



Review of Proposed Parking Standards

December 2015

Bath and North East Somerset Council

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1 Introduction

Historically, local authorities have used parking standards to manage the level of parking provided for new developments, aiming to promote more sustainable travel modes to the private car. Previously, maximum standards for each land use were set but this requirement was removed by Government in 2011¹, in relation to residential developments:

“local authorities are best placed to take account of local circumstances and are able to make the right decisions for the benefit of their communities. As such, the central requirement to express ‘maximum’ parking standards for new residential development has been deleted.”

This was in the light of research and experience that suggested that there is not necessarily a direct link between car **ownership** and car **use** and that insufficient parking can cause problems for the local community. More recently, the need for parking standards at all was clarified in a written statement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government made on 25 March 2015²:

“Local Planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network.”

This statement should be read in conjunction with paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework:

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

- *the accessibility of the development;*
- *the type, mix and use of development;*
- *the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- *local car ownership levels; and*
- *an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.”*

The current parking standards available to Bath and North East Somerset Council are those set out in the Adopted 2007 Local Plan. As such, it is clear that the issue of parking standards needs to be reviewed.

1 http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/general/news/stories/2011/jan2011/21jan2011/210111_3

2 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-03-25/HCWS488/>

1 359888/ITD/TPS/002/B December 2015
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2 Proposed Standards

2.1 Principle of Zoning

Bath and North East Somerset Council is proposing to retain parking standards but only for application to new developments in the city of Bath. This is considered to be consistent with the need for “*clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network*”. Bath currently suffers from traffic congestion, with associated air quality and other environmental negative impacts which are discussed further in Section 3.

Applying parking standards to Bath is also consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in that it recognises that there is greatest potential to use non-car modes in Bath, compared to other areas within the Council’s control. NPPF stresses the importance of promoting sustainable transport and how local policies can influence this:

“Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.”

It is sensible that different standards can apply to Bath because of higher levels of accessibility and public transport availability, noting the requirements of NPPF:

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

- *the accessibility of the development;*
- *the type, mix and use of development;*
- *the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- *local car ownership levels; and*
- *an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.”*

For non-residential developments, maximum parking standards are proposed in the ‘Bath Outer Zone’. For the ‘Bath City Centre Zone’ zero provision is proposed due to this area having the greatest accessibility but also being the most sensitive to the negative impacts of traffic. For ‘Bath and North East Somerset Outside of Bath’, each case would be assessed on merit.

In determining parking standards, it is clear that consideration needs to be given to the accessibility of the development site, in terms of promoting sustainable transport, notably walking, cycling and bus and rail options. Where sites are more accessible then a lower parking requirement is justified; where sites are less well served by sustainable means, more parking could be considered, provided that this does not support excessive car use. For developments in areas where constraints in the highway network are evident, then it is reasonable to contain the number of car movements by applying parking standards that deter car journeys in favour of access by sustainable means, particularly where sustainable modes can be extended or improved. Therefore, the principle of applying maximum standards to Bath only is supported.

2.2 Comparison of Proposed Standards

Table 2.1 overleaf presents a comparison of the new proposed standards with the current standards of the following neighbouring authorities:

- Bristol City Council (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, adopted July 2014)
- South Gloucestershire Council (Local Plan 2006 and Residential Parking Standards December 2013, adopted Supplementary Planning Document)
- North Somerset Council (Parking Standards November 2013, adopted Supplementary Planning Document)
- Wiltshire Council (Parking Strategy March 2011, taken from Local Transport Plan 2011-2026).

Data in the table refers to vehicle parking only (not cycle parking) and is for the largest size category per land use where variations occur for smaller sites. As mentioned earlier, the proposed maximum standards for non-residential development would apply to 'Bath Outer Zone' only.

The standards for C3 Residential are different in that they represent *minimum* rather than *maximum* standards.

The main differences highlighted by the comparison in relation to the Bath standards are:

- A1 retail – non-food retail same as other authorities, but no food retail specified
- A2 Financial and Professional Services - higher provision than all other authorities
- A3 Restaurant and cafes – similar to Bristol
- B1 Offices - lower provision than all other authorities
- B2 Industry – much lower provision than all other authorities for over 235m²
- C1 hotels – lower provision than all other authorities
- C3 Residential – Bristol has lower minimum standards, others are similar.

For B1, B2 and C1 uses, the proposed standards for Bath Outer Zone would result in lower provision of parking, compared to neighbouring authorities. However, this is considered appropriate given the unique nature of Bath and the strong desire to manage traffic levels in the city.

