: brett.wilcock@reading.gov.uk

Planning Application Ref: PL/26/0277

Officer: Catrin Davies

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: GARDEN OF 80 WHITLEY WOOD ROAD, READING, RG2 8JE

Proposal: Change of use of rear garden of No.80 from residential (C3) to a mixed use (sui generis) residential and childcare nursery with the erection of two outbuildings used to accommodate 15 FTE childcare spaces (Retrospective)

Dear Planning Policy Team,

I am writing to set out the Early Years and Childcare Team's position in relation to a planning request seeking approval to increase registered childcare places from 8 to 15, in response to identified parental demand. This proposed expansion is supported through the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.

Sweet Pea Childminding, operated by Donna DeFazio, is an established Ofsted-registered early years provision located within Whitley Ward. Since commencing operations in September 2024, the setting has experienced exceptionally high demand. The provider is currently fully booked until September 2026, holds a waiting list of approximately 17 families, and continues to receive regular new enquiries with a clear and sustained demand for childcare provision within the local area.

Based on Early Years sufficiency analysis for Spring 2025, and the provider's confirmation that they have the capacity to safely accommodate additional children, the Early Years and Childcare Team is supportive of the request to increase registered numbers to 15 places, subject to all necessary planning and statutory approvals being secured. Additionally, we welcome the provider's commitment to offering places for targeted families eligible for Funded Early Learning for two-year-olds, alongside the working entitlements, in line with local priorities.

As referenced in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2025, some of the most deprived areas of Reading are located within and around the wards of Church and Whitley, highlighting an ongoing need for childcare provision in this area.

Furthermore, the Reading Borough Council Residential Commitments 2025 identifies the town centre as the main focus for new housing delivery, with South Reading acting as a secondary focus. Planned increases in residential dwellings typically result in a corresponding increase in demand for childcare places, reinforcing the need to support appropriate expansion of existing early years provision where capacity pressures are evident.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should any further information or clarification be required.

Kind regards

B. Wilcock

Brett Wilcock
Wraparound Childcare Coordinator
Early Years & Childcare Team
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