

Development Control Guidance Note

Technical Guidance on
PARKING STANDARDS

December 2007



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This supplementary Development Guidance Note has been prepared to provide more detail on the requirements for car parking, cycle facilities and other modes of transport associated with new developments within Swindon Borough Council. The following parking standards are proposed for use in the development management of proposals for both residential, commercial and mixed use development.
- 1.2 The residential aspect of the parking standards have been reviewed in response to increasing concern over on-street parking generated by new residential developments, and with regard to the most recent published guidance contained in the Department for Transport's "Manual for Streets", (2007) and Communities and Local Government's "Residential Car Parking Research" (May 2007). The commercial parking standards, have not been reviewed. The standards shown are maximum standards, and for all commercial development the calculating of accessibility discounts **MUST** be applied.
- 1.3 It is the aim of the Government to reduce motor vehicle movements nationally and this includes private vehicle trips, and there are a number of mechanisms that can be implemented to try and achieve such a reduction. One method is to reduce the availability of car parking spaces especially in areas where there are good alternative modes of transport, such as town or city centres. However, it is understood that long or short term parking spaces will continue to be required in many rural areas, where access to alternative transport choices, is often poor, or in centres of employment, shopping and community facilities that attract vehicles.
- 1.4 Transport – Chapter 9 of Swindon Borough Councils Local Plan, has one overall aim, that is to reduce the dependency on the private car. Indeed many of the policies set out within this chapter promote this key objective. However, there is also the need to ensure that any proposed development does not have an adverse effect on both the existing and proposed highway in terms of safety and traffic congestion. Areas where vehicles are parked inappropriately can cause a hazard to both pedestrians and other road users, additionally a further consequence of this type of parking is that the local environment becomes less attractive to local residents.
- 1.5 However, not all on-street parking has a negative effect. Where it is designed into a scheme such proposed parking can make a valuable contribution to the parking requirement of a development. Indeed, guidance from Manual for Streets steers developers into thinking about on-street parking within their design, and it has been demonstrated that a more flexible approach to parking can be achieved by the provision of communal parking areas within a development. The allocation of parking spaces associated solely to individual dwellings can have an adverse impact upon the efficiency of the car parking provision throughout a site. Research* has shown that if only 1 space per dwelling is allocated, the amount of parking required could increase by approximately 13% compared to a situation where all parking within the site is

unallocated. Developers therefore should bear this in mind when putting forward their proposals.

* Communities and Local Government "Residential Car Parking Research" (May 2007).

- 1.6 All developments whether they are residential, commercial or a mixture of both should provide for an appropriate level of vehicle parking, based on the parking standards set out in the Appendixes. However, where the applicant can demonstrate that a development is served by a frequent public transport service and that it connects well with both the pedestrian and cycle network, then a lower level of parking may be considered acceptable. Conversely, an over provision of parking within a development needs to be fully justified, and the rationale behind the proposed level will need to be satisfactorily demonstrated. A degree of caution needs to be taken when allowing higher levels of parking within a development, as such provision often encourages vehicular use, especially when associated with commercial development. Here high levels of over provision on a site does not encourage alternative transport use by employees or visitors, even when alternatives are well provided, as there is little or no incentive to use such alternatives. It is often in these circumstances that developers try and substitute parking levels based on Gross Floor Area with number of employees proposed within the building, although one should be pragmatic such a departure from the standards should be avoided.
- 1.7 Where sites require the provision and the monitoring of a Travel Plan the targets set within the document should reflect existing and future parking provision, and there should be a genuine aspiration for modal shift with targets set at realistic levels. The key objective being that employees choose to use alternative modes of transport thereby negating the need for high levels of parking provision.
- 1.8 Unfortunately even by ensuring that there is good design, and adequate parking provision within a site, this does not mean that inappropriate parking will not occur. Inconsiderate / inappropriate parking cannot be designed out completely. Such parking can only be avoided if residents take an active role in ensuring local amenities are not abused and thereby taking a degree of responsibility for their local street scene.