Table 2.1: Comparison of Maximum Standards

Land Use	Threshold	Proposed Standards		Current Standards		
		Bath and North East Somerset	Bristol	South Gloucestershire	North Somerset	Wiltshire
A1 Retail	Over 1,000m ²	1 space per 20m ²	1 space per 20m ² non-food 1 space per 14m ² food	1 space per 20m ² non-food 1 space per 14m ² food	1 space per 20m ² non-food 1 space per 14m ² food	Does not specify
A2 Financial and Professional Services	Over 1,000m ²	1 space per 20m ²	1 space per 100m ²	1 space per 35m ²	1 space per 20m ²	1 space per 30m ²
A3 Restaurant and cafes	Over 1,000m ²	1 space per 20m ²	1 space per 20m ² (drinking and dining space)	1 space per 5m ² (drinking and dining area)	1 space per 5m ² (public area)	1 space per 25m ²
B1 Offices, Light Industrial, R&D, Laboratory Studios	n/a	1 space per 100m ²	1 space per 50m ² (with 10+ cars: 1 electric point per 5 spaces)	1 space per 35m ² below 2,500m ² 1 space per 30m ² over 2,500m ²	1 space per 30m ²	1 space per 30m ² sites standalone 1 space per 25m ² over 2,500m ²
B2 Industry	Up to 235m ²	1 space per 50m ²	1 space per 50m ²	1 space per 50m ²	1 space per 45m ²	1 per 30m ²
	Over 235m ²	1 space per 250m ²				1 per 50m ²
B8 Warehousing	Up to 235m ²	1 space per 50m ²	1 space per 200m ²	1 space per 200m ²	2 spaces per 1,000m ²	1 per 30m ²
	Over 235m ²	1 space per 250m ²				1 per 200m ²
C1 Hotels	n/a	1 space per 3 bedrooms	1 space per bedroom	1 space per bedroom 1 coach space per 30 bedrooms	1 space per bedroom 1 space per 3 staff 1 coach space per 30 bedrooms	1 space per bedroom plus requisite for public facilities
C2 Hospitals	n/a	1 space per 4 staff 1 space per 3 visitors	1 space per 3 FT duty staff 1 space per 3 bed spaces for visitors	Each case assessed on merit	1 space per 4 staff 1 space per 3 daily visitors	1 space per 4 staff 1 space per 3 visitors
C2 Residential /Boarding Schools	n/a	1 space per 2 members of staff	1 space per each duty staff	1 space per 2 staff	2 spaces per classroom	Does not specify

Land Use	Threshold	Proposed Standards		Current Standards		
		Bath and North East Somerset	Bristol	South Gloucestershire	North Somerset	Wiltshire
C2 Residential Colleges, student accommod.	n/a	Zero provision	Does not specify	2 spaces per 5 bed spaces	2 spaces per 5 bed spaces	1 space per bed (inc. staff) 1 space per 2 non-residential/ ancillary staff
C2 Convalescent, Residential Care and Nursing Homes	n/a	1 space per 2 staff 1 space per 6 bed spaces	1 space per 2 FT duty staff 1 space per 6 bed spaces for visitors	1 space per 2 staff 1 space per 6 bed spaces	1 space per 4 staff 1 space per 6 bedrooms	1 space per 2 staff 1 space per 4 beds
C3 Residential	n/a	1 space per dwelling	1 space per one bed house/flat	1 space per one bed dwelling	1.5 spaces per one bedroom unit	1 space per 1 bedroom unit
NOTE – minimum standards		2 spaces per two to three bed dwelling	1.25 spaces per two bed house/flat	1.5 spaces per 2 bed dwelling	2 spaces per 2-3 bedroom unit	2 spaces per 2-3 bedroom unit
Apply to both Bath Outer Zone and Outside of Bath		3 spaces per four bed dwelling and above	An average of 1.5 spaces per 3+ bed house/flat	2 spaces per 3-4 bed dwelling 3 spaces per 5+ bed dwelling	3 spaces per 4+ bedroom unit	3 spaces per 4+ bedroom unit
		0.2 spaces per dwelling for visitor parking	Not stated	0.2 spaces per dwelling for visitor parking	Not stated	0.2 spaces per dwelling (unallocated) for visitor parking
D1 Non-Residential Institutions	n/a	Each case assessed on merit	1 space per 20m ² Community Halls/Places of worship/ Church Halls	1 space per 10 seats Places of Worship, Church Halls	1 space per 10 seats or 10m ² Church Halls, Community Halls, Places of Worship, Cultural Centres, Scout Huts, Youth Clubs	1 space per 5m ² Places of Worship, Church Halls, Public Halls
D2 Assembly and leisure uses	n/a	Each case assessed on merit	1 space per 2 staff 1 space per 10 seats for visitors Theatres/ Cinemas/ Concert Halls	1 space per 5 seats Cinema and Conference Facilities	To be determined by planning application and in accordance with policy CS11 of the adopted Core Strategy (2012)	1 space per 5 seats Cinemas, music, Concert Halls and conference facilities

