

# **Wycombe District Council Interim Guidance on the Application of Parking Standards set out in Appendix 9 of the Local Plan to 2011.**

## **Introduction**

1. This note provides guidance on how the Council will apply the Parking Standards set out in the Local Plan to 2011 having particular regard to policies CS 19(6) Raising the Quality of Place making and Design and CS20(5) Transport infrastructure. Policy CS16(3) Transport is also material in relation to impact of development on the transport and road network. Policy T2 refers to the parking standards set out in Appendix 9 of the Local Plan to 2011.
2. This note does not represent new policy however application of the guidance set out should help ensure good quality developments as well as ensuring that parking concerns do not impede the grant of planning permission.
3. This guidance note is published in light of concerns about the role of parking and the quality of developments that are being achieved, recently highlighted for example through the “Quality Counts” process. It is intended as interim guidance. Any comments received or further learning points will be taken into account in the forthcoming county-wide review of parking standards led by Buckinghamshire County Council which is expected to be completed in 2013.

## **Applying the Parking Standards set out in the Local Plan**

4. A key requirement of policy CS20(5) is that parking provision is both appropriate and effective. This means parking that contributes to:
  - high standards of design and layout
  - residents having good access to employment, shops, services and leisure opportunities – which reflects the availability of local opportunities, public transport access, as well as parking provision
  - efficient use of land, avoiding extensive low density development, and ensuring that parking that is provided in a way that is attractive to users, and in a way that is efficient and flexible and so available to different users at different times.
5. The Local Plan standards are maxima however it is now expected that developments will provide parking at this maximum level. Considerable weight was previously afforded government advice that planning authorities should not require developers to provide more parking than they themselves wish to provide. This advice has been superseded.
6. Applications for more or less than the maximum should explain why the level of parking provision is such that it is not appropriate to apply the

maximum amount that is normally expected. The Parking Guidance in Appendix 1 (section 6) to the Local Plan to 2011 indicates the limited circumstances in which car free development maybe appropriate.

7. Across the district average household car ownership as indicated in the 2001 census shows variation according to ward, tenure, size and type of dwelling depending on whether it is a flat or a house. They vary from 0.4 cars per household for smaller social housing to 1.91 for larger owner occupied houses. Further Information, broken down to ward level is available on our [website](#), as a document to download, from which it is possible to estimate average household car ownership rates.
8. It is estimated that these average figures will have increased slightly since 2001 and more information will be known when more details of the 2011 census become available. Information on car ownership levels may inform an assessment of the appropriate level of on-site parking that should be provided with new development.
9. It should be kept in mind that parking provision has a role in ensuring that residents have convenient access to a range of employment, services, leisure and recreation opportunities and that visitor parking also has an important role, both in providing for visitor parking and providing flexibility where more than one car is owned per household. In less accessible areas there will be less scope to reduce the level of parking below that set out in the standards. In accessible areas such as the town centres there will be more scope.
10. Where development is situated in more accessible areas the developer should aim to ensure that new residents make informed choices about the level of parking available before deciding to move in, for example, by clearly highlighting parking levels as well as any particular parking constraints (if any) in sales particulars and marketing details. An employee or residential travel plan may well be required for larger developments – policy DM1 of the DSA refers.

**Potential impacts where less parking is proposed than the maximum amount normally expected.**

11. Many developments place some reliance on existing on-street parking to meet their parking demands, and new developments that do likewise are not necessarily unacceptable, provided there is no overriding objection from the Highway Authority, for example on the grounds of safety or the reasonable convenience of road users. Guidance within the *Manual for Streets (2007) (chapter 8)* recognises parking as a key function of most streets.
12. In addition the local planning authority has a role in considering the potential impacts of parking displaced onto the highway and managing the demands placed on the often scarce resource that is on-street

parking in a way that is reasonable and equitable and so that change does not occur at a pace that brings about dramatic changes to the character of an area and the availability of on street parking in a way that residents very often do not welcome.

13. Individual developments should not provide less than the maximum level of parking where to do so would place undue reliance on on-street parking.
14. In accessibility zones 4 and 5 development that does not provide at least 50% of the maximum expected level of visitor parking (in addition to the specified level of residents parking) is unlikely to provide appropriate and effective parking and the potential for displaced parking may have a severe residual impact that may warrant a refusal of planning permission.
15. In accessibility zones 1 to 3 and those parts of accessibility zone 4 close to public parking and public transport interchanges, eg Princes Risborough Rail station and the Handy Cross Hub when operational, a lower level of visitor parking may be justifiable, however it will be for the developer to demonstrate that a lower level of provision is acceptable”.
16. Where proposals are considered to provide inadequate levels of car parking a typical reasons for refusal might be that:

Taking account of local levels of car ownership and car parking standards, the development would place undue reliance on on-street parking and so would fail to provide appropriate and effective parking facilities to cope with demand for resident and visitor parking. As a result the level of on-street parking associated with the development would:

- Fail to adequately provide for convenient access to existing employment, services and leisure opportunities for residents of the proposed development
- Unreasonably displace on-street parking by existing residents and their visitors in the immediate vicinity
- Adversely affect the character of the area, including as a result of displaced parking on footways and green spaces

As such, the proposal is contrary to policy T2 of the Adopted Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (as saved, extended and partially replaced) and policies CS19 and CS20 (5) of the adopted Core Strategy, taking account of the approach set out in the Council’s Guidance on the Application of Parking Standards set out in the Local Plan to 2011.

