

Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review

Issues and Options (online version)

Vehicle Parking

Appropriate provision of vehicle parking is of great benefit to the vitality of communities and businesses across the district.

Vehicle parking

Suffolk Coastal is a predominantly rural area and therefore has a certain reliance on the car as a form of transport to conduct day-to-day business. For those people living close to a range of facilities a bicycle may offer an alternative or additional transport option. Many local roads are single track and unsuitable for conventional public transport. Therefore, the provision of adequate, reasonably priced car parking is essential to maintaining the viability and vibrancy of our town centres and district centres.

Transport and logistics form a very significant part of the local economy. Policies need to work with industry and industry changes to ensure that needs such as stopping places are provided. This will require working in partnership with relevant highway agencies and neighbouring authorities. However, parking needs to include provision for cars, lorries, coaches, taxis, cycles, motorcycles, and mobility scooters. Car / vehicle parking is an important tool for visitor management particularly in relation to tourism. There are also EU obligations in relation to designated landscape sites across the district.

Some people, either self employed, or as a condition of their employment, are required to take their work vehicle home with them. This may be a van or in a smaller number of cases vehicles such as a recovery lorry. Modern vehicles tend to be bigger, meaning that residential garages are no longer always suitable or available for parking.

Car Parking Standards

Although Suffolk Coastal District Council has not formally adopted the Suffolk County Council car parking standards, they are used to determine planning applications. The opportunity exists to give consideration to whether or not the latest SCC parking standards are considered appropriate or whether amendments/revisions are needed to meet local circumstances.

Having regard to local car ownership rates, for example, is specifically noted in national planning policy; as is the recognition that different circumstances apply to rural and urban areas and the availability or opportunity for public transport provision. It should be noted that if it is decided to depart from the Suffolk County Council standards, evidence will be required to support this.

Q88: Are the current SCC parking standards appropriate in the context of Suffolk Coastal? If not, what changes would you wish to see and why?

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Parking Policy Approach

It is clear that whilst the existing development plan documents make reference and acknowledge matters relating to car/ vehicle parking, that it has the potential to get diluted where it is split between various policies and supporting text.

The opportunity exists to raise the profile of vehicle parking through the Local Plan Review. One of the ways of doing this would be to identify or treat vehicle parking as a basic infrastructure requirement required to support new development and to address parking in all its various forms as a single topic issue. This could include a single policy linked to a set of parking standards. The supporting text could be used to re-iterate the importance and guiding principles behind the standards.

Q89: Is the need for and the importance of, vehicle parking sufficiently reflected in existing planning policies?

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[Previous](#) [Next](#)