2.3 Detailed Comments on Proposed Standards

It is suggested that the Council reviews the proposed standards in light of the following comments:

General

- For Bath Outer Zone, should an accessibility assessment be an option to justify increased non-residential parking e.g. for less sensitive areas, with lower levels of accessibility?

A1 Retail

- A separate figure for food retail could be included.

B2 Industry

- Review the figure of 1 space per 250m² for over 235m², given that it is much higher than neighbouring authorities

C3 Residential

- Should specify one space per **one bedroom** dwelling for Bath Outer Zone
- For City Centre Zone, should the option of reduced parking be available if it can be justified with a Parking Management Strategy? Should a parking assessment be a requirement of all significant residential developments in the City Centre Zone?
- Garages could be included as contributing to the standard if they have minimum internal dimensions of 6m x 3m.

3 Traffic Demand in Bath

The approved transport strategy for the city ('Getting Around Bath³') sets out a vision for transport and a series of objectives against which the impacts of potential transport initiatives can be determined. Addressing the negative effects of traffic congestion and associated air quality problems feature strongly, with possible approaches to manage car traffic across the city. The aim is to reduce the number of vehicle movements entering or passing through the central area, while enhancing the local environment and economy. Safeguarding and enhancing the unique historic environment and World Heritage Site status is an essential part of the agreed strategy which states:

"Parking in particular is a key issue and progressive reductions in the supply of public on- and off-street parking to support a shift to the provision of long stay parking at Park and Ride sites have been implemented in recent years. This policy needs to be strengthened and extended to create more long stay capacity at the periphery, in tandem with further constraints on parking in the central area. Some reductions in capacity will occur as a result of flood alleviation but parking policy is an essential element of delivering the Enterprise Area. The consequences are better air quality, less vehicle intrusion (noise and street impacts), maintaining the built environment, better visitor experiences, accessibility for people with mobility impairments and a healthy economy."

Strong emphasis is also placed on sustainable transport measures coupled with demand management measures. Parking standards form an influential element of this type of approach, in that parking provision needs to reflect the problems being experienced and can help to contain car use.

As part of the development of the Transport Strategy, predictions were made on the number of additional trips to/from Bath as a result of new developments, as set out in the proposed Core Strategy. This included the Enterprise Area, in which it is planned to provide nearly 100,000m² of new office and workspace/innovation uses.

Based on existing modes used to travel to work in Bath (2011 Census data), it is estimated that this level of development would produce an 'unconstrained demand' for around 2,100 parking spaces at new employment sites. This calculation is on the basis that parking demand would be the same as the net trip generation of the sites (trips to the site less trips away from the site) for the morning peak period of 07:00-10:00.

Applying the proposed parking standards to the new development areas (1 space per 100 m²) results in around 1,000 spaces. Therefore, if parking is unconstrained within the Enterprise Area it is likely to result in around 1,100 more car trips into the city centre each day or more than double the number with the parking standards in place.

³ http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/getting_around_bath_transport_strategy_-_final_issue_web_version.pdf

4 Conclusions

The overall conclusion of this review is that the proposed parking standards are sound subject to detailed amendments.

For Bath, it is agreed that in relation to the use of parking standards, there is “*clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network*”. This is based on the existing problems of traffic congestion and its negative air quality and environmental impacts, particularly given the city’s World Heritage Site status.

It is also considered appropriate that three separate zones for parking standards are used i.e. City Centre, Bath Outer Zone and Outside of Bath.

Managing parking within the city is a key element of the approved Bath Transport Strategy which aims to reduce the growth of traffic entering and passing through the historic city centre. Without appropriate parking standards, this objective will be much harder to achieve. Based on the proposed level of employment development for the Enterprise Area, unconstrained parking could lead to over 2,100 more vehicles per day entering the city, more than double the number if the proposed standards were applied.