

LDF PMB and MAG Combined Group

Core Strategy Workshop 10 – December 16th 2011 Somerset County Council Parking Strategy, Consultation Draft

Report by Keith Lane – Policy Planner

Purpose

To notify members of the publication of Somerset County Council's Parking Strategy consultation draft; present a summary of the Parking Strategy; set out the District Council's proposed responses to the document and affirm the current Core Strategy Policy seeking to apply the County Council car parking standards.

Recommendation

That members of the LDF PMB

1. note the content of the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy consultation draft,
2. note and support the proposed consultation responses which are to be presented to the appropriate Portfolio Holders for formal endorsement prior to forwarding to Somerset County Council
3. endorse current Core Strategy Policy seeking to apply the County Council standards subject to the draft standards being substantively approved in the final County Council parking strategy.

Background

As discussed at previous PMB meetings (14th and 29th September), there has been some delay in producing the Countywide Parking Strategy, but Somerset County Council has now published the Parking Strategy draft for consultation from 31st October to 20th January. Following consideration at this PMB meeting, the summary and comments of the Parking Strategy will be sent to the relevant Portfolio Folders for their consideration and approval prior to sending to Somerset County Council.

Report

The car parking standards now proposed by the County Council are more closely based to actual car ownership and usage in relation to residential car parking standards. In relation to non-residential car parking standards they are based on actual evidence of usage of car parking provided in association with the full range of land uses. The County Council have taken the evidence on the median parking provision for the assortment of land uses as the one to apply for non-residential parking standards. This seems reasonable and appropriate as it ensures parking for the normal busy times for parking for the various land uses.

It is considered that the parking standards both residential and non residential are appropriate and can be supported. The Core Strategy policy should be amended by the deletion of the second sentence and its replacement with the following

“The parking standards within the current Somerset County Council Parking Strategy will be applied within South Somerset.”

This revision is subject however to confirmation that the standards in the draft county strategy are endorsed through the consultation process. It will be necessary therefore to review this recommendation in the light of the final adopted County Parking Strategy which is expected in the new year and before final consideration of

the report on changes to the Core Strategy reflecting representations received and changing evidence to go before full Council.

The following text summarises the key points from the Parking Strategy, with the proposed comments set out in the table on page 6 onwards.

Summary of draft Parking Strategy

The draft Parking Strategy includes objectives, policies and supporting strategy options (i.e. delivery of policies) for both the *management* and *provision* of parking in Somerset, with 10 policies on parking management and 6 policies on parking provision.

Parking Management

The strategy notes there are various conflicting aspirations associated with the management of parking that need to be balanced in order to deliver wider policy aims. The objectives for parking management include:

- Manage car parking in order to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres by ensuring the needs of shoppers and visitors are prioritised;
- Manage parking in order to meet the needs of residents who live within towns, in villages and in rural areas;
- Encourage the use of more sustainable modes, including adequate provision of accessible and secure bicycle and motorcycle parking;
- Manage parking on the highway network to encourage the use of public transport;
- Manage parking effectively in order to reduce commuter trips from new developments by car;
- Contribute to the reduction of CO₂ emissions from vehicles;
- Meet the special parking needs of people with disabilities.

Parking Provision

- Residential parking standards for new developments are set for cars, bicycles, and motorbikes. Car parking levels are optimum standards, rather than maximum or minimum – provision for higher or lower car parking will must be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify the deviation and must be included in the developers Travel Plan.
- A key change is the relaxation of the strict maximum parking standards that have resulted in low/zero levels of residential car parking provision in town centres. The standards are set out in table 1 and 2 below.
- Non-residential parking standards are set for each use class, with maximum car standards, optimum motorcycle standards, and minimum cycle and blue badge standards. Departures from these standards will be considered where justified by the Transport Assessment/Statement, and where a fully funded Travel Plan is secured.
- Parking provision policies are based upon a framework of three tiers in order to reflect the diversity of the county. The three 'zones' are (listed in Appendix 2 of the Parking Strategy) based on the population of Output Area Wards (as defined in Census):
 - Zone A (large) – over 20,000 population.
 - Zone B (mid-range) – 3,000-19,999 population.
 - Zone C (low) – up to 2,999 population.

