

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1. This section reviews parking policy aspirations against a background of relevant national policy, in particular PPG13, and regional and local parking policy as set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan, East Midlands Parking Review, Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) and Charnwood Local Plan.

National

- 4.2. National parking policies are set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport. This states that 'the availability of car parking has a major influence on the means of transport people choose for their journeys.' PPG13 recognises the importance of striking a balance between encouraging growth and vitality in town centres and increasing traffic congestion and therefore recommends that local authorities should take care not to create perverse incentives for development to locate away from town centres, or threaten future levels of investment in town centres when developing and implementing parking policies.
- 4.3. PPG13 sets out maximum parking standards for broad classes of development and recommends that these standards are adopted by local authorities. However, it acknowledges that Planning Policy Guidance 6 (PPG6) advises that good quality secure parking is important to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres, and to enable retail and leisure uses to flourish. PPG13 therefore suggests that parking additional to the maximum standards may be provided for town centre developments where the parking would genuinely serve the town centre as a whole.
- 4.4. With regard to parking charges and control PPG13 advises that car parking charges should also be used to encourage the use of alternative modes but that appropriate levels and charges for parking should be set which do not undermine the vitality of other town centres.
- 4.5. Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (PPS6) replaced PPG6 in March 2005. One of the key objectives of this policy is to ensure that locations are accessible by a choice of transport modes. The policies also seek to reduce or reconfigure car park areas within town centre sites to maximise actual development space.
- 4.6. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) was published in November 2006 and sets out the national policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives. It emphasises a design led approach to the provision of car parking space within residential developments.

Regional

- 4.7. Policy 47 of the current Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) March 2005 states that net increases in public car parking un-associated with development should not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that:
- Public transport, cycling or walking provision cannot be made adequate or a shortage of short stay parking is the principal factor detracting from the vitality and viability of an area; or
 - Excessive on-street parking is having an adverse effect on highway safety or residential amenity which cannot be reasonably resolved by other means; or
 - The nature of new car parking can shift from long stay spaces to high quality short stay provision;
 - It is linked to public transport provision, for example as part of a park and ride scheme.
- 4.8. The current RSS8 is due to be replaced by the East Midlands Regional Plan (EMRP), a draft copy of which went out to public consultation in September 2006. The parking policies in this draft document reflect those of the current RSS. The final Regional Plan will provide a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2026. Policy 45 of the EMRP states that all transport authorities should examine the feasibility and appropriateness of introducing fiscal measures to reduce car usage and Policy 46 states that in the regions principal urban areas and growth towns net increase in public car parking not associated with development should only be permitted where certain factors can be demonstrated.
- 4.9. Policy 43 of the East Midlands Regional Plan (EMRP) recommends that the Regional Planning Body, with Government, public and local bodies, and service providers should work together to implement measures that reduce the scale of traffic growth to at least zero by 2026 including encouraging behaviour change away from use of the private car. Such measures should be co-ordinated with the implementation of other national, regional, and local policies.
- 4.10. A review of the parking standards contained in the RSS was commissioned by the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) and a final report issued in September 2006. The report demonstrates that the current parking standards for Charnwood are not fully compliant with the standards contained in PPG13 (less stringent for food retail, cinemas and conference facilities, and B1 (including offices) uses). The report recommends that all local authorities should adopt parking standards at least as stringent as those set out in PPG13 and that a settlement type approach should be adopted for determining parking levels.

4.11. Local Policy

4.12. Local Development Framework (LDF)

4.12.1. The LDF (known as Charnwood 2021) is currently being prepared by CBC for Charnwood Borough and outlines the spatial planning strategy for the borough. It is anticipated that the final document will be adopted sometime in early 2008. The LDF will replace the existing Charnwood Borough Local Plan which outlines policies for the period 1991 to 2006.

4.12.2. The following policies are relevant:-

4.12.3. Policy 17:- Managing Travel Demand and Widening Transport Choice – the Borough Council will work in partnership with Transport authorities and other interests to seek to ensure that future travel demand is managed as part of the integrated and sustainable land use and travel solutions.

4.12.4. Policy 18:- Town Centre – Loughborough Town Centre will continue to be the main focus for retailing, leisure, cultural, and business activities in the Borough. The existing District Centres in Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Birstall, Shepshed, Syston and Thurmaston, Gorse Covert and Shelthorpe, Loughborough will provide retail, leisure, and cultural opportunities to serve their immediate communities. The vitality and viability of Loughborough Town Centre, District and Local Centres will be maintained and enhanced by:-

- permitting new retail proposals of a scale appropriate to the centre;
- restricting the development of town centre uses outside the defined centres through the application of a sequential approach to the site selection;
- defining key retail frontages within Loughborough Town Centre to safeguard its core retail function;
- controlling change of use from A1 (retail) to other uses in Loughborough Town Centre and the District Centres;
- using the Council's powers of compulsory purchase where appropriate to bring forward sites for further growth in town centre uses where a need has been identified;
- through effective Town Centre Management ensuring Loughborough remains an attractive retail and cultural destination;
- integrating planning and licensing controls in the management of licensed premises;
- working with the Police and local Chambers of Trade to ensure Loughborough Town Centre and the District Centres provide a safe environment for all;
- improving access by public transport, cycling, and walking;

- supporting the provision of additional off-street public short-stay parking facilities for shoppers and visitors serving Loughborough Town Centre, District and Local Centres necessary to safeguard the vitality and viability of the centre.

