

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Principal Planning Policy Officer</b>	<b>Author</b>	☎ 01206 282625
<b>Title</b>	<b>Consultation on Parking Guidance for Essex</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) has been leading work to revise the parking standards guidance to inform new development across Essex. Parking guidance is referred to in policy in the Colchester Local Plan. The proposed guidance sets parking for different vehicle types, design and location, dimensions for parking and a suggested quantum for different types of development.
- 1.2 EPOA are consulting on parking standards for development such as housing, retail, commercial and leisure uses in the Part 1 document, which covers the smallest developments upwards, of any type, across the County. A new approach to Garden Communities and Large-Scale Developments is also being consulting on in the Part 2 document.
- 1.3 The consultation and documents are being hosted on the Essex County Council (ECC) website on behalf of EPOA. The deadline for responses is 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, although it has been agreed that a slightly later deadline of 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 is acceptable to allow for formal processes.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To submit the proposed response to the consultation by the agreed deadline.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The consultation provides an opportunity for the Council to influence parking guidance for Essex.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not to respond to the consultation or to make amendments to the suggested response.

## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 The existing guidance was approved in 2009 and therefore is proposed to be updated as there have been changes in planning legislation and policy, introduction of Garden Communities and a greater awareness of the need to manage the impact of developments on local communities and the environment.
- 5.2 The revised Parking Guidance is in two parts: Part 1 covers from the smallest developments upwards of any type across the County. A new approach to apply to Garden Communities (GC) and Large-Scale Developments (LSD) (Part 2) is also being consulted on.
- 5.3 The consultation documents are hosted on the Essex County Council (ECC) website: <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-parking-guidance-consultation-2023/>. The supporting documents include the Part 2 Accessibility tool; Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report; Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment; and the Essex GC and LSD Parking guidance evidence base.
- 5.4 A set of consultation questions are included for both Part 1 and Part 2 of the Parking Guidance. The questions, and the proposed Colchester City Council response, is included in Appendix 1.

### Part 1

- 5.4 The document will replace the previous Parking Standards for Essex, produced in 2009. The 2009 Parking Standards were adopted as SPD by Colchester Borough Council.
- 5.5 The purpose of the revised parking guidance is to:
- Assist the local planning authorities in determining levels of parking provision for new developments;
  - Assist developers in preparing plans for the development of land; and
  - Assist the determination of planning applications by ensuring that applications submitted include an appropriate level of cycle parking, car parking, and electric vehicle provision; and parking designs and arrangements that operate effectively and safely.
- 5.6 The guidance has been developed to align with, and support, relevant national and local policy documents including the NPPF, Local Plans and Local Transport Strategies. The Colchester Local Plan refers to the Parking Guidance in Policy DM22: Parking.
- 5.7 The revised standards are intended to guide new development in order that the appropriate balance can be achieved between securing a reduced reliance on the private car, while needing to make provision for travel by all modes in a way that does not prejudice the safety or the quality of new development.
- 5.8 The following principles are set out in the guidance to underpin the parking standards:
- All measures to encourage trips by non-car modes should be taken to influence a shift to sustainable modes of travel, in particular in urban centres with high accessibility to key services and facilities, prior to resorting to the provision of car parking.
  - Parking for cyclists must be considered in terms of its quantity, quality, accessibility, convenience and safety. These fundamental elements must be included within the earliest stages of design.

- Parking provision should be future proofed to ensure provision is made for EVs.
- Developers will be expected to provide sufficient parking on the development site to accommodate forecast parking requirements. It is expected that there will be no overflow parking from developments onto the surrounding road network, and any on-street parking will be planned in a way to enhance placemaking and ensure vehicular prominence is mitigated.
- Parking, with every other aspect of transport, must contribute to climate change-related commitments and objectives as relevant.
- Areas for parking should be flexible to allow for alternative uses for the space when parking is not required; and
- All parking provision should be safe for all users.

