

Inspector Question 90

My Q30, supplementing my Q6 raised the question of the soundness of delegating the plan's transport and parking policies to SPDs. Policy T5 effectively delegates policies on parking provision to a SPD. In addition to responding to my earlier questions, I would welcome the Council's response to representations 635 from Mr John Shephard of J & J Design 1841 from Mr Tim Northey of Rectory Homes, 1921 and 1922 from Mark Behrendt of HBF, 1962, 1963, 1979 and 1980 Robert Love of Bidwells on behalf of Careys New Homes and Persimmon Homes Midlands, 2441 from Jonathon Clover of Wendover neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on this point.

Summary

Key issues raised in the representations are as follows:

- SPD approach to parking standards contrary to the Framework/ 2015 Ministerial statement/Canterbury Local Plan set as an example
- Need to set out minimum standards in policy not SPD – cannot judge effects on development including viability without them (particular reference to garage size/dimensions)
- Specify electric charging point requirements
- Wendover town centre parking

AVDC Response

As an introduction, these issues should be cross referenced with the Inspector's Question 6 which is also of relevance here – in particular the Council's response on the use of SPDs generally and in particular commentary on car parking standards/provision (the response is not repeated here).

This response will only cover new/further issues raised in the representations above.

Government policy no longer requires local authorities to set maximum parking standards. Instead, local authorities are encouraged (paragraph 39 of the Framework supplemented by the clarification from the 2015 Ministerial statement) to develop locally appropriate standards taking into account factors such as the availability of public transport and local car ownership levels. While the Council is committed to improving sustainable transport options, car travel will remain a significant mode of travel for the foreseeable future.

The SPD will cover the requirements in relation to dimension of bays/garages that reflect policy T5 as well as siting and design of electric charging points. This will assist with assessing viability assessments through the development management process.

Policy S5 includes a consideration of the viability of a proposal considered against infrastructure requirements. Expressed concern that the imposition of local standards could unduly affect viability (referring to paragraph 174 in the framework) would be considered under VALP Policy S5.

Local standards are not therefore contrary to the Framework and as such it is critical that new development provides sufficient parking to meet the needs of the development.

Currently, the adequacy of parking and servicing is assessed against the SPD "Parking Guidelines" adopted in April 2002 and referenced in the AVDLP adopted in 2004 (copy attached). Should the Inspector be so minded, the current parking guidelines could be added as an Appendix to the Plan. Noting their date of adoption these will be reassessed as part of the Local Plan review work.

In terms of the intention to review parking guidelines, the County Council in 2015 carried out a Buckinghamshire wide review of car parking guidance which looked to address the significant changes to parking strategies begun by PPG13 and reflect most up to date Government policy including the 2015 Ministerial statement on car parking.

The Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance was adopted by the County Council in September 2015. While this is not an SPD, the document was subject to public consultation and provides the basis of highways advice provided by the County Council in its role as highway authority. A copy of the 2015 guidelines is attached as Appendix B.

At the time, this authority had some reservations about the approach advocated in the guidelines which led to the Council (and other Councils in Buckinghamshire) deciding not to adopt the guidance. Notwithstanding this, the guidelines have subsequently been included in their Proposed Submission Local Plan by Wycombe District Council. It is proposed that the Countywide Parking Guidance form the starting point for the Council to reassess parking as part of the Local Plan review.

While noting the concern that more clarity is needed on electric vehicle infrastructure the Council believes that Policy T7 and preceding paragraphs in the Local Plan adequately address the position regarding the use of electric vehicles. Even with the recent concerns raised worldwide regarding diesel vehicles, the major impact was on more petrol car sales than any significant shift to electric. Policy T7 is considered not to require modification at the moment and the need to change/amend will be considered in the light of any changing circumstances in the Local Plan review.

The Council has worked closely with the Parish Council and the Highway Authority over the years to address both on and off street parking issues in Wendover town centre. A car parking study has recently been commissioned by the Council to look at centre parking issues and possible solutions/improvements for Wendover, Winslow and Buckingham – it is expected to report back in late 2018.

While it is unrealistic to expect no impact from the redevelopment of RAF Halton on Wendover Policy D-HAL003, the Local Plan includes proposals to improve public transport, cycling and walking links between the two locations and a specific requirement for a new local centre to be created in the redevelopment area. Further detail will be forthcoming as the proposals for the redevelopment of RAF Halton moves forward.