4.13. Local Plan

4.13.1. The role of the Local Plan is to provide the detailed framework for future development and use of land within Charnwood Borough. The document outlines the authority's policies for the control of development and makes proposals for the development and use of land and to allocate land for specific purposes. Relevant policies are as follows:-

Parking Provision in New Development Policy TR/18

- Planning permission will not be granted for development unless off-street parking for vehicles, including cycles, and servicing arrangements are to secure highway safety and minimise harm to visual and local amenities. The adopted standards included in Appendix 1 (of the local plan) will be used as a starting point in assessing the level of provision and represent the maximum level.
- In the Central areas of Loughborough and Shepshed, District Centres, primarily employment areas and other areas of significant trip generation the quantity within new development will be determined through negotiation based on containing car park provision. The quantity of parking allowed will reflect the proposed use and the location of development, the availability of public off-street parking; the current, or potential accessibility by non-car modes; the feasibility for commuted payments; the scope for practical measures to significantly reduce the use of private car trips to and from the site; and the need to reduce the use of private car trips to and from a site; and the need to reduce existing levels of private non-residential (PNR) car parking.

Public Car Parking Provision Serving Loughborough Town Centre Policy TR/19

- Planning permission will be granted for additional off-street public car parking facilities for shoppers and visitors serving the central areas of Loughborough shown on the Proposals Map in circumstances where the Borough Council is satisfied the car parking is necessary to ensure a continuing and adequate supply of short-stay car parking.
- In the case of car parks funded by development the Borough Council will seek to negotiate a legal agreement for the car park to be managed for short-stay users which does not generate significant peak hour traffic movements.

Planning Criteria for the Design and Layout of new Car Parks Policy TR/21

- Planning permission will be granted for matters of detail relating to car parking proposals where all the following criteria are met:-
 - they are in locations convenient for the centre or feature they serve, and provide safe and direct access for pedestrians and people with disabilities to those destinations;
 - traffic generation by the car park would not create unacceptable congestion and conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on roads close to the development;
 - measures including signing and lighting are included to ensure easy access, internal circulation, safety and security for vehicles, bicycles and people using the car park;
 - extra wide spaces are provided for people with disabilities and people with small children;
 - screening and landscaping is provided to safeguard the amenities of adjoining properties and land uses.

Planning Criteria for Park and Ride Schemes to serve Loughborough and Leicester Policy TR/23

- Planning permission will be granted for bus or rail based 'park and ride' provision provided that all the following criteria are met:-
 - The site is strategically well placed on the road network and served, or capable of being served, by frequent and direct public transport links to central area destinations;
 - satisfactory access is provided to the main road network;
 - the highest standards of design, layout, landscaping and screening are provided to assimilate the site and access arrangements with its surroundings. Landscaping measures will soften the impact by structural planting around the site and access roads and planting within the parking areas;
 - the scheme provides on-site facilities for security, information, shelters and "cycle and ride".

- The provision of car parks at strategic points on the main network allied to frequent and regular public transport services is proving in many parts of the country a very useful measure to help alleviate congestion and delay on main roads into the urban areas.

- Park and ride sites should provide car parking immediately adjacent to provision for public transport and cycling. They can help reduce the volume and movement of traffic along urban roads in central areas and so enable more efficient use of road space to the advantage of non-car modes and improved urban environments. Their effectiveness will be enhanced if complimentary bus priority measures are in place.

4.14. Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2)

4.14.1. The second LTP produced by Leicestershire County Council was adopted in March 2006 and covers the period 2006 to 2011. The LTP outlines the transport strategy for the county, this involves a review of transport requirements and presents a 5 year implementation programme.

4.14.2. The Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2) includes a package of measures to tackle congestion, one of which is managing demand through parking policies. The plan refers to working closely with district councils to ensure the provision and pricing of off-street car parks fits in with wider parking policies. The plan seeks to manage parking charges to reduce nuisance from all day commuter parking and help town centre economies by encouraging short-stay shopper parking.

4.14.3. In terms of tackling congestion the objectives of LTP2 is:-

- Tackling congestion by increasing the use of public transport, walking, and cycling with less growth in car mileage and more effective vehicle use of congested road space.

4.14.4. LTP2 has a number of 'Smarter Choices' initiatives to encourage people to switch from car travel to other modes. These are:-

- School Travel Plans and Routes to School Programmes
- Workplace Travel Plans
- Personalised Travel Planning
- Travel Marketing and Promotion
- Public Transport Information and Marketing
- Active Travel

4.14.5. CBC has concerns that proposals in LTP2 do not adequately address the requirement to reduce traffic growth. CBC believe that increased funding should be directed at progressively reducing traffic growth with increased emphasis being placed on making the bus a real alternative to the car, improvements to park and ride, walking and cycling,

effective travel plans, pricing mechanisms to help reduce car usage, and incentives to reduce car usage.

