

Report to District Development Control Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 7 April 2009

Subject: Car Parking Standards - Consultation Draft

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Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249

Recommendation(s):

1. **That the Committee raise no objection to the revised Car Parking Standards, entitled "Parking Standards Design and Good Practice for Essex" being issued by ECC.**

Report Detail

1. The first Parking Standards Document was produced in 1960 in consultation with the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) and since then there have been revisions in 1970/78 and the last one 2001. The 2001 revision was a desk top exercise to bring the standards in line with PPG13 – Transport, which sort to use parking restraint as a tool to reduce car usage. The recent changes in the planning system have placed the responsibility on the Districts to produce parking standards in the suite of planning documents. By 2008 there was a need to review the standards both to assist the District authorities but also to address the general concern being expressed about residential parking.

2. A working group of County and District officers via EPOA was set up to review standards. In considering new parking standards a wider view was taken of the role that parking has to play in place shaping as well as a tool for promoting travel choice. Case studies were used to assess the impact of current parking standards and their functional relationship to the development they serve. The outcome of this are revised standards in a new draft document for consultation entitled "Parking Standards Design and Good Practice For Essex", issued by ECC in conjunction with EPOA.

3. This Council is therefore being consulted on the draft document. The consultation runs between 13th March until the 24th April and hence Officers have had only a limited time to view this document and report it to members. A hard copy of the document is available in the Members Room to view. Alternatively, it can be viewed on-line at:

[http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/content/binaries/documents/Sustainability Appraisal Non Technical Summary.pdf?channelOid=null](http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/content/binaries/documents/Sustainability%20Appraisal%20Non%20Technical%20Summary.pdf?channelOid=null)

4. A fundamental change included in the revised standard is a move to minimum standards for trip origins (residential parking) and a greater emphasis on advice and best practice examples rather than just a list of standards. The move to minimum standards for housing was supported by members of the working party and Essex County Council believe this to be in line with emerging Government thinking, albeit

that PPG 13 - Transport, for the moment, supports maximum parking standards for residential areas.

5. The suggested minimum standards for residential areas will help to overcome the problem of parking on verges and curtilages in existing developments where insufficient car parking has been provided. However the minimum standard specified will create a greater land take for new development and result in over provision in some areas where car ownership is below the average. Encouraging unallocated parking for a development rather than allocations for each dwelling will ensure provision better reflects the numbers needed and will result in less land being required and less wastage of space. This embraces the advice in PPS3 – Housing, to take account of expected levels of car ownership, the importance of promoting good design and the need to use land efficiently.

6. The new title "Parking Standards Design and Good Practice" reflects the new approach to this subject which is being closely watched by neighbouring Counties as an example of emerging best practice. Essex County Council's intention is that Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment is carried out to enable the final document to become a Supplementary Planning Document in accordance with the revised PPS12 – Local Spatial Planning.

Changes from Adopted 2001 to 2009 consultation draft document:

7. The main changes are as follows:

Residential

8. There is proposed a shift back to the pre-2001 standards by changing back from maximum to minimum standards. The current approved standard is 1.5 spaces per dwelling as a maximum, whereas the proposal is for 1 bed = 1 space, 2 bed + = 2 spaces per dwelling as a minimum (only garages 3m x 7m or larger will be considered a parking space). There is in addition a requirement for 0.25 spaces per dwelling for visitor parking (subject to appropriate design, it can be located on or near the road frontage).

Garages

9. Currently, these are a minimum size = 5m x 2.5m. The proposal is that the min. size = 7m x 3m internal dimension. Garages provided at a smaller dimension will not be considered a parking space or count towards the parking space allocation.

Parking Bay sizes and Areas

10. This is proposed to be increased from a minimum of 4.8m x 2.4m to 5m x 2.5m to take into account increasing car sizes (various car models dimensions were investigated to get to this conclusion).

11. Disabled parking bay sizes have been increased in line with a standard parking bay. There is also guidance on integrated and secure parking areas in residential developments, which reduces the currently occurring isolated rear parking courts which few residents use.

12. In respect of setbacks with driveways/garages, previous guidance of 1.5m setback lead to widespread abuse of vehicles overhanging driveways and parking

over pavements and cycleways. The proposed guidance sets out that setbacks should be no more than 0.5m (to allow for the opening of a garage door), 0m (with gates) or at least 6m.

Cycle parking standards

13. The standards for some class uses have been revised to allow for a more realistic level of parking. Previous standards in some class uses required an overly onerous quantity. The proposed standards still require generous amounts of cycle parking to encourage sustainable travel.

Powered Two-wheeler standards

14. These have been revised to reflect realistic provision requirements. Previous standards required a large amount of provision (generally an excessive amount at larger car parks).

Part time employees

15. In the current standard, spaces were only allocated for full time staff in certain class uses. The revised standards take account of the fact there is increased part time working and look for space to be allocated on a "full time equivalent" basis.

Summary

16. Members and officers have worked with the current parking standards for some 8 years now and have generally felt somewhat uncomfortable applying certainly the residential maximum standards when in this district there is high car ownership. It is clear that restricting parking spaces at home does not discourage people from owning a car and therefore parking spaces should at origin return to a minimum standard. The proposed draft standards are more a sense of the "real world", but they still encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport and parking spaces to destinations, other than homes, remain at a maximum standard.

17. The only concern is the spaces per dwelling ratio for residential areas perhaps should be used in a more precise manner. The rigid use of 2 spaces per dwelling, which will apply for all dwellings with 2 or more bedrooms, will result in greater land take and inefficient use of land, particularly in areas where car ownership is on average lower. Perhaps in these cases, the 1.5 space per dwelling ratio should be used but in unallocated parking areas. This will provide an overall number of car parking spaces sufficient to meet need for the development without wasting land. This may be therefore on a case-by-case or by area basis.

18. However, overall, Officers consider that no objection be raised to the new standards. This is because they add more clarity and advice to members of the public in a more easily understandable approach, as well as assist Planning officers and Members in determining appropriate standards for our District and developers in preparing proposed development of sites. Perhaps most importantly, they should ensure that planning applications include an appropriate level and location of car parking provision and ultimately contribute to improved amenity and environmental quality in residential areas.