Vehicle obstructing the footway

2. National and Regional Framework and Guidance

- 2.1 The key objectives of Planning Policy Guidance: Transport 13 (PPG13) is to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level by:
- a). promoting more sustainable transport choices for both people and for freight;
 - b). promoting accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and
 - c). reducing the need to travel, especially by car.
- 2.2 The guidance recommends that maximum parking standards should be set for a broad range of land uses and locations. It's ethos is that by restricting and controlling parking provision within new developments and in areas that are readily accessible by alternative modes of transport, i.e. city and town centres, such a restriction has the effect of encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour. Therefore, in doing so, this then releases land for more productive purposes, other than that of parking a car. However, one of the foreseeable problems in applying restrictive parking standards is that potential investors could possibly 'play off' one local authority against another on the grounds that more car parking could be secured elsewhere, another problem with restrictive parking is what happens to the street scene when on-street parking increases due to under-provision on site.
- 2.3 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3), sets out the national planning framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives. The guidance promotes the following in order to achieve high quality housing:-

- It is easily accessible and well-connected to public transport and community facilities and services, is well laid out so that all the space is used efficiently, is safe, accessible and user-friendly.
- Takes a design-led approach to the provision of car-parking space, that is well-integrated with a high quality public realm and streets that are pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly.

2.4 Manual for Streets (2007) (MfS) replaces Design Bulletin 32, and its companion guide “Places, Streets and Movement”. Historically the focus has been on the movement function of a residential road, this has resulted in developments that are dominated by the motor vehicle. The new emphasis on design is to give higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, and MfS extols the benefits that come from designing streets that work for the all whole of the community. The manual emphasises the importance of providing good quality cycle parking, whilst the parking of vehicles is still a key function of most streets, and as such should be properly considered in the design process.

2.5 The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1991 requires local authorities to reduce traffic or traffic growth levels using a range of measures. A strategic approach to car parking management is one of the mechanisms that can be used to achieve this objective.

2.6 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to exercise their functions with due regard to the need to do all that they can to prevent crime and disorder in the area.

2.7 Communities and Local Government document “ Residential Car Parking Research” considers the expected levels of car ownership and the factors that have a significant influence on ownership and parking demand. It also analyses the provision of unallocated parking opposed to allocated parking and the positive effects of unallocated spaces within a development.

3. Local Transport Plan and the Vision for Swindon

3.1 The Borough of Swindon is preparing to meet the challenges of accommodating an additional 35,000 houses, plus associated mixed development over the next 20 years. In July 2002 the Government and Local Government Association agreed a set of seven shared priorities for local government. These priorities include raising the standards across schools, transforming the local environment and meeting local transport needs more effectively by tackling:

- accessibility
- congestion
- air quality
- road safety

3.2 Swindon Borough Council Local Transport Plan (2006 to 2011) published in March 2006, recognises that Transport in its broadest sense is a vital element of the Council's vision for the future because it not only provides access, but also helps widen opportunities for, work, education, health care, and other important elements which enhance quality of life. The Council's ambitious plans for housing and economic growth depend on a transport system that is sustainable, efficient, attractive and affordable. The document has 10 over-arching local objectives which were developed through consultation which include:-

- Promote travel choice and increase opportunities for travel by public transport, cycling and walking.
- Manage the impact of transport on the built and natural environment.
- Manage the impact of traffic growth in Swindon by implementing sustainable mitigation measures.
- Develop orbital and other route networks and road hierarchies that acknowledge the complex journey patterns within the urban area and reflect the locations of significant trip attractors.
- Improve rights of way, to enhance access to the countryside and improve pedestrian/cycle links with urban networks.

3.3 Vision for Transport for Swindon to 2030 (Draft April 2007) has been developed because of the Borough's aspiration for significant economic and housing growth in the coming years. Looking to 2030, the Borough of Swindon aims to become both the UK's best business destination and the UK's number one sustainable community, and also to grow by some 32,000 additional dwellings. Transport planning involves long lead in times, therefore, a long term transportation strategy, based on the future vision for the borough needs to be put in place promptly as this is a key element to ensuring the vision occurs.

3.4 Transport is not an end in itself, but it will either facilitate this vision or become a barrier to it. Without change, there will be significant congestion on the roads by 2016 and the 2030 vision will not be realised. The borough therefore, needs both investment to ease localised congestion and to provide more attractive alternatives to the car, thus enabling people to make a preferred lifestyle choice, whereby they change their travel habits from primarily the private motor vehicle towards more sustainable modes of transport.

3.5 There are a number of aims and objectives of the transport strategy, these include the following:

- To facilitate delivery of Swindon's long term vision for its economy and prevent transport issues becoming a barrier to economic success