

Residential Parking Standards for Proposed New Developments (100325/CAB004)

To: Cabinet
25 March 2010

Main Portfolio Area: Planning and Economic Development

Author of report: Deborah Dixon

Classification: Non-Exempt

Ward: All

Executive Summary

The saved policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 relating to residential parking, Policies TP5 and TP6, refer to the Kent County Council (KCC) Vehicle Parking Standards included in the Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG4 (July 2006) to the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 that was adopted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The use of maximum parking standards for residential development in SPG4 was based on national planning policy set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3) and in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13).

The saved policies within the Kent & Medway Structure Plan expired in July 2009 and, consequently, SPG4 ceased to carry weight. Furthermore, since the adoption of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan in May 2006, the publication of Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) and the demise of the Structure Plan, the use of maximum parking standards for new residential development can no longer be considered appropriate in every development situation.

Proposed changes

This report therefore seeks to put in place interim guidance, based on that prepared by KCC, until such time as the position can be comprehensively reviewed through the preparation of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD).

It recommends that the Cabinet:

1. Approves the proposed parking standards set out in the report for informal consultation with key stakeholders.
2. Following consultation, grants delegated authority to the portfolio holder for Planning and Economic Development to approve the standards to be used as a material consideration together with national and regional policy when considering proposals for residential development until a new parking policy is adopted within the Development Control Policies DPD.
3. Delegates authority to the Head of Planning Services to make any amendments necessary to finalise the standards for publication following consultation.

Corporate Priorities

The saved policies in the Local Plan provide the planning policies against which applications for development in the Borough are assessed. These saved policies make provision both for appropriate change in the Borough to meet the needs of its communities and for the conservation of its environment and heritage.

The report supports a number of Council priorities, including: “Prosperous”, “Green” and “Healthy”.

Report status

For decision

Route to Implementation/Timetable:

The table at the end of this report setting out the proposed residential parking standards will be made available to the public on the Borough Council’s website following approval by Cabinet.

The principles of the modified parking standards as proposed could be adopted for development control purposes. These principles would not constitute planning policy but could be used as a material consideration when considering proposals for residential development until a new parking policy is adopted within the Development Control Policies DPD.

Report of Head of Planning Services Continued**Background/Introduction****Requirement for up to date guidance on Residential Parking Standards**

1. The use of maximum standards set out in the KCC SPG4 July 2006 for residential development, and referred to in the saved Local Plan Policy TP5, has been superseded by changes to both national and regional policy guidance. In addition, the Structure Plan and associated guidance referred to in the saved Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan Policy TP5 have ceased to exist. Although there is guidance set out at a national and regional level, it is considered that there is a lack of detailed up to date advice for residential parking standards reflecting local conditions that can be used by Development Control officers when considering planning applications.

Summary of the current policy position relating to car parking standards for residential development

2. With reference to current national and regional policy set out in PPG13, PPS3, Policy S3, Policy T4: Parking of the South East Plan and Policy EC18 of Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4), the use of maximum parking standards for new housing provision may not be considered appropriate.
3. Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 Policies TP5 and TP6 have been saved beyond 24 March 2009 through a "direction" received from the Secretary of State. These policies continue to form part of the Development Plan and will be used for planning purposes until they are superseded by the Development Control Policies DPD. The Local Plan policies reflect the maximum approach to standards, having been developed within the context of the Kent & Medway Structure Plan and prior to the publication of PPS3 and the South East Plan. They could now be considered to be out of date as they refer to SPG4 guidance that was developed within the context of maximum standards for residential parking, an approach that may not necessarily be appropriate for every situation.
4. The saved Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan policies TP5 and TP6 should still be taken into account when applying revised parking standards guidance set out by KCC. Policy TP6 constitutes a local policy that appropriately reflects local circumstances.
5. The KCC Vehicle Parking Standards referred to in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan Policy TP5 are maximum standards as set out in SPG4 July 2006, including for residential developments. As discussed above, this approach has been superseded due to the Kent & Medway Structure Plan ceasing to exist and by more recent policies contained within national guidance: PPS3, Policy T4: Parking of the South East Plan and PPS4 Policy EC8: Car parking for non-residential development.