- Zone A has lower car parking standards to reflect that development land is more limited, population levels are high, and there are more opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport. Zone B is the benchmark standard that includes the market towns and large mid-population settlements. Zone C is predominantly rural, and the standards here recognise the likelihood of residents wishing to keep more than the national average number of cars due to location.
- The car parking standard in new residential developments has been developed to accommodate the likely level of car ownership in the area. These levels are based upon car ownership in existing developments in those areas, and consideration of forecasts that indicate that car ownership is set to rise.
- The residential parking standards are set out below in table 1 and additionally :
 - Cycle parking: a minimum of 1 space per bedroom. Nb. requirements in some areas (especially Zone A) are likely to be higher.
 - Motorcycle parking: a minimum of 1 motorcycle parking space per 5 dwellings or 1 motorcycle space per 20 car spaces, whichever is greater.
 - Blue badge parking for people with severe mobility problems: advisory bays available on request where no off-road space is provided.
 - Visitor parking: where half of parking is unallocated – none; where less than half of parking is unallocated – 0.2 spaces per dwelling.

Table 1: Residential Car parking standards

| Zone | 1 bedroom | 2 bedroom | 3 bedroom | 4 bedroom |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| A – red | 1 car space | 1 car space | 2 car spaces | 3 car spaces |
| B – amber | 1.5 car spaces | 2 car spaces | 2.5 car spaces | 3 car spaces |
| C – green | 2 car spaces | 2.5 car spaces | 3 car spaces | 3.5 car spaces |

* Developments in more sustainable locations that are well served by public transport or have good walking and cycling links may be considered for lower levels of car parking provision. Proposals for provision above or below this standard must be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify the deviation and must be included in the developers Travel Plan. The previous aspiration and expectation that car parking for residential development in particularly accessible locations would be expected to be substantially below maximum standards has been dropped. I.e. the presumption in favour of nil parking or lower than 1 parking space per dwelling in town centres is no more.

Other key issues:

- Consideration will be given to the provision of new park and ride site(s) in Yeovil in association with development proposals for the town.
- Provision of increased bicycle parking at bus and train stations will be encouraged.
- The importance of design and layout of parking is detailed, including specific issues and guidance associated with all types of parking.
- Installation of electric charging points for electric vehicles is encouraged, particularly in larger developments.

Key changes compared with current Local Plan Parking Standards (2006):

Current Local Plan saved policies on parking standards are set out below

- Local Plan Policy TA6: non-residential parking standards are based upon national standard (PPG13) and does not differentiate according to location.
- Local Plan Policy TA7: residential parking provision sets maximum off street parking levels for town centres (1 space per dw); towns and rural centres (1.5 spaces per dw); Villages and countryside (2 spaces per dw). Provision is expected to be substantially below the maximum for housing types with less demand for parking than family housing or accessible locations.
- Current standards use 'accessibility profile' scoring is used to guide reductions from the maximum standard, based upon pedestrian links, cycleway links, bus service, public car parking. This accessibility profiling is also used to guide reductions to the existing countywide car parking standards, as set out in the table below.

Table 2: Existing and Proposed Countywide Residential car parking standards

| Location* | Dwelling size | Existing Parking Strategy (maximum) | Proposed draft Parking Strategy (optimum) |
|--|----------------------|--|--|
| Yeovil / Zone A (>20k people in Output Area) | 1 bed | 1 space per dw, but 20-50% reduction in town centre, and 0-30% in edge of centre. | 1 space per dw. |
| | 2 bed | 2 spaces per dw, but 20-50% reduction in town centre, and 0-30% in edge of centre (2-3 bed). | 1 space per dw. |
| | 3 bed | 2 spaces per dw, but 20-50% reduction in town centre, and 0-30% in edge of centre (2-3 bed). | 2 spaces per dw. |
| | 4 bed | 3 spaces per dw, but 20-50% reduction in town centre, and 0-30% in edge of centre (4+). | 3 spaces per dw. |
| Other towns / Zone B (3k – 19,999 people in Output Area) | 1 bed | 1 space per dw, but 0-30% reduction depending on accessibility. | 1.5 spaces per dw. |
| | 2 bed | 2 spaces per dw, but 0-30% reduction depending on accessibility. | 2 spaces per dw. |
| | 3 bed | 2 spaces per dw, but 0-30% reduction depending on accessibility. | 2.5 spaces per dw. |
| | 4 bed | 3 spaces per dw, but 0-30% reduction depending on accessibility. | 3 spaces per dw. |
| Elsewhere (villages and rural areas) / Zone C (<2,999 people in Output Area) | 1 bed | 1 space per dw, but 0-20% reduction depending on accessibility. | 2 spaces per dw. |
| | 2 bed | 2 spaces per dw, but 0-20% reduction depending on accessibility. | 2.5 spaces per dw. |

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| | 3 bed | 2 spaces per dw, but 0-20% reduction depending on accessibility. | 3 spaces per dw. |
| | 4 bed | 3 spaces per dw, but 0-20% reduction depending on accessibility. | 3.5 spaces per dw. |

* The locations are not directly comparable as the existing Parking Standards are based upon settlements, whilst the proposed draft uses the population of Output Area Wards rather than settlements per se.

