

Report to the Council

Committee:	District Development Control	Date:	16 February 2010
Chairman:	Councillor B Sandler	Item:	16

1. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REVISED PARKING STANDARDS - ADOPTION AS SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

Recommending:

That, having given further consideration to the representations made by GO East, the new parking standards issued by Essex County Council, entitled "Parking Standards Design and Good Practice for Essex" be adopted as supplementary guidance.

1. The first parking standards document was produced in 1978 in consultation with the Essex Planning Officers Association. The current version was prepared in 2001 and brought the standards in line with PPG13: Transport. This sought to use parking restraint to reduce car usage. Changes in Government policies from 2006 demonstrated that there was a need to review the standards to address a number of concerns being expressed about residential parking.
2. A Working Group of County and District Officers was set up through the Essex Planning Officers Association 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 promoting travel choice. Case studies were used to assess the impact of current parking standards and their functional relationship to the development they serve. This resulted in Essex County Council in conjunction with the Essex Planning Officers Association issuing a draft consultation document earlier this year entitled "Parking Standards Design and Good Practice for Essex".
3. This Council was consulted and the draft document was discussed by the District Development Control Committee on 7 April 2009. One of the key changes proposed from the 2001 parking standards was the use of minimum parking standards for trip origins (e.g. residential parking) rather than maximum standards as per the current policy. The District Development Control Committee supported the revised standards subject to provision being made from minimum garage door width size and to officers undertaking further investigations into the possibility of the adopted standards becoming part of the Development Plan in advance of the Core Strategy.
4. On 30 June 2009 the County Council published its comments and actions on the responses received from the consultation exercise. In relation to this Council's comment about a minimum garage door width size the County Council decided to take no action. They commented that the majority of garage doors are of a standard size and that provided a vehicle can pass through, the door did not need to be the width of a garage.
5. The County Council did not significantly alter the overall intention and requirements of the draft revised parking standards after considering the consultation responses. An amended parking standards document entitled "Parking Standards Design and Good Practice for Essex" was authorised for publication by the County Council as County

Council supplementary guidance on 18 September 2009.

6. Following the County Council decision, officers have investigated how the new parking standards could be adopted as planning policy by this Council. The current Development Plan for Epping Forest District includes the "saved policies" of the Local Plan and the Local Plan Alterations. Policy ST6 (vehicle parking) of the Local Plan Alterations states that the Council will expect all development proposals to provide on-site parking in accordance with the adopted 2001 standards or its successor documents. As the new parking standards of 2009 are "successor documents" these can be linked into the existing Policy ST6.
7. Paragraph 6.3 of PPS12: Local Spatial Planning refers to supplementary guidance produced by a County Council and advises that such guidance is not a supplementary planning document. However where appropriate consultation and sustainability appraisal has been carried out the supplementary guidance can be afforded a weight commensurate with a supplementary planning document in decision making. This is more likely to be the case where the supplementary guidance is endorsed by the District Council.
8. We are satisfied that the County Council carried out consultation on the draft parking standards in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended. We are also satisfied that the County Council conducted a process of strategic environmental assessment/sustainability appraisal that has influenced the final version of the document.
9. The Head of Planning received an email from GO East on 10th December 2009 raising concern over the use of minimum parking standards across Essex for residential areas. GO East also referred to PPS3: Housing which allows local planning authorities some discretion in setting parking standards for their area provided the approach can be justified. GO East were of the opinion that minimum parking standards may be justified for specific areas. However they had reservations about whether this approach should be applied to the whole of the County.
10. Essex County Council carried out extensive survey work on current parking problems within residential developments in the County. Officers are satisfied that the evidence collected shows that the problem of under provision is common to all areas of the County including Epping Forest District. The survey work also highlighted other common problems for example changes to the minimum dimensions for garages required by increases in vehicle size.
11. Notwithstanding GO East's reservations, The Committee remain satisfied with the approach taken by Essex County Council.
12. Accordingly we are recommending that this Council adopts the new parking standards as supplementary guidance.
13. The full Parking Standards document is available from the Essex County Council website on the following link:

http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/content/binaries/documents/Parking_Standards_2009.pdf?channelOid=null