

SUBJECT:	County wide parking standards		
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team-	Director of Services	
	Prepared by	-	Head of Sustainable Development

1. Purpose of Report

To agree a response to the consultation by County Council on new County wide Parking Guidance.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

3. Background

The County has drawn up County wide parking guidance. This is currently out to consultation which runs from 8th September to 31st October. A copy of the consultation is available at

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s50399/Parking%20guidance%20final.pdf> .

Members are invited to view the document and advise of their views, which would be taken into account in the District Council's consultation response. It explains that parking at new developments should provide for bicycles, motorcycles, cars and Blue Badge Holders. The parking standards will be 'optimum' and moves away from imposing either maximum or minimum standards. There is also flexibility to provide the right amount of parking where applying the specific standards would not be appropriate. The other Districts have agreed on a zoning approach. Your officers have agreed that this is not appropriate for South Bucks as the small geographical area differences are not as apparent as say Wycombe.

The NPPF states that the following factors should be considered if local authorities choose to set parking standards;

- The accessibility of the development
- The type, mix and use of the development
- The availability of and opportunities for public transport
- Local car ownership level
- An overall need to reduce the use of high emission vehicles

The government is currently consulting until 26th September on parking standards. This is an extract from the consultation document.

Maximum parking standards

2.77 The Government supports the motorist and wants to see adequate parking provision for them. For this reason, we removed the previous administration's restrictions on the number of parking spaces for new developments. And in March this year we published new planning guidance, which encourages local authorities to improve the quality of parking in town centres and, where it is necessary to ensure their vitality, the quantity too. Parking standards are now matters for local authorities.

2.78 We are aware that some local authorities appear to have adopted a more flexible approach, and this is to be welcomed, but the Government now wishes to understand whether more action is needed to tackle on-street parking problems. We want to understand whether local authorities are stopping builders from providing sufficient parking space to meet market demand. We also want to ensure that local authorities

in their Local Plans have properly reviewed their parking policies and brought them up to date.

The table below compares the District Council's existing parking standards with the standards proposed by the County Council.

Comparison Table

Example uses	SBDC existing policy	Bucks CC proposed policy	Difference
Housing C3		Zone B	
4 + beds	3 spaces	2.5-3	0.5 (for 4 beds)
2 or 3 beds	2 spaces	1.5-2	0.5 (for 2 beds)
1 bed	1 space	1	
Offices B1	1 space for 25 Sq m	1 space for 39 Sq m	7 spaces less for each 500 Sq m (but flexibility offered)
Retail A1 (less than 1000 Sq m)	1 space for 30 Sq m	1 space for 30 Sq m	No difference
Pubs, restaurants A3	1 space for 4 Sq m of public floorspace	1 space for 36 Sq m	34 spaces for 150 Sq m of public floorspace .
Care Home C2	1 space for 4 residents plus 1 space per resident staff	Case by case	

4. Discussion

The proposed standards are optimum numbers but are mostly proposing less parking spaces than we currently require. Accordingly, if these standards were to be adopted your officers consider that they should be applied flexibly in order to ensure that sufficient spaces are provided to reflect local circumstances. However, the problem with having relatively low optimum standards is that where the Council considers that a higher standard than the optimum should be applicable, the applicant may disagree. Accordingly, this might result in an increase in refusals on parking grounds, with the potential for an increase in appeals. It would be better if the optimum standard were more reflective of the more demanding circumstances in the first place, with the flexibility to allow less provision than the optimum standard where local circumstances justify it.

Members will also notice that the whole District, unlike other districts is one zone for both residential and non-residential parking standards as your officers did not agree that

there were sufficient differences in geography within the District to justify a zoned approach.

Development Management officers have been consulted and they are concerned that in this District where car ownership is so high, any decrease in parking standards from the current standards is not desirable. They are also concerned about using ½ spaces such as in the housing standards (see table above).

Of particular concern is the significant drop in the parking standard for offices. The Bucks proposed standards would require 7 spaces less than current standards for each 500 square metres of office floorspace. On a large scheme, in what would almost certainly be a location with relatively poor public transport, this would be likely to result in insufficient parking being provided by most office schemes. After pressure from your officers an additional clause has been inserted into Table 7 of the non-residential standards to include for deviations to reflect local circumstances provided a justification is made. In this District that exception is likely to be the rule. However, again it would be better if the optimum standard were more reflective of the more demanding circumstances in the first place, with the flexibility to allow less provision than the optimum standard where local circumstances justify it.

In response to the consultation it is suggested that we express concern regarding the above issues and other relevant concerns expressed by Members.

The District Council could not adopt the County Council's final document (post consultation) as SPD as the current consultation has not complied with the District Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Accordingly the County Council's final document could only be used by the District Council as part of the evidence base in preparing new parking standards for the District to be set out either in the Development Management Local Plan or in a parking standards SPD produced by the District Council.

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

The consultation has no direct resource implications (other than responding to the consultation). There is a risk that if the County Council were to adopt the document (either in its current form, or an amended form that did not reflect the District Council's views), that it might be referred to by developers in support of their applications and appeals, and that as it had been prepared more recently than the District Council's current standards, that it might be given more weight at appeal.

6. Recommendation(s)

To respond to County expressing concern that the decrease in parking standards from the current standards; the use of ½ spaces and the potential effect on future office development and authorise the Head of Sustainable Development to finalise the wording of the Council's response.

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Background Papers:	https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=925