



PLANNING STATEMENT

**PROPOSED INCREASE IN CHILDCARE SPACES from 37 TO 50
CHILDREN at**

Wigwam Day Nursery, 22 Fatherson Road, Reading, RG1 4PL

**PREPARED BY
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May 2026



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application submitted on behalf of Wigwam Day Nursery in relation to the existing nursery premises at 22 Fatherson Road, Reading, RG1 4PL.
- 1.2 Planning permission 08/00714/FUL was granted by Reading Borough Council on 17th September 2008 for 'Relocation of kitchen enabling increase in childcare spaces from 29 to 37, and addition of front and rear skylights to roof and replaced windows throughout'.
- 1.3 Condition 5 currently states: 'The number of children attending the nursery shall not exceed 37 for the entire building without the written approval of the local planning authority'.
- 1.4 This application seeks consent to increase the maximum number of children attending the nursery from 37 to 50. There will be no change in the number of staff or to the opening hours.
- 1.5 The nursery is a long established and lawful community use which has operated from the site since the 1970s. The proposal does not involve any physical extension to the building, alterations to the site layout, or changes to the existing operating hours. The application relates solely to an increase in operational capacity.
- 1.6 The application is supported by the following technical documents:
- Transport Statement prepared by Motion;
 - Travel Plan prepared by Motion; and
 - External Activity Assessment prepared by LCP Acoustics.
- 1.7 These documents demonstrate that the proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts in relation to highways, parking, accessibility or residential amenity.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises an existing children's day nursery operating since the 1970s from a substantial three-storey Victorian semi-detached property located on the western side of Fatherson Road within Reading.
- 2.2 The nursery occupies No. 22 Fatherson Road, whilst the adjoining semi-detached property at No. 20 remains in residential use as an HMO. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, comprising a mix of Victorian terraced and semi-detached dwellings together with some larger residential and commercial buildings in the wider area.

- 2.3 The site benefits from an enclosed rear outdoor play area associated with the nursery use. Existing boundary treatments surround the play space and there are no proposed changes to these arrangements as part of this application.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 PL/08/0472 – Withdrawn – Demolition of existing lean-to shed replaced by 2-storey side extension.
- 3.2 PL/08/0473 – Approved – Non-illuminated business sign.
- 3.3 PL/08/0701 – Approved – Relocation of kitchen enabling increase in childcare spaces from 29 to 37, and addition of front and rear skylights to roof and replaced windows throughout.
- 3.4 PL/11/0834 – Approved – Retrospective application for 12 Canadian black solar panels on the roof.
- 3.5 PL/12/1085 – Refused – Erection of a garden room for the nursery use in the neighbouring properties back garden (no. 20)

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application seeks planning permission under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Condition 5 of planning permission 08/00714/FUL to allow an increase in the number of children attending the nursery from 37 to 50.
- 4.2 No physical extensions or alterations are proposed to the building as part of this application.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

- 5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's overarching planning objectives and contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant sections of the NPPF include:

- Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development;

- Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport;
- Chapter 11 – Making Effective Use of Land;

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm
- Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity
- Policy EM1 – Provision of Employment
- Policy EM4 – Maintaining a Variety of Premises
- Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- Policy OU1 – New and Existing Community Facilities

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main material planning considerations to be considered as part of this assessment are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Character and Design
- Neighbour Amenity
- Highways

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The application site comprises an established and lawful children's day nursery which has operated from the premises since the 1970s. The principle of nursery use at the site is therefore firmly established.
- 6.3 The proposal seeks only to increase the number of children by 13, from a maximum number of 37 to 50 and does not involve any physical expansion of the building, alterations to the established outdoor play areas, or changes to the overall character of the use.
- 6.4 The principle of intensification at the site has previously been accepted by Reading Borough Council under planning permission 08/00714/FUL, which approved an increase in nursery numbers from 29 to 37 children (8). The associated delegated officer report confirmed that the

increase was acceptable in principle and would not result in unacceptable impacts in relation to highways, parking or residential amenity.

- 6.5 The proposal would support the continued operation and enhancement of an important existing community facility within Reading. In this regard, the proposal accords with the social objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to promote healthy and inclusive communities and support access to local services and community facilities.
- 6.6 The proposal also accords with Policy CS31 of the Reading Borough Core Strategy, previously identified by the Council as relevant to the lawful operation and expansion of the nursery use. Policy CS31 supports the retention and enhancement of community facilities where they continue to serve the needs of the local population.
- 6.7 The site occupies a highly sustainable urban location close to Reading town centre with excellent accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. The supporting Travel Plan confirms that the site achieves a DfT Connectivity Score of 87 and falls within Band A accessibility, representing excellent connectivity to sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.8 The proposal therefore represents a sustainable form of development within an accessible urban location and accords with the overarching sustainability objectives of the NPPF.
- 6.9 Accordingly, the principle of the proposed development is considered entirely acceptable.