- 5.9 In addition to a section covering general guidance on parking within developments, the guidance includes sections on: cycle parking including quantity (expressed as minimum standards), type and design guidance in line with other relevant guidance including Local Transport Note LTN1/20; electric vehicle (EV) parking including standards and design of EV charging facilities; parking for disabled motorists; powered two-wheeler parking; and a section on the design and layout of parking areas including parking bay dimensions.
- 5.10 Section 8 sets out vehicle parking standards (quantum of parking) according to Use Class.
- 5.11 National policy recognises that the level of parking required for a development is dependant not only on the land use type, but the level of accessibility of the site. The guidance includes a Zonal Approach to Residential Parking Standards with standards that vary based on the level of accessibility of the location (High Accessibility; Moderate Accessibility; and Low Accessibility). Accessibility mapping, showing accessibility levels across Essex, is included in the appendix of the guidance. The accessibility levels are determined from three key layers which are overlaid to form one overall accessibility 'score'. The three key layers are:
- Accessibility to urban centres within 10- and 20-minute walking times
  - Accessibility to urban centres within 10- and 20-minute cycle times
  - County-wide Public Transport Accessibility Level scores.
- 5.12 It is recognised in the guidance that a development itself has the potential to improve the existing accessibility of the site or the surrounding area. If the applicant can demonstrate that the accessibility score would materially improve as a result of their proposals, then there may be a case for negotiation over alternative parking standards. This is most likely to be the case, however, at Garden Communities and Large-Scale Developments - where there is the scale and funding to deliver new infrastructure - and therefore the Part 2 parking guidance (which adopts the Accessibility Tool/accessibility levels more comprehensively) is more likely to be relevant.
- 5.13 The Parking Guidance document states that parking below minimum standards will be considered where a developer can demonstrate that trips to and from the site will be by modes other than car, and that there will be less demand for parking than that set out by minimum standards in the document. It also states that there must be no unplanned overflow of parking from the development site as a result of insufficient on-site parking provision and developers will be expected to fund mitigation measures to ensure that this is enforceable. The Parking Guidance document recognises that access to car club vehicles and other requirements are important elements.

## Part 2

- 5.14 Alongside the Part 1 guidance, a companion Part 2 has been provided. This guidance is relevant to Garden Communities (GC) and Large-Scale Development (LSD) – defined for the purposes of the Parking Guidance as residential-led developments comprising at least 1,000 homes, usually with other supporting mixed land uses.
- 5.15 The Part 2 guidance is intended to be referred to when determining the volume and design requirements of parking at GCs and LSDs. Other detailed matters such as parking bay dimensions and specifications for electric vehicles are found within Part 1.
- 5.16 The reason for differing guidance is stated that Large-Scale Development, and in particular Garden Communities, are expected to achieve exemplar sustainable mobility outcomes and therefore necessitate more progressive parking provision.
- 5.17 The Part 2 guidance sets out a parking hierarchy for considering the quantum, design and provision of parking in new GC's and LSD's. It reflects an order of priority where the storage of active and sustainable mobility and e-mobility modes should be considered first and made most convenient, attractive and prominent. Where vehicle parking is provided, the space for car sharing should be most convenient and attractive.
- 5.18 The Part 2 guidance acknowledges that to be effective and contribute towards achieving sustainable travel outcomes, an appropriate reduction in car parking provision can only be delivered alongside supporting measures including design (density and land use planning); active travel; public transport; car clubs and shared mobility; demand management; and stewardship and enforcement.
- 5.19 The Part 2 guidance adopts an Accessibility Tool to establish how well connected a development is, and its potential to achieve sustainable transport outcomes. The accessibility tool is a spreadsheet tool which will help inform decisions around recommended parking levels for GCs and LSDs. The accessibility tool assumes that GCs and LSDs will be required to achieve the highest levels of accessibility, mode shift and reductions in car ownership (through policy requirements) and recommends that a reduction in overall parking from the more generic standards contained in Part 1 is appropriate for these developments.
- 5.20 There is an opportunity to use the accessibility tool to inform decisions around smaller scale developments in highly accessible locations.
- 5.21 The proposed Colchester City Council response to the consultation is set out in the Appendix to this report.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 An EQIA has been carried out as part of the EPOA consultation and is available on the website <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-parking-guidance-consultation-2023/>.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 All themes in the Strategic Plan are relevant, in particular: respond to the climate emergency; improve health, wellbeing and happiness; and grow our economy so everyone benefits.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Essex Planning Officers Association are carrying out this consultation and the final response will be submitted by the agreed deadline.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 Local Stakeholders will have an interest in the consultation including the Council's response.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 N/A

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 N/A.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 N/A.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Colchester City Council's Proposed Response

## **Background Papers**

EPOA Parking Guidance Consultation – online resource

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-parking-guidance-consultation-2023/>

## Appendix 1: Colchester City Council's Proposed Response to EPOA Essex Parking Guidance Consultation 2023

The online consultation includes a number of questions in relation to the draft document. Responses to the consultation will be completed using the online consultation questions, but the questions are copied out below for information.