- Provision for residential cycle parking levels is higher in the draft than the existing strategy.

Non-residential parking standards - key differences:

- Existing standards apply to non-residential development regardless of location, whilst the new ones differentiate according to the zones.
- The new standards generally set a lower maximum car parking provision than existing standards, as demonstrated in the table below.
- The existing non-residential standards are at least 10 years old, and based upon limited, if any evidence. The proposed standards are based on evidence using real life examples, and therefore considered more robust.
- Minimum cycle parking standards are generally higher than the existing strategy; with provision in Zone A particularly high.

Table 3: Examples of Existing and Proposed Countywide Non-residential maximum car parking standards

| Land use | Existing | Proposed draft |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Non food retail (>1000m ²) | 1 space / 20 m ² | 1 space / 50-70 m ² |
| Food retail (>1000 m ²) | 1 space / 14 m ² | 1 space / 16-25 m ² |
| B1 Offices | 1 space / 30 m ² | 1 space 30-55 m ² |
| B2 | 1 space / 30-50 m ² | 1 space / 75-100 m ² |
| Hotels | 1 space per bedroom | 1 space per 2-3 bedrooms |
| Cinemas | 1 space per 5 seats | 1 space per 12-16 seats |

The following pages (5-8) set out the proposed comments from the District Council on the Consultation Draft County Parking Strategy.

South Somerset District Council comments on the Consultation Draft Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (October 2011)

| Paragraph (section heading) | Comment | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1.1 (Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes) | Incorrect references to residential parking in PPS3 - see para 51 of PPS3. | Make suggested text amendment. |
| 2.1.1 (Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes) | Add reference to draft National Planning Policy Framework, and final version if published when Parking Strategy is re-written. | Make suggested text amendment. |
| 3.3.3 (Management of Publicly owned car parks) | SSDC Policy currently in line with management strategy stated. What defines a short stay parking times? Figure 3.2 misleading as there are short stay tariffs available in some long stay car parks as close to shops on outskirts and vice versa as some long stay tariffs available in short stay car parks but at increased cost. | Clarify short stay parking times, and inconsistency in fig 3.2. |
| Policy PM3 (Management of Publicly owned car parks) | SSDC Policy already complies with this. | Note comment and amend text. |
| PM3.1 and 3.2 (Management of Publicly owned car parks: Supporting strategy options) | Higher charges in place for 3 hours plus already. | Note comment and amend text. |
| PM3.3 (Management of Publicly owned car parks: Supporting strategy options) | Also need to recognise that lower paid workers in town centres (shops etc.) need to park all day and alternative transport not always available to them. The aspiration to support modal shift away from car use in the larger settlements where there are prospects of success is supported in principle. The policy of limiting commuter parking provision by limiting long stay parking and specifically in the centre of Yeovil however needs to be tempered by recognition that future economic growth and the parking requirements that it brings and the status and development of town wide bus services will affect the requirement for long stay parking needed to maintain economic growth and personal accessibility. | Make suggested text amendments. |
| PM3.4 (Management of Publicly owned car parks) | Agree but difficult in rural areas for well served alternative means of transport. | Make suggested text amendment. |

