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Best Practice for Temporary Play Streets

If councils wish to support residents to follow the 'playing out' model using the guidance and resources freely available on the Playing Out website, we strongly recommend the following considerations when drafting a local play street policy and procedure, based on best practice from across the UK. It is well worthwhile looking at other councils' application forms and guidance so as not to entirely reinvent the wheel. We can also provide a template application form for you to adapt.

1. Do not charge residents for processing applications. The public health benefits for children alone far outweigh the minimal administrative costs to the council.
2. One annual application form should allow for multiple play street closures.
3. Make the application form simple and easy for residents to use, without jargon.
4. Don't set any limit on the number/length of closures per year.
5. Let residents choose the days/times that suit them (within reason)
6. Don't set deadlines for applications but accept them year-round.
7. Be clear what type of road is suitable (most residential streets).
8. Offer residents advice on road closure layout, correct signage etc.
9. Signage and barrier requirements should ensure safety without being too onerous or difficult to store. Ideally, the council would provide residents with simple signage and barriers for duration of their Order.
10. A formal consultation letter to all households within the closure area is good practice to ensure any concerns can be addressed. Requiring proof of majority support (e.g. petition or survey) is an unnecessary obligation on residents.
11. Only 'material' objections should be considered, not those based on a disagreement with the general principle of street play.
12. Where possible, such objections should be resolved between neighbours but the council can lend support and, where necessary, mediate or offer practical solutions (e.g. having a one-off 'trial' session or moving the road closure to another part of the street).
13. Applications should only be refused where there is a legitimate concern about safety or where objections outweigh support on the street.
14. Residents should be required to follow standard procedure for placing signage, cones etc. in the street and to ensure two stewards are at each road closure point at all times. (Ask residents to follow the safety guidelines in Playing Out's manual for organisers and steward briefing).

15. The Order should be clear that all through-traffic is prohibited and vehicles may enter or leave the road *only at walking speed and under supervision, once the road is clear of children playing*.
16. It should be clear in guidance notes that *parents are responsible for their own children* at all times.
17. Allow residents to make more than one application during a year, so that they can trial the idea or change the day/time if it becomes unworkable.
18. Ask residents to sign a (reasonable) indemnity clause rather than insist on public liability insurance (which could prove a major barrier for many streets).
19. Make it clear to residents that there is no obligation to close the road every time they have permission to do so and should only go ahead if there are sufficient stewards and it is safe to do so.
20. Establish a Street Play Steering Group (or similar), including council officers, police, key residents and those supporting them to monitor the policy and practice and address any issues arising.
21. Clearly signpost residents to www.playingout.net for free advice and resources, and to any local sources of support.