4.15. Loughborough Integrated Transport Project (LITP)

4.15.1. Consultation of the LITP was undertaken during 2006. Proposals relate to the completion of the Inner Relief Road (IRR) which would provide a link between the Lemyngton Street/Baxter Gate junction and the Leicester Road/Southfield Road junction. In addition it is proposed that priority is enhanced for pedestrians including pedestrianisation of the A6 between Baxter Gate and Derby Square. High quality public transport interchanges are also proposed in the vicinity of High Street / Baxter gate, and The A6 / Derby Square. The LITP compliments the initiatives presented in the Town Centre Masterplan.

4.16. Town Centre Masterplan (TCMP)

4.16.1. The TCMP was approved by Cabinet on 15th February 2007. The TCMP aims to provide a clear vision for the social, economic, and environmental development of Loughborough Town Centre up until 2021 and presents a strategic framework for future development.

4.16.2. The TCMP proposes a number of key developments and highway improvements between now and 2021. These can be summarised as follows:-

- Provision on an Inner Relief Road (IRR) (outlined in LITP).
- Provision of a new car park in the vicinity of the IRR.
- Closure of Swan Street between Baxter Gate and Derby Square to all vehicular traffic except buses and taxis (outlined in LITP).
- Improvement of public spaces at Bedford Square, Devonshire Square, Derby Square, and Ashby Square.
- Route between Wards End and Woodgate via Bedford Square to be removed.
- Additional parking to be provided at Browns Lane and the former Hospital site.
- 3 key areas of mixed use development to be progressed. These are north-east (Baxter Gate, High Street, former Hospital, Pinfold Gate, Aumberry Gap), south-east (Southfield Road, Woodgate), and south-west (Bedford Square, Devonshire Square).
- Wards End to be made access only.
- Use of Packe Street and Granby Street as a one-way loop for taxis and the disabled, with disabled parking.
- Rationalise car parking. Beehive Lane, Carillon Court, The Rushes, Browns Lane, and a new car park at the former Hospital site to be treated as key car parks.
- Dual use of Sainsbury's Car Park.

- Public transport hubs along Baxter Gate and Derby Road.
- New bus routes incorporating Woodgate, High Street, Swan Street and Baxter Gate. Bus lane to be provided along Woodgate.
- Revised traffic circulation including 2-way operation of Southfield Road.

4.17. Parking Standards

4.17.1. The Local Plan identifies the maximum parking standards permitted for new development within the borough. Parking provision will be assessed in accordance with these standards and the guidance outlined in Policy TR/18 of the Local Plan. Policy TR/18 states:-

“Planning permission will not be granted for development unless off-street parking for vehicles, including cycles, and servicing arrangements are included to secure highway safety and minimise harm to visual and local amenities. The adopted standards included in Appendix 1 will be used as the starting point in assessing the level of provision and represent the maximum level.”

4.17.2. Extracts relating to parking standards are presented in **Appendix G**. A summary of the maximum provision permitted in relation to retail, employment, and residential use class development is summarised in **Table 21**:-

Table 21:- Summary of CBC Maximum Parking Standards

| Use Class | Development Type | | Maximum Parking Provision (car spaces) |
|-----------|------------------|------------------------------|--|
| A1 | Shops | GFA above 3000sqm | 1 space per 9sqm |
| | | GFA between 1000 and 3000sqm | 1 space per 12sqm |
| | | GFA between 300 and 1000sqm | 1 space per 30sqm |
| | | GFA below 300sqm | 2 spaces per 100sqm. 1 space per each additional 100sqm thereafter |
| A2 | Offices | | 1 space per 35sqm |
| B1 | Offices | | 1 space per 25sqm |
| B2 | Industry | | 1 space per 50sqm |
| B8 | Warehousing | GFA below 9300sqm | 1 space per 100sqm |
| | | GFA above 9300sqm | 1 space per 150sqm |
| C3 | Housing | 4 or more bedrooms | 3 spaces |
| | | 3 or less bedrooms | 2 spaces |

4.17.3. Policy 46 of the draft EMRP (RSS8) recommends that Local Planning Authorities should apply for the maximum amount of vehicle parking for new development as set out in PPG13. CBC has objected to this Policy because it could result in inconsistencies relating to vehicle parking not covered by the standards in PPG13. CBC is seeking amendments to the draft as follows:-

- A locational hierarchy should be used based on the geographical distribution of settlements rather than settlement type.
- Thresholds for accessibility should be based on the frequency, reliability, and variety of bus and rail services, and access by cycling and walking.
- Give flexibility to allow for changes in accessibility over time.
- Include guidance for cyclists and Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs)

4.18. Summary

4.18.1. Emphasis at a national, regional, and local level is on reducing car travel and promoting more sustainable travel. Increases in the number of parking spaces not associated with new development are generally not supported. LTP2 outlines a number of 'Smarter Choice' initiatives aimed at encouraging people to use sustainable transport modes. The Loughborough Integrated Transport Plan outlines proposals to improve the town centre whilst the TCMP proposes further initiatives and a framework for future development.