



PLANNING COMMITTEE
21 NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	Response to Essex Parking Standards Consultation
REPORT OF:	Phil Drane, Director - Place
REPORT IS FOR:	Decision

REPORT SUMMARY

The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA), consisting of 12 local planning authorities across Essex, including Brentwood, has prepared guidance on the updated Essex Parking Standards. Parking Standards are referred to in local plans and the Essex County Council Local Transport Plan. The guidance sets parking for different vehicle types, design and location, dimensions for parking and a suggested quantum for different types of development.

A consultation on the draft document commenced on 16 October and will conclude on 4 December 2023.

The current Essex Parking Standards guidance (EPOA) was approved by Brentwood Borough Council in 2009. Therefore, it requires an update as there have been changes in planning legislation and policy, the introduction of Garden Communities, and a greater awareness of the need to manage the impact of developments on local communities and the environment.

RECOMMENDATION

- R1. Approve the response to the Essex Parking Standards consultation, as set out in Appendix A**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) (consisting of the 12 local planning authorities across Essex, including Brentwood, plus the two unitary authorities and county council), has prepared new draft guidance on parking standards for the county. Parking standards are referred to in local plans and Essex County Council's Local Transport Plan.
- 1.2 The current Parking Standards guidance was approved by Brentwood Borough Council in 2009. It is referred to in the recently adopted Brentwood Local Plan (2022). However, since 2009 there has been several changes to planning legislation and policy, the introduction of garden communities, and a greater awareness of the need to manage the impact of developments on local communities and the environment. Therefore, this updated draft guidance is welcomed, with council officers taking part in EPOA discussions and work to draft a new document. The document has been published for consultation.
- 1.3 Key updates made to the guidance include:
- a) Updated guidance and removal of arbitrary maximum parking values;
 - b) Compliance with National Planning Policy and Guidance;
 - c) Improved evidence base;
 - d) Parking provision based on how accessible a location is;
 - e) Update on electric vehicle charging;
 - f) Update to cycle parking to align with new national guidance; and
 - g) A new Part 2 guidance for Garden Communities and large-scale development, focused on supporting sustainable growth and responding to climate change, help manage congestion, and encourage modal choices which makes better use of the local transport network.

Maximum Parking Standards

- 1.4 The Parking Standards guidance includes a calculating tool to assist with identifying the maximum amount of parking that is considered suitable for a

development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that compelling justification is needed when setting maximum parking standards, to manage the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in town centres and other locations well served by public transport (Paragraph 108). The council's proposed response recommended that some flexibility to maximum parking guidance is needed when considering the diverse and varying neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities across Essex with their different populations and local character.

Bicycle Storage

- 1.5 The inclusion of bicycle storage within the Parking Standards guidance is welcomed. The guidance proposes the inclusion of Sheffield cycle stands. The council's proposed response suggests including more secure bicycle storage to assist with reducing the frequency of bicycle theft, which in turn may encourage a modal shift and increased cycling within the borough.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

- 1.6 Essex has seen an increase in the ownership of electric vehicles (EV) in recent years, similar to national trends. Zero emission Battery Electric Vehicle ownership has increased from 4,500 vehicles in 2018 to 18,500 by the end of 2021. Plug-in Hybrid EV ownership has increased at a similar rate from 4,000 to 16,000 vehicles in the same time period.
- 1.7 The Parking Standards guidance outlines the provision for EV charging points to be able to meet the increasing demand for electric vehicles. The council supports this. However, concerns are raised about whether the required power identified for slow, fast, rapid, and high power (shown in Table 4.2 of the document, 'General types of EV Charging Points'), are reflective of current charging needs. As there is an increase in EV and thus increased demand for charging points there is a need to ensure this requirement is future proofed so that the current and future demands can be met.

Part 2, Maps 1-3

- 1.8 Part 2 of the Parking Standards guidance is focused on garden communities and large-scale developments. This is particularly relevant to Brentwood borough with larger-scale development coming forward through the local plan, including Dunton Hills Garden Village. The council is in general support and has not provided any comments on the content of this section. However, the council does raise a minor comment regarding the useability of Maps 1 through 3, as the colour code used to differentiate between the spatial data illustrated are difficult to see. Therefore, the council has suggested that

instead of using different shades of the same colour that the colour pallet be changed to make it easier to see. The council also suggests that GIS interactive mapping tool would be useful especially for zooming into a small local level to assist planning officers when they need to assess a particular area.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The council as local planning authority should respond to planning guidance proposals by seeking to improve content or query issues. In this case, the proposed response seeks to do so before a finalised version of the Essex Parking Standards is published. At that point, it will be for the council to decide whether this planning guidance is adopted or not.

2.2 The proposed consultation response (Appendix A) provides general support for the new parking standards and focuses on specific amendments consisting of:

- a) Flexibility on the maximum parking standards may be needed, considering the diverse neighbourhood, village, town centre, and city size and population across the county;
- b) Consideration of alternative bicycle storage to improve security and reduce bicycle theft;
- c) Ensuring the most up to date EV charging types and power and increased future proofing of this infrastructure; and
- d) Changes to the colour codes used in Maps 1-3 in Part 2 to make it more user friendly (and recommendation of interactive maps if possible).

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None

4. RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 None. The council will ultimately decide whether it wishes to adopt the Essex Parking Standards to form weight when determining planning applications. The current standards are used and referred to in the council's local plan. Alternative guidance could be produced if the new Essex Parking Standards were eventually not adopted by the council and there remained a recognition

that the currently adopted standards needed to be updated. This would need to be considered by the council, including resource implications.

5. ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation on the Essex Parking Standards guidance commenced on 16 October and is closing on 4 December 2023. The document is available to view and comment on through the EPOA website (website hosted by Uttlesford District Council and document consultation portal hosted by Essex County Council).

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Acting Joint Director – People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Tel & Email 01277 312500 / Claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The recommendation is to respond to the consultation. Any decision to adopt new parking standards would require a separate decision where those legal implications could be considered.

8. EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health
Tel & Email 01277 312500 kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and

- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

8.3 The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

9. ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director - Place

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9.1 Parking Standards guidance assists with ensuring appropriate quantum, design, and access to vehicle and bicycle parking is provided within developments. The updated guidance includes changes to national policy and guidance ensuring the evidence related to parking standards used to support the council's local plan remain robust.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Response to the Essex Parking Standards consultation

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) Parking Standards Guidance: [Essex Parking Guidance Consultation 2023 - Essex County Council - Citizen Space](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	