Proposed interim guidance for residential parking standards

6. In response to the lack of up to date advice for residential parking standards that can be used by Development Control officers when considering planning applications, Kent County Council (KCC) Highway Services has prepared a guidance note "Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3: Residential Parking, November 2008" (IGN3). The Guidance Note attempts to deal with dissatisfaction identified amongst residents of recently completed developments that has been shown by the results of surveys carried out by KCC and has been the subject of consultation through the Kent Design Initiative Network. Consultees included a number of the house builders active within the Borough and the House Builders Federation.
7. IGN3 was approved by KCC in May 2009; the report presented to the KCC Cabinet stated that adoption of the guidance notes for parking would "*represent a strong recommendation to its Kent Design partners that the (IGN3) should be adopted for Development Control purposes*". The report confirmed that IGN3 had been approved by the Kent Planning Officers Group for use by Medway Council, Kent District Councils and Kent County Council (including Kent Highway Services).
8. It is suggested by Kent Highway Services that the guidance note is used as the basis for residential parking policies in Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) across Kent, with the principles to be adopted for development control purposes as soon as possible. These principles would not constitute planning policy but could be used as a material consideration when considering proposals for residential development until a new parking policy was adopted within the Development Control Policies DPD.
9. The following table included within IGN3 provides a guide for residential parking, divided into four distinct locations (see comments below referring to these locations):

Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3 Residential Parking, November 2008
GUIDANCE TABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL PARKING

LOCATION	CITY/TOWN CENTRE	EDGE OF CENTRE	SUBURBAN	SUBURBAN EDGE/ VILLAGE/RURAL
ON-STREET CONTROLS	On-street controls preventing all (or all long stay) parking	On-street controls, residents' scheme and/or existing saturation (Note 3)	No, or very limited, on-street controls	No on-street controls, but possibly a tight street layout
NATURE OF GUIDANCE	MAXIMUM (Note 1)	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM (Note 6)	MINIMUM (Note 6)
1 & 2 BED FLATS	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Not allocated	Not allocated	Not allocated
1 & 2 BED HOUSES	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1.5 spaces per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Allocation possible	Allocation possible	Allocation of one space per unit possible
3 BED HOUSES	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1.5 spaces per unit	2 independently accessible spaces per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Allocation possible	Allocation of one space per unit possible	Allocation of one or both spaces possible
4+ BED HOUSES	1 space per unit	1.5 spaces per unit	2 independently accessible spaces per unit	2 independently accessible spaces per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Allocation of one space per unit possible	Allocation of both spaces possible (Note 7)	Allocation of both spaces possible (Note 7)
ARE GARAGES ACCEPTABLE? (Note 4)	Yes, but with areas of communal space for washing etc.	Yes, but not as a significant proportion of overall provision	Additional to amount given above only	Additional to amount given above only
ADDITIONAL VISITOR PARKING (Note 5)	Public car parks	Communal areas, 0.2 per unit maximum	On-street areas, 0.2 per unit	On-street areas, 0.2 per unit

NOTES

1. Reduced, or even nil provision, is encouraged in support of demand management and the most efficient use of land.
2. Parking/garage courts, probably with controlled entry.
3. Reduced, or even nil, provision acceptable for rented properties, subject to effective tenancy controls.
4. Open car ports or car barns acceptable at all locations, subject to good design.
5. May be reduced where main provision is not allocated. Not always needed for flats.
6. Lower provision may be considered if vehicular trip rate constraints are to be applied in connection with a binding and enforceable Travel Plan.
7. Best provided side by side, or in another independently accessible form. Tandem parking arrangements are often under-utilised.

NB: The proposed standards set out in this Cabinet report relate to **residential parking space standards** only; issues relating to the number, size and design of garages will be addressed during the preparation of the Development Control Policies DPD.

Defining “Locations” on the guidance table specific to the needs of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells

10. It is important to note that the above Guidance Table has been prepared to cover all of the Kent County Council Area, covering rural and urban areas. KCC would have ideally opted for two zones: constraint (maximum standards) being applied where on-street parking controls are sufficient and relaxation (minimum standards) in areas of no constraint where evidence suggests that car ownership is not related to the number of parking spaces for each dwelling. The four-zone approach has been developed to address problems that could occur along the boundaries of the above two zones.
11. IGN3 states that “*Local Planning Authorities may adopt this table and identify the areas within which particular levels will apply*”. With reference to the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, ‘Town Centres’ are not defined as geographical areas within the adopted Local Plan. Neither are they considered to be similar enough to necessarily apply a common parking standard to all of the town centres within the Borough.

Proposed application of the Guidance Table in IGN3 within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells: Parking Space Standards only (not garages)

12. It is suggested that, in order to reflect the local circumstances within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, an approach advocated by PPS3 and Policy T4 of the South East Plan, the following categories for the location of development are used as a guide for Development Control purposes (note change in location description from headings in the table in the Guidance Note to reflect local circumstances within the Borough):
13. **“Town Centre Area”** (relates to “City/Town” in Guidance Table) to refer to the central part of Royal Tunbridge Wells only, reflecting the area covered by the Central Access Zone (Residential) as defined in the Local Plan 2006. Para 11.36 describes this designated area as a defined area within a reasonable distance of the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells, measured as an 800 metre radius from three key locations within the Primary Shopping Area. This area is considered to have good access to a range of public transport.
14. Currently, Local Plan Policy TP6 sets out the residential parking standards for the Central Access Zone (Residential). Within this defined area, the following parking standards currently apply:
- A maximum parking standard of one space per dwelling
 - In the case of schemes for the conversion of existing buildings to no more than 15 bed spaces, the provision of additional on-site parking will not be required
15. Applying the residential parking standards to the area covered by the Central Access Zone set out in the guidance table in IGN3, using the column entitled “City/Town Centre”, the following parking provision would apply:
- A maximum parking standard of one space per dwelling regardless of the number of bedrooms