### Part 1

#### Question 1

- a. In reference to section 2.20. Do you agree or disagree with using a zonal approach to determine parking standards?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. Please can you provide us with your views on the proposed accessibility approach? Are there any other factors you would expect to be taken into account when considering accessibility and why?

*Colchester City Council agree that in certain circumstances and in locations well served by sustainable travel options, parking standards could reflect accessibility by non-car modes and that a zonal approach provides a method of assessing accessibility. The accessibility maps would need to be far more granular and high quality than the version currently provided to enable assessment of a proposed development. The use of accessibility mapping would however require additional resource when assessing planning applications. An online mapping tool that generates parking requirements could make the process less onerous.*

*In those cases where parking standards are reduced complementary measures, including car clubs, are an important consideration and this should be made a clear requirement throughout the document.*

#### Question 2

- a. In reference to section 2.30; National guidance requires clear and compelling evidence to set maximum standards. For 1-bedroom dwellings in highly accessible locations a maximum is still applied, all other standards are minimums. Do you agree with the suggested approach?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. What other contexts are there aside from highly accessible developments where maximum standards could be relevant or effective?

*Maximum standards could be relevant or effective in urban areas and can also optimise the density of development in urban centres. However, maximum standards should adjust to*

*the locality. In areas where there are high levels of accessibility (whether through good quality frequent sustainable transport links, and/or key services and facilities in walking distance) adopting maximum parking standards could be relevant.*

### Question 3

- a. In reference to section 2.42 – 2.45; Do you agree or disagree with the guidance on enforcement, with greater emphasis on enforcing parking from first occupation of development?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. If you were to change this section what amendments would you like to see included?

*A greater emphasis is welcomed, however enforcement on the public highway falls outside the planning process. Enforcement on public land could be covered by Car Park Management Plans (CPMPs). However, this may require their use to be extended beyond trip destination developments, as per section 2.46.*

### Question 4

- a. In reference to section 3; Do you agree or disagree with the updated guidance relating to cycle parking standards and design?

Please select one item:

- **Strongly Agree**
- Fairly Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. If you were to change this section what amendments would like to see included?

*All cycle parking should be secure. To be secure, in addition to the location of the cycle parking within the development and levels of visibility and lighting, consideration should be given to secure access to parking compounds (for example by app or by fob) for residents, employees and those parking for longer periods (e.g. in non-residential cycle parking provision).*

### Question 5

- a. In reference to section 4; Do you agree or disagree with the updated guidance relating to electric vehicle parking standards and design?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree



- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

b. If you were to change this section what you would like to see included?

*Table 4-1 should be amended to prescribe a 'minimum' charger specification.*

#### Question 6

a. In reference to section 8; Do you agree or disagree with the updated numerical parking standards? (Strongly disagree-> strongly agree)

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

b. Based on your experience, what changes would you make to the standards for particular land uses?

*When Section 8 sets standards for "retirement developments" specific reference should be included to all uses that fall between C2 and C3 eg 'assisted living', 'extra care'.*

c. Based on your experience, what changes would you make to the numerical standards for high, medium and low accessibility areas?

*Section 8.5 states "It is now recognised that providing a reduced number of parking spaces at a travel origin alone does not discourage people from owning a car." But there is limited emphasis of guidance on reduced provision at destinations, or how this might be assessed or justified.*

#### Question 7

Do you have any other comments relating to Part 1 Parking guidance?

