

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 11 March 2024

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: East Sussex County Council Guidance for Parking at New Developments

Purpose: To seek approval of ‘Guidance for Parking at New Development’ which will help to ensure that there is sufficient parking provision to accommodate an agreed level of demand whilst exploiting the potential for sustainable travel and minimising adverse effects on highway safety. This document will replace two existing guidance documents (for residential and non-residential development).

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to approve the use of the ‘Guidance for Parking at New Developments’ at Appendix 1.

1 Background Information

1.1. Assessing development proposals and determining the appropriate level of parking provision is a key consideration for the County Council as Highway Authority in assessing the transport impacts of development.

1.2. National guidance is clear that the emphasis remains on highway authorities to set parking standards or guidance for their areas. In doing so, it is recognised that instead of simply applying a maximum standard due consideration should be given to local circumstances, accessibility and local car ownership levels. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (para 111) states:

If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- a) the accessibility of the development;*
- b) the type, mix and use of development;*
- c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- d) local car ownership levels; and*
- e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.*

1.3. The County Council currently uses two separate guidance documents to ensure that the optimum amount and type of parking is provided at new developments. It is proposed that these documents, ‘Guidance for Parking at Non-Residential Development’ (2012) and ‘Guidance for Parking at New Residential Developments’ (2017), will be replaced with a single document titled ‘Guidance for Parking at New Development’ (Appendix 1). The use of this guidance will allow developers and officers to ascertain an optimum level and design of car parking provision. This is important as poor parking design can lead to problems that can be detrimental to pedestrian and road safety.

1.4. A calculation tool for residential development was developed in 2012 that uses census ward data. It has been used successfully since that time to allow for site specific determination of a predicted parking demand. The current calculation tool, which is linked on the East Sussex County Council website, uses 2011 Census data to understand the differing levels of car ownership and therefore parking demand across the county. The relevant 2021 Census data has now been released and the calculation tool has been updated to reflect more up to date car ownership data.

1.5. The update to the calculation tool has also allowed for adjustments to be made to accurately reflect ward boundaries, some of which have changed since the last update in 2017. Other sections of the guidance have been updated to respond to current guidance and best practice.

1.6. The draft document was shared with the Local Planning Authorities in East Sussex and comments were invited. No significant issues or concerns were raised.

2 Supporting information

2.1. The proposed updated guidance considers parking for all types of vehicles and land uses and seeks to balance the need to provide an appropriate parking provision, ensure the safe operation of the public highway and encourage travel by sustainable modes.

General Principles

2.2. The overarching aim of the document is to ensure that new developments provide an appropriate level and type of parking whilst taking into account the characteristics of the location within the county. The document sets out general principles that establishes the County Council's recommended approach to parking for both residential and non-residential developments. These principles cover: accommodating parking demand; size, design & layout; accessible parking for disabled people; electric vehicle charging infrastructure; cycle parking; and powered two-wheeler parking. Changes have also been made to ensure that the guidance better reflects the key principles set out in emerging Local Transport Plan 4, particularly aims to promote sustainable modes of transport.

2.3. The optimum level of parking for any development is influenced by its location. For example, the need for parking in a rural settlement is very different to the need at a town centre location. Therefore, there is a need to develop an approach which takes into account a variety of factors and can be applied flexibly where appropriate. As such, a key principle embedded throughout the document is that the level of parking provided for each development reflects local characteristics. These considerations, particularly the levels of accessibility, will be site specific and therefore it is essential that each site and proposal is assessed on its own merits.

2.4. Although the key principles will be applicable to all types of development, the proposed guidance explains the different approaches that will be applied for residential and non-residential developments.

Residential Development

2.5. Section 6 of the document sets out specific guidance on the type of parking associated with residential development. It also covers matters such as visitor parking and courtyard parking and clarifies the continuation of the approach that counts the provision of a garage space as only one third of a space due to their limited use.

2.6. The level of car ownership is one key factor that influences the optimum level of parking provision for residential developments. To understand prevailing ownership levels, specialist consultants (Pelham Transport Consulting) were commissioned to undertake a review of the

existing parking calculation tool using recently released census data. The review has shown that car ownership levels in East Sussex are influenced by dwelling size, type and tenure and that different levels of car ownership were apparent in each of the districts and boroughs. Unsurprisingly, houses have higher car ownership than flats and, generally, car ownership increases with the size of dwellings. Car ownership is also higher for owner occupied houses compared to all residential dwellings classified as 'affordable housing'.

2.7 The data also showed that, in general terms, locations in built up and town centre locations with higher public transport accessibility and with on street parking controls in place had the lowest levels of car ownership. Rural locations had the highest level of car ownership. The lowest level of car ownership was in Eastbourne and the highest in Wealden. The figures in the parking calculation tool have been updated to reflect these findings.

2.8 Users of the calculator are able to enter details of any proposal for residential development (location, dwelling type, size and the way parking is provided etc) into the tool in order to generate the required level of parking. The calculator tool now accurately reflects the current ward boundaries in the County, some of which have changed since the last version of the calculator was published.

2.9 The updated calculation tool for residential proposals provides a robust tool to forecast the predicted parking demand that reflects the location of the development, the housing to be delivered and the way that parking is provided. Appendix A of the proposed guidance document provides further guidance on the use of the calculation tool.

Non-Residential Development

2.10 The parking guidelines (vehicular and cycle) for non-residential development are set out by land-use class and are tabulated within Appendix B of the proposed guidance document. The parking guidelines for different use classes are based on the requirements set out in the current East Sussex County Council guidance along with best practice from other comparable Highway Authorities.

2.11 It is explained that the level of provision for non-residential uses would be dependent on local characteristics and other considerations such as the proposed land use, the accessibility of the site for non-car mode users and forecast trip rates. The intention is that the guidance for non-residential development is used to provide an initial indication for developers who may then undertake a site-specific assessment. This assessment will seek to balance operational needs, space requirements, efficient use of land and cost attributed to providing parking and where relevant, attracting and retaining staff. For some land use types where transport patterns are difficult to generalise, parking provision may be calculated on an individual assessment using a Transport Assessment or similar.

2.12 The requirements for non-residential uses have been revised to reflect the current Use Class Order in England, including the relatively new Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Services) which, in effect, provides for greater flexibility for changes between certain land uses.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Assessing parking provision for new development is one key aspect of assessing planning applications. The proposed updated document conforms to relevant guidance and reflects current best practice. The updated calculation tool for residential development has been developed based on current ward boundaries and the most up to date East Sussex specific car ownership ward data available to reflect the different characteristics that occur across the County. The calculation tool provides developers and other interested parties a user-friendly method to ascertain the optimum

car parking provision for residential development whilst not compromising road safety for all road users.

3.2. The application of the guidance will ensure that the right type and amount of all forms of parking for new development is provided. This will mean that the right balance is struck between meeting parking demand whilst exploiting the potential for sustainable travel and minimising adverse effects on highway safety. The guidance will be kept under review and carefully monitored to ensure that it meets these objectives and remains effective.

3.3 The Lead Member is recommended to approve the use of the revised “Guidance for Parking at New Development” (Appendix 1).

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LOCAL MEMBERS

ALL

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- None