17. Should displaced parking occur to the detriment of highway safety and convenience of use, a further reason for refusal may be recommended by the Local Highway Authority.

## **Bedsits/HMOs**

18. Proposals for change of use to bedsits <sup>1</sup>/HMOs need to be considered carefully to assess which parking standard is most appropriate, given changes to government advice and changes to the character of these uses since the parking standards were agreed, including the growth in occupation of HMO's by relatively high income groups such as young professionals.
19. The appropriate standard in Appendix 9 may be either that for:
  - HMO's (between 0.2 and 0.5 spaces); or
  - bedsits/studio/one bed dwellings (between 0.5 spaces and 1.5 spaces per bedsit).
20. However it is recognised that the average occupancy for bedsits will be lower than for one bed flats (estimated at 1.4 people based on 2001 census data) and so no more than one parking space per bedsit will be required in any case.
21. Where the HMO parking standard applies it should be noted that this requires the number of spaces to be provided to be rounded up to the nearest whole number.

## **Four and Five + Bedroom Dwellings**

22. The level of parking specified in the current parking standards for four and five + bedroom dwellings in areas of accessibility of zone 3 to 5 was recognised as being more than adequate but was designed to allow double garages with two spaces on the garage forecourt. This format whilst not respecting the principle that visitor parking should normally be provided off plot, will nonetheless generally be considered acceptable as in practice two visitor spaces are more than required. Lower levels of parking, between two to three spaces per dwelling, will be acceptable provided at least some parking is provided flexibly. There is generally more scope to provide on-street and shared parking in larger scale developments (that add new road space) that can be used flexibly. Hence a lower level of provision overall may be adequate on larger sites, compared to smaller developments or developments in rural areas.

## **Width of Parking Spaces and Manoeuvring Space**

23. Where these are provided in perpendicular ranks 25% of these spaces should be provided at a minimum width of 2.7m, with a minimum length

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 11 of Circular 11/2010 Changes to Planning regulations for dwelling houses and HMO's

of 4.8m. This will ensure that some spaces are available for work vans and larger vehicles. In any case where spaces are adjacent to a hard boundary on one or more sides they should be at least 100mm wider, i.e. 2.5m wide, to allow for ease of access. The Councils requirement for wider parking spaces for people with disabilities remains as set out in Appendix 9 of the Local Plan to 2011. Further guidance on parking space dimensions and configurations can be found in the *Manual for Streets (2007) (Chapter 8, sub-section 3, paragraphs 48 to 58)*.

24. Buckinghamshire County Council as Local Highway Authority usual seeks on plot parking provision for sites served by A, B and some C class roads to have sufficient on plot manoeuvring space in addition to the parking spaces themselves so that vehicles can enter and leave in a forward gear.

### **Garages, undercroft parking and car ports**

25. Garages are frequently used for domestic storage, reducing their contribution to parking provision. For this reason the Essex Vehicle Parking Standards 2009 count garages towards parking provision only when, internally, they measure at least 3m x7m. The District Council considers this sensible and will follow this approach to ensure that parking provision is appropriate and effective. Smaller garages may be accepted as contributing to parking needs only if equivalent weather protected secure storage is provided for example in a shed. Undercroft parking and car ports are not included in this approach provided they have no other use. They should be a minimum of 2.4 x 4.8m. As indicated above undercroft and carport spaces will need to allow 100mm extra width adjacent to solid walls (NB this does not apply to parking spaces adjacent to supporting pillars).

### **Cycle and other Parking**

26. Parking for cycles will be required. Separate provision is not required if a garage of the appropriate size or other suitable weather protected and secure storage is provided within the curtilage of the dwelling, or communally in the case of flats. Provision should be provided so that it may be used flexibly for example to allow storage of mobility scooters or similar.
27. Provision of simple locking points such as Sheffield stands that are exposed to the elements as well as potential theft and vandalism are not appropriate to serve dwellings or where parking will be typically over two hours duration.
28. Flats should be served by secure and weather proof cycle parking that is conveniently located for users. The cycle parking facility should benefit from casual surveillance and where possible serve no more

than 10 flats so that people using the facility are more likely to know their neighbours and feel safer using the facility.

29. Commercial developments should provide secure and weather proof cycle parking and this should be provided in a location that benefits from some overlooking from the building its serves. Cycle parking for visitors may be provided in the form of Sheffield stands.

### **Car Parking and the Quality of Development**

30. The way in which parking is provided is important, not just the amount. It is important in relation to place making, reducing the fear of crime and the quality of development and it is important that some parking is available to be used flexibly, for convenience and to achieve an efficient use of land. Hence in larger developments that are self contained the visitor parking component should be provided in a way that is off-plot and unallocated (with an exception being made for four and five + bedroom dwellings as set out above). On street parking is often an appropriate and effective way of doing this. This approach will be applied flexibly to smaller infill developments where it may be more sensible to provide visitor parking on-plot.
31. Development that results in places that are dominated by the demands of traffic and parking or by parked vehicles, or by parking displacement on footways or green spaces will not reach the standard required by policy CS 19(6).

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Further guidance on parking is available in  
“Car Parking: What works where” English Partnerships 1 May 2006  
“Manual for Streets” Department for Transport, DCLG, 29 March 2007