*General comment:*

*Colchester City Council welcome the work undertaken to revise the parking standards guidance. The current 2009 Parking Standards were adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The adopted Colchester Local Plan recognises that although the lack of parking provision can have a negative impact on the public realm and the local highway network, over provision and poor management of parking can lead to the inefficient use of land and can also discourage greater use of more sustainable modes of transport. Adopted Local Plan policy on residential car parking is informed by the Parking Standards, but also takes into account levels of local accessibility; car ownership levels; the size, tenure and location of dwellings; the appropriate mix of parking types including opportunities for car sharing and car clubs; and the need to ensure facilities are incorporated for electric and low emission vehicles.*

*Accessibility of the Parking Guidance document and ease of its use is important. The document is currently long and not easily navigable. An online version that is easy to navigate, should be the minimum. An interactive map that generates parking requirements for the location you click on would be welcomed.*

*Other comments on specific sections/paragraphs:*

- *Applying paragraph 2.41 to all applications is likely to have unforeseen consequences for some householder applications, in that some dwellings will not have existing 'adequate' parking provision and thus could not demonstrate this moving forward in conjunction with an "extension that requires planning permission". This should be caveated along the lines of 'demonstrating that development will not worsen the existing parking circumstance', so as to not prejudice minor householder extensions.*
- *Section 7 should be more direct about a requirement to mitigate the visual impact of parking and minimising its impact on public realm.*
- *Section 7 should place an emphasis on utilising a variety of typologies on larger schemes.*
- *Section 7 has a lack of emphasis and options for off-plot and unallocated parking.*
- *Typology examples in the Part 1 standards should be more progressive, as per the Part 2 standards. Why do they vary between the two parts?*
- *Paragraph 7.6 – need to consider cyclists in layout proposals too.*
- *Paragraph 7.55 should make clear that separate cycle parking is required if carports or car lodges are provided as these are not deemed suitable for the storage of bicycles.*

## Part 2

### Question 1

- In reference to section 1.1 – 1.4; The guidance suggests a different approach to Part 1 for Garden Communities and large-scale developments of around 1,000 dwellings or more. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
  - Fairly Agree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Fairly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
- What approach would you take to the two parts of the guidance or the scale thresholds?

*1,000 units is a reasonable threshold to start employing more progressive parking standards and the accessibility tool provides an appropriate mechanism for assessing the degree to which provision should be reduced.*

### Question 2

- a. In reference to section 2; Do you agree or disagree with the outcomes that the parking approach in Garden Communities and large-scale developments seeks to support?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
  - Fairly Agree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Fairly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
- b. What changes would you make to the outcomes?

### Question 3

- a. In reference to section 3; Do you agree or disagree that the supporting measures outlined above will be needed, alongside parking, to help achieve the outcomes?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
  - Fairly Agree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Fairly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
- b. What amendments would you like to see included?

*Supporting measures must be provided in perpetuity with a robust, sustainable, and financially viable stewardship model in place from the outset. This can be achieved in principle on Garden Community developments which are comprehensively planned,*

*although this must be realistic. This approach is likely to be less successful on Large Scale Developments which are more likely to have a higher reliance on existing infrastructure or which may have interrelated links to existing communities. The supporting measures may be harder to achieve and establish fairly where conflict with existing communities occurs.*

#### Question 4

- a. In reference to section 4; Do you agree that the assessment of parking for a Garden Community or large-scale development should be influenced by its existing accessibility?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- Fairly Agree
- **Neither Agree nor Disagree**
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. What amendments would you like to see included, especially if you feel consideration of existing accessibility is not appropriate?

*1,000 units is a reasonable threshold to start employing more progressive parking standards and the accessibility tool provides an appropriate mechanism for assessing the degree to which provision should be reduced.*

*A Garden Community that is comprehensively planned is different to a Large-Scale Development and has the ambition to establish its own exemplar level of accessibility and sustainability, once a comprehensive package of supporting measures are in place. There should be an aspiration for future accessibility, to be the starting point which will be achieved through the package of measures implemented, with proportionate supporting infrastructure provided at the point of housing delivery.*

*The Standards allow for review of the most appropriate reduction of standard to apply to Garden Communities, linked to the extent of provision and commitment to delivery of the package of supporting measures required to allow for lower parking standards to achieve the identified desired outcomes.*

#### Question 5

- a. In reference to the accessibility framework; Do you agree or disagree with the metrics approach taken to the Accessibility Framework?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. What amendments would you like to see included?