Design, Character and Appearance

- 6.10 Policy CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework seek to ensure that development responds positively to local character and maintains the visual quality of the surrounding area.
- 6.11 The proposal does not involve any external alterations, extensions or operational changes which would materially alter the visual appearance of the site or its relationship with the surrounding streetscene.
- 6.12 The nursery would continue to operate from the existing building with no changes proposed to the established outdoor play areas, boundary treatments, access arrangements or wider site layout.
- 6.13 The lawful use of the site as a children's day nursery is long established and the proposal would not alter the overall character of the site or introduce any visually intrusive features within the surrounding area.

- 6.14 The proposal would therefore preserve the existing character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and accords with Policy CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan together with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.15 Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable harm to the living environment of neighbouring occupiers, including impacts arising from noise and disturbance.
- 6.16 The application is supported by an External Activity Assessment prepared by LCP Acoustics which assesses the potential impact of increased nursery activity upon surrounding residential receptors.
- 6.17 The report confirms that there would be no changes to the existing boundary treatment surrounding the outdoor play areas. The assessment also confirms that the external play areas are not intended to be used by all children simultaneously but instead operate through smaller supervised groups.
- 6.18 The acoustic assessment concludes that the proposed increase in child numbers by 13 would result in only approximately a 1dB increase in noise levels. The report states that such an increase would represent a “low impact” in BS4142 terms and would likely not be perceptible to human hearing.
- 6.19 The report therefore concludes that the proposal would not negatively impact neighbouring residents.
- 6.20 It is also relevant that the nursery is a long-established use operating within a dense urban environment close to Reading town centre.
- 6.21 Further, Environmental Health previously raised no objections to the earlier increase in nursery numbers approved under planning permission 08/00714/FUL.
- 6.22 Having regard to the submitted technical evidence and the established lawful use of the site, it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential amenity.
- 6.23 The proposal therefore accords with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the environmental objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways

- 6.24 Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan seeks to ensure that development proposals do not result in material harm to the functioning or safety of the transport network and that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users.
- 6.25 Similarly, Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework require development proposals to provide safe and suitable access for all users and confirm that development should only be refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.26 The application is supported by a detailed Transport Statement and Travel Plan prepared by Motion.
- 6.27 The Transport Statement confirms that the nursery occupies a highly sustainable location with strong accessibility to local services, bus routes, pedestrian routes and cycle infrastructure. The report further confirms that the nursery promotes sustainable travel for both staff and parents wherever possible.
- 6.28 The site is located approximately 150 metres from nearby bus stops on Kings Road and within walking distance of Reading Railway Station, which provides extensive regional and national rail services, including Elizabeth Line connections.
- 6.29 The Transport Statement confirms that the nursery is effectively car free and located within a controlled parking zone. Parking surveys undertaken during peak morning drop-off and evening collection periods demonstrate that spare parking capacity exists within the surrounding area during operational periods.
- 6.30 Importantly, the supporting technical evidence concludes that the proposal would not lead to severe impacts upon the operation or free flow of traffic on the adjoining highway network.
- 6.31 The application is also accompanied by an updated Travel Plan which seeks to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, promote sustainable travel choices and minimise nursery-related vehicle movements.
- 6.32 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts upon highway safety, parking provision or the surrounding transport network.
- 6.33 The proposal therefore accords with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan together with the sustainable transport objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This application seeks planning permission to allow an increase in nursery numbers from 37 to 50 children at Wigwam Day Nursery, 22 Fatherson Road in Reading.
- 7.2 The proposal relates solely to an operational increase in child capacity and does not involve any physical expansion of the premises or material alteration to the character of the site.
- 7.3 The nursery is a long established and lawful community facility operating from a highly sustainable urban location close to Reading town centre. The principle of intensification at the site has previously been accepted by Reading Borough Council under planning permission 08/00714/FUL.
- 7.4 The supporting technical evidence demonstrates that:
- the proposal would not result in severe highway impacts;
 - safe and suitable access would continue to be achieved for all users;
 - sufficient parking capacity exists within the surrounding area;
 - the site benefits from excellent accessibility to sustainable modes of transport; and
 - the proposal would result in a negligible acoustic impact upon neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.5 The proposal therefore accords with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policies TR3, TR5 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Policy CS31 of the Reading Borough Core Strategy.
- 7.6 In light of the above, the application is respectfully approved.