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| parks: Supporting strategy options) | | |
| PM3.5 (Management of Publicly owned car parks: Supporting strategy options) | Feel Yeovil already achieves this and reflected in tables 3.3 and 3.4. | Note comment and amend text. |
| PM3.6 (Management of Publicly owned car parks: Supporting strategy options) | Agree but would be down to redevelopment opportunities. | Note comment and amend text. |
| PM3.7 (Management of Publicly owned car parks: Supporting strategy options) | In place in Yeovil on four main access routes on peripheral of town centre. | Note comment and amend text. |
| PM3.8 (Management of Publicly owned car parks: Supporting strategy options) | Agree need to be available on long stay car parks outside town centres. None in SSDC car parks due to physical constraints, topography, and location of car parks available. | Note comment and amend text. |
| Policy PM5 (Management of private parking policy) | Major issue with Tesco car park in Yeovil town centre whereby SCC insisted previous controls of barrier and ticket reimbursement system were removed when store expanded via planning conditions and 106 agreement. Situation now that no parking controls, free access and exit for two and a half hours in car park without having to use store. Resulted in knock on effect on town centre P & D parking management. Totally against principles stated under PM5. | Note objection and amend text as appropriate. |
| 3.3.7 (Parking charges) | SSDC charges comply with policy stated under PM3.2. | Note comment. |
| Policy PM7 (Parking charges policy) | SSDC complies with this but supporting strategy options would need to be considered carefully as stated. | Note comment. |
| 3.3.8 (Blue badge parking) | SSDC have worked with SSDF (South Somerset Disability Forum) in carrying out successful DDA assessment of its car parks. Figure 3.5 shows adequate provision of Blue Badge parking provisions across SSDC car parks. | Note comment. |
| 3.4.3 (Non-residential parking standards) | The Supporting Strategy Option of providing charging points for electric cars should also be included as a Supporting Strategy Option for Policy PP2. If not, why is there a difference between residential and non-residential development? | Make suggested amendment or add explanation. |

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| 4.1 (Developing the zones) | The three zones should relate to actual settlements to make it easier to understand. In many cases the Output Area Wards do not relate to actual settlement names and boundaries e.g. Wessex includes Somerton. | Make suggested amendment. |
| 4.1, 5.3 (The standards for residential development) | There is currently a lack of consistency between some areas identified as Zones B and C, and the proposed settlement hierarchy in the emerging South Somerset Core Strategy. This could lead to inappropriate parking standards, and inconsistency between 'similar' settlements in South Somerset. E.g. Langport/Huish Episcopi, Milborne Port, Stoke sub Hamdon and Ilchester are classed as Rural Centres but are within Zone C alongside the rural settlements/areas. This would result in inconsistent approaches to car parking provision. | Identify Zone A as Yeovil; Zone B as Market Towns and Rural Centres; and Zone C as Rural Settlements. |
| 4.1, 5.3 (The standards for residential development) | The use of quantitative information i.e. population of Output Area Wards, needs to be balanced with qualitative information to reflect the actual location of settlements. The proposed approach of using Output Area Wards rather than settlements, means a large rural hinterland is also included in the zone, leading to inappropriate parking standards in rural settlements e.g. the Cary ward is Zone B and includes the rural settlements of Babcary, Galhampton and Lovington, as well as the Market Town of Ansford/Castle Cary where the standards for Zone B are appropriate. | Refer to settlements rather than just Output Area Wards. |
| 5.2.5 (Residential visitor parking) | Visitor parking needs to be expanded to clarify the role of the road in providing parking viz a viz road space especially where there is not intended to be any off road parking. | Add further explanation regarding visitor parking. |
| 5.3 (The standards for residential development) | There should be specific guidance for parking provision at urban extensions. E.g. proposed urban extension to Yeovil would be either Zone B or C depending on location, implying a higher level of parking provision even though it would be part of Yeovil. This is another point in favour of basing standards on settlements rather than Output Area Wards. | Refer to settlements, including specific reference to urban extensions, rather than just Output Area Wards. |
| 5.3 (The standards for residential development) | Add more guidance as to how much parking provision could potentially deviate from optimum/maximum levels. Current Strategy uses accessibility profiling. | Add suggested further detail. |
| 5.3 (The standards for residential development) | Suggest that car parking provision for 2 bedroom dwellings in Zone A should be 1.5 spaces to reflect and provide for the 2-3 residents of these dwellings. | Make suggested amendment. |
| Fig. 4.2, Appendix 2 (The | Yeovil should include Brympton Output Area (if Output Area approach is continued). | Make suggested |

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| output area zones) | | amendment if Output Area approach is continued. |
| 6.4 (The standards for non-residential development) | The 1 st row, 2 nd column in the table under 'cycle parking' sub heading should state "Cycle (minimum level)." | Make suggested text amendment. |
| 7.4, 7.4.1, 7.4.2 (Design and layout: Cars, residential parking, non-residential parking) | There is some inconsistency on the issue of electric charging points, with para 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 stating that access to electric vehicle charging points will need to be available to all dwellings in new developments, whilst para 7.4 states this will be encouraged. The requirement should be set out in a policy – 7.4.2 states "this policy will be reviewed as the technology is advanced," but it is not included in a policy. | Make charging points a requirement for all new development. |
| Appendix 2 (list of output areas by zone) | Ivelchester should be Zone B as it has a population of >3,000 (if these zones are carried forward). | Make suggested text amendment. |