*It would be preferable to see a layer added to the accessibility level that reflects access to services and facilities outside of urban centres.*

#### Question 6

- a. In reference to section 4.7-4.11; Do you agree or disagree with calculation of a total parking budget for a site rather than calculation of parking per dwelling?

Please select one item:

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. The calculation of a parking budget aims to balance provision with outcomes; how well do you feel this balance is achieved?

- c. Based on your experience, what changes would you make to the numerical standards for Garden Communities and large-scale developments?

*Where there is a comprehensive mobility strategy, there is an ambition for Standards for Garden Communities, to be more progressive than Large Scale Developments, particularly with regard to non-residential uses, but this needs to be realistic set against the supporting measures.*

#### Question 7

- a. In reference to section 4.19-4.23; Do you agree or disagree with the idea of repurposing areas of parking in the future if demand changes?

Please select one item:

- **Strongly Agree**
- Fairly Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. What issues or opportunities can you see with this approach?

*The potential for re-purposing needs to be established at the outset with residents having a clear understanding of future options and benefits which come from it, with a monitor and management plan in place for review of these spaces at regular intervals. This has the potential to be effective for LSD as well as Garden Communities.*

#### Question 8

- a. In reference to section 4; Do you understand the process for applying the Accessibility Tool?

Please select only one item

- **yes**
- somewhat
- no

- b. What changes would you make to the process for applying the Accessibility Tool and why?

*It is a complicated process to follow and not clear within the Part 2 Guidance that you need to refer to a separate spreadsheet for the Tool. It would also be helpful to have the non-residential section in the tool rather than just an appendix, as they are currently in two separate places. Again, a web version of the guidance and the calculator would ease and enhance its use.*

#### Question 9

- a. In reference to section 5; Do you agree or disagree with the parking Design Principles here?

Please select only one item

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. What changes would you suggest e.g add any further detail or any other principles?

*There should be a greater emphasis on visual mitigation of parking. Where images are used to provide examples, they should show how to do it well and how to do it badly and be clear about which category they fall in to.*

#### Question 10

- a. In reference to table 5-1; Do you agree or disagree with the Design Typology Matrix?

Please select only one item

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- b. What changes would you make to the content or order of preference in the Typology Matrix?

*In the context of a comprehensively planned Garden Community a preference for off plot recognises the ambition to be exemplar, working together with the wider GC principles. This needs to be realistic and emphasis on parking being designed with a focus for re-purposing opportunities in the future should also factor in the balance of preferences. Monitoring and management is key as well as the review of the standards referred to above (Q4).*

#### Question 11

- a. In reference to section 5.21 and beyond; Do you agree or disagree with the Design Typologies here?

Please select only one item

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

b. What changes do you suggest e.g any further detail or other typologies?

#### Question 12

a. Do you agree or disagree with the level of detail included on Design Typologies here?

Please select only one item

- Strongly Agree
- **Fairly Agree**
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Fairly Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

b. If this detail is not included, where else is it or should it be, e.g. in other documents?

*This section could feature as an appendix, or as a separate design code. As per previous comments, useability is key, and the creation of a web version is likely paramount to ease of use.*

#### Question 13

Do you have any other comments relating to Part 2 Parking guidance?

*Parking Standards for Use Classes B2 and B8 are not covered at all for GC/LSD in Part 2. Is the expectation that you would apply the Part 1 standards?- There should be greater clarity if this is the case.*

*As per previous comments, it is felt that Large Scale Developments and Garden Communities have the ambition to be substantively different types of development and different approaches should be taken to parking within each, although it important that these remain realistic. The part 2 standards appear appropriate for Large Scale Developments, where the context and scale will vary to a degree where accessibility also varies. The approach for GCs should be embedded within a wider mobility strategy and should reflect the review of the delivery of supporting measures which compliment lower parking standards and influence the accessibility outputs.*

*The whole document (Part 1 and Part 2) is comprehensive and in part complex and many users would benefit from a summary and as referred to in a number of responses a web tool. In particular the use of the Accessibility Tool in Part 2 would lend itself to online based through the website.*