16. Therefore the parking standards set out in Local Plan Policy TP6 and those in the KCC Guidance Table (using the column “City/Town Centre”) are the same for the central part of Royal Tunbridge Wells covered by the Central Access Zone (Residential).
17. “Areas not included in the Town Centre Area for Royal Tunbridge Wells” (relates to “suburban edge/village/rural” in the Guidance Table) to cover all parts of the Borough not included in the first category above.
18. Currently, Local Plan Policy TP5 sets out the residential parking standards for these areas, applying KCC’s Vehicle Parking Standards set out in SPG4 to new development proposals:

Current Maximum standards

1 bedroom	1 space per dwelling
2 & 3 bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling
4 or more bedrooms	3 spaces per dwelling

19. Applying the residential parking standards to the area not covered by the Central Access Zone, using the column entitled “Suburban Edge/Village/Rural” in the guidance table in IGN3, the following parking provision would apply:

Proposed Minimum standards

1 & 2 bed flats	1 space per unit
1 & 2 bed houses	1.5 spaces per unit
3 bed houses	2 spaces per unit (independently accessible)
4 or more bed houses	2 spaces per unit (independently accessible)

20. It should be noted that saved Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan Policy TP5 refers to the “maximum necessary” levels of parking. In the context of the above, development control officers will need to make a judgement as to what is the appropriate level of parking provision for each individual development proposal.
21. The main difference between parking standards in SPG4 and Interim Guidance Note 3 for areas outside the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Area (if the proposal to adapt the standards in the guidance note as discussed above are used):

Size of dwelling	Current : Guidance from SPG4	Proposed: Using guidance from IGN3	Commentary
Overall Parking Standard	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	Allowance for flexibility to meet local needs
1 bedroom flat	1 space	1 space	No change
1 bedroom house	1 space	1.5 spaces	Increase
2 bedroom flat	2 spaces	1 space	Decrease (NB: minimum standard)
2 bedroom house	2 spaces	1.5 spaces	Decrease (NB: minimum standard)
3 bedrooms	2 spaces	2 spaces	No change
4 bedrooms	3 spaces	2 spaces	Decrease (NB: minimum standard)

Reasons for using two “Location” categories from the Guidance Table

22. **Clarity:** the two categories proposed are clearly defined. The Town Centre Area relates directly to the Central Access Zone (Residential) as defined in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan and is therefore easily available for reference on the relevant Local Plan Proposals Map. This defined area represents a clear policy decision made within the Local Plan 2006.
23. **Ease of definition:** it could prove difficult and contentious to define “Edge of Centre” and “Suburban”. To ensure that such designations were robust could involve a level of research and consultation that would delay the introduction of revised parking standards to aid development control decisions. A finer grained definition for locations where different parking standards are applied could, however, be considered during the preparation of the Development Control Policies DPD.
24. **Pragmatic outcome:** an alternative scenario could be considered that identifies a “Town Centre” area for each of the main urban areas and small rural towns, possibly following the boundaries set by the Primary Shopping Areas defined in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan. These are defined areas that are easily available for reference on the relevant Local Plan Proposals Map. However, using the standards set out in the Guidance Table would impose a maximum parking level of one space per unit for all sizes of dwellings within these “Town Centre” areas and could be considered insufficient in certain locations. As above, a finer grained definition for locations, considering each individual central area where different parking standards are applied could be considered during the preparation of the Development Control Policies DPD.

SUMMARY

25. Introducing the residential parking standards set out in ING3, using the first and last columns only as discussed above with reference to “Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Areas” and “Areas within the rest of the Borough”, would not have a fundamental impact on policy relating to parking standards. The approach of using minimum standards where considered appropriate is, however, in line with recent national and regional policy guidance that has been introduced since the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan Policies TP5 and TP6 were adopted. There would be no change in parking standards for the area covered by the Town Centre of Tunbridge Wells: Central Access Zone (Residential); for the rest of the Borough there are some changes but they are not considered to be fundamental policy changes.
26. The introduction of minimum parking standards for areas outside the town centre area for Royal Tunbridge Wells would allow for a degree of flexibility if this was considered appropriate for the local circumstances and would still be limited to the maximum level judged to be necessary for each individual development proposal.

