



Building & Development Control Committee

Running a business from home

It may be possible to run a business from your home without the need to obtain planning permission. However, it is always wise to contact the Planning Department first for advice and guidance. This information sheet offers some basic advice about whether or not permission is needed.

The following questions are often asked:

Do I need planning permission?

- To use a room as a personal office?
- To use a room as a hairdressers?
- To use a room for dressmaking?
- To give music or language tuition?
- To repair cars and/or store goods associated with a business?
- To run a child-minding business or a playgroup?

There is no clear-cut answer. The Planning Department will need to know more details about the size and location of your property and the particular business activity in order to give you an answer.

As a general rule:

- Planning permission will be required if the house is no longer mainly residential in character and use; and
- Planning permission will not be required if the house continues to be used mainly as a home.

A change in character or use will probably arise and permission will be required if the answer to any of the following questions is **YES**:

- Will your home cease to be used mainly as a place to live?
- Will your business cause a noticeable increase in traffic or people calling?
- Will your business disturb your neighbours at unreasonable hours or be noisy or smelly?
- Will the business involve activities which are unusual in a residential area?
- Will it involve people outside your household coming to work at your house?

A change in character or use probably will not arise, and planning permission will not be required, if the answer to the following questions is **YES**:

- Will the business only involve a single room and primarily involve use of a telephone?
- Will only members of the household be involved?
- Will there be few or no deliveries other than normal post?
- Will there be no noise or smell?
- Will it be low key and not inconvenience your neighbours?

It is possible that a low key use which does not need planning permission today may intensify in the future. If this happens the answers to some of the above questions may change and planning permission may then be required.

This does not mean a business would be breaking the 'planning laws' or that enforcement action would automatically follow. It would be possible to apply for retrospective permission, and planning permission may be granted, but it is likely that certain conditions on the use would be imposed.

If permission is refused, the Department would discuss with you the various options such as:

- Reducing the overall level of business to an appropriate level;
- The discontinuance of particular parts of the business which may be causing problems;
- The relocation of your business to other premises.

As a last resort the Committee could take enforcement action, if a business is causing serious problems, for example to a neighbour's amenity or to road safety. However, this would only occur after investigating the options above.

If you need further advice please contact: -

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