

Working from Home

Planning Guidance Note

Introduction

Some businesses can easily and suitably be operated from a house, particularly ones in which a single or small number of rooms are used mainly as a phone or postal point, do not involve visiting members of the public (or visiting staff) and generate no noise or disturbance to neighbours. Others, however, can have a detrimental impact on the amenity of residential areas by excessive parking, storage of materials or requirement for access during anti-social hours and noise.

Format of Guidance

All planning guidance notes are material considerations in the assessment of planning applications and shall be afforded significant weight in the decision making process. Failure to comply with Guidance Notes may be a reason for refusal of planning consent.

Planning Framework

Local Plan policies and associated guidance notes place emphasis on high quality places and the protection of neighbouring residential amenity. East Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2, Policy DQ1 – Assessing Proposed Uses states that *“developments should enhance and certainly not reduce the amenity and character of the surrounding area”*.

Policy Guidance

The main consideration is what effect the use will have on neighbours and the amenity of the area in general. A balance requires to be struck between: a) what individuals can do within their own property and the need to encourage the creation of local business; and, b) controls on activities which adversely affect the amenity of neighbours. People living in quiet residential areas rightly expect their amenity to be protected from unacceptable neighbouring uses.

When it is proposed to operate a business from a house, planning permission may be required. In general terms the use of one room of a house for a business which generates no clients, traffic or noise will not require planning permission as there will be no material effect on the use of the house or on the residential environment of the area. Use of more than one room generally will require planning permission as will any use affecting the amenity of the surrounding properties. Activities will generally not be allowed which generate noise, on-street parking, high levels of traffic, where large goods vehicles will be based at the site or where the amenity of the area will be adversely affected.

The information required to assess whether planning permission will be required, and if so, whether it is likely to be acceptable, includes the following;

1. What type of business is it?
2. What type of property is it? (e.g. detached, semi-detached, terraced or flatted)
3. How many rooms has the house and how many of these will be used for the business?
4. How many staff will work at the house and how many of these do not live at the house?

5. How many visitors/clients will there be to the house per day/week?
6. Is there any off-street parking at the site?
7. What hours will it be operating?
8. What vehicles will be based at the site and will there be any business deliveries?
9. Will any machinery/equipment be used?
10. Will any materials/goods be stored at the site?

Each case is determined on its merits as types of properties and areas vary greatly. It is not, therefore, possible to give a definitive list of which uses will be acceptable.

The use of the property should not change the residential appearance of the house or area in general, and businesses should not be intrusive in the area by, for example, the installation of signs.

Where a business is unsuitable for a house, the Council would encourage its location in proper business premises, either in the town centres/local shopping areas or in industrial/office buildings suitably designed and located for the use. Business Gateway may be able to assist anyone in looking for commercial premises.