PROPOSED ADAPTED GUIDANCE TABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL PARKING STANDARDS FOR USE WITHIN TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH

Location	Town Centre: Tunbridge Wells Central Access Zone	Rest of the Borough
Overall Parking Standard	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM
1 bedroom flat	1 space	1 space
1 bedroom house	1 space	1.5 spaces
2 bedroom flat	1 space	1 space
2 bedroom house	1 space	1.5 spaces
3 bedrooms	1 space	2 spaces
4 bedrooms	1 space	2 spaces

Note 1: "Town Centre" refers to the central part of Royal Tunbridge Wells only, reflecting the area covered by the Central Access Zone (Residential) as defined in the Local Plan 2006

Note 2: Saved TWBC Local Plan Policy TP5 refers to the "maximum necessary" levels of parking. In the context of the guidance for minimum standards for the "Rest of the Borough", development control officers will need to make a judgement as to what is the appropriate level of parking provision for each individual development proposal.

NON-RESIDENTIAL PARKING STANDARDS FOR USE WITHIN TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH

27. The use of maximum parking standards for new non-residential development is still considered to be appropriate. Pages 14-29 within the KCC Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG4 Kent Vehicle Parking Standards July 2006 (SPG4) (<http://www.kmsp.org.uk/pdfs/kmsp-spg4-pre-print.pdf>) set out the parking standards for all types of non residential development. These standards are still considered appropriate for development control purposes; reference would need to be made to the saved Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan Policy TP5 that requires regard to local highway conditions.

Cross cutting issues

Legal

28. N/A

Finance and other resources, including ICT

29. Introducing recommended residential parking standards for use by development control officers would introduce a degree of certainty for both developers and planning officers. On balance, this is likely to shorten the planning decision-making process and reduce overall costs.

Staffing

30. No relevant issues

Value for money

31. As finance and other resources above.

Risk Management

32. As finance and other resources above.

Equalities

33.

Screening for equality impacts		
Question	Answers/Notes	
Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain:
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please explain: No relevant issues identified
	Note: if the answer is 'yes' then a full equality impact assessment is required	
Does the activity make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain:
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please explain: No net impact on equality issues The detailed design of parking spaces is dealt with through Building Regulations. There is no specific requirement within these regulations that deals with disabled parking spaces. However, to meet Lifetime Home standards, there is a requirement that the distance from the car parking to the dwelling should be kept to a minimum. Alternatively, when people move in to a dwelling and have a specific need, they can apply for a marked bay (- available to anyone with a blue badge). Each site is therefore to be dealt with on its own merits.
	Note: if the answer is 'yes' then a full equality impact assessment is required	
When a full impact assessment is required:		
Summary of the impacts	<i>i.e. your responses to questions 13 – 16 in the Equality Impact Assessment Template</i>	
What weight do the equality impacts have with regard to other factors relating to the decision?	<i>i.e. what reasonable adjustments can be made to address any impacts within other constraints e.g. budget?</i>	

Safer & Stronger Communities

34. No relevant issues

Health and Wellbeing

35. No relevant issues

Environment / Sustainability

36. Sustainable development criteria have been followed when developing the proposed standards. Account was taken of proximity to services and public transport when assessing the location types and level of provision.

Human Rights Act

37. No relevant issues

Communication and Consultation

38. See report: when developing the standards, KCC consulted a range of stakeholders, including house builders and the House Builders Federation. A report was presented to the Local Development Framework Members' Working Party on 09 February 2010.

Conclusion

39. The above report explains why it is considered appropriate for the proposed residential parking standards tailored for use within Tunbridge Wells Borough to be used for development control purposes. The standards would not constitute planning policy, but could be used as a material consideration, together with national and regional policy, when considering proposals for residential development until a new parking policy was adopted within the Development Control Policies DPD.

Recommendation(s):

1. That Cabinet approves the proposed parking standards set out in the report for informal consultation with key stakeholders;
2. That following consultation, Cabinet grants delegated authority to the portfolio holder for Planning and Economic Development to approve the standards to be used as a material consideration together with National and Regional policy when considering proposals for residential development until a new parking policy is adopted within the Development Control Policies DPD; and
3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Planning Services to make any amendments necessary to finalise the standards for publication following consultation.

Reason(s) for recommendation(s):

40. To allow planning officers to use the principles for residential parking standards as set out in the report as a material consideration when considering proposals for residential development until a new parking policy is adopted within the Development Control Policies DPD. This will allow for a degree of certainty, while also allowing for planning decisions to be made that reflect local circumstances.

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Appendices: none

Background Papers: A hard copy of each document can be found in the Members' Room at the Town Hall

- KCC Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG4 Kent Vehicle Parking Standards July 2006 (SPG4) <http://www.kmsp.org.uk/pdfs/kmsp-spg4-pre-print.pdf>

- Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3: Residential Parking, November 2008 (IGN3) <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/community-and-living/Regeneration/interim-guidance-notes-residential-parking.pdf>