



Department for Transport

Research into the Use and Effectiveness of
Maximum Parking Standards


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Department for Transport

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Executive Summary

The Department for Transport (DfT) has commissioned Atkins, under the Framework for Transport Related Technical Advice and Research, to undertake a review of existing research relating to the maximum standards for non-residential car parking, as currently set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (PPG13), as well as investigating the effects of these parking standards on traffic levels and economic development.

The aim of the study is to help inform the Department's policy position on the proposed changes to parking policy as set out in the draft Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS4) which would cancel the maximum parking standards set out in PPG 13 and provides guidance to assist local authorities to set their own maximum parking standards.

The study has looked at a range of existing research from within the UK and Europe and highlighted several common themes which came from the conclusions of these studies. These were that:

- ◆ Parking is a very important demand management tool;
- ◆ Developers see parking as important as they consider that it adds value to their asset; and
- ◆ There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development within urban and rural areas.

This study also undertook new research based upon a series of discussions and consultations with Local Authorities, Professional Bodies and Academia.

We found that the findings of this new research accorded completely with the findings of the existing research as set out above.

Additionally, the research found no indication that maximum parking standards have had any effect upon inward investment or economic development. Indeed some evidence suggested that maximum parking standards would support business and the economy within urban and rural areas.

These findings question the rationale for the proposed cancellation national maximum parking standards in the draft PPS4 as the evidence indicates that there are not the economic reasons to adopt such a policy and that there are many sound reasons, in terms of traffic demand management, to retain the current situation as set out in PPG13.

The research suggests that local authorities are likely to revise their standards to suit their different needs and across most of the authorities surveyed and there is a general consensus that national policy needs to reflect local needs.

Based on this outcome and common problems encountered by rural authorities, we recommend that the current guidance and maximum parking standards, as set out in PPG13, are retained for urban areas and that a more flexible approach is permitted within rural areas.

1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) has commissioned Atkins, under the Framework for Transport Related Technical Advice and Research, to undertake a review of existing research relating to the maximum standards for non-residential car parking, as currently set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (PPG13), as well as investigating the effects of these parking standards on traffic levels and economic development.
- 1.2 This study will look at examples of how PPG13 has been implemented by local authorities, as well as examples of the effects of parking standards from parts of the UK and Europe.
- 1.3 The aim of this work is to help inform the Department's policy position on the proposed changes to parking policy, as set out in the draft Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS4).
- 1.4 The Draft PPS4 seeks to replace the national maximum parking standards (as set out in Annex D of PPG13) and allow local planning authorities to set their own maximum parking standards based upon the following criteria:
 - ◆ The current and future levels of public transport accessibility;
 - ◆ The need to encourage cycling, walking and sustainable modes of transport;
 - ◆ The need to plan for appropriate disabled parking and access;
 - ◆ The varying needs of different business sizes and types;
 - ◆ The particular needs of hospitals arising from their 24 hour service (which impacts on accessibility for patients and visitors and on staff working patterns);
 - ◆ The differing needs of rural and urban areas; and
 - ◆ Provision for powered two-wheelers.
- 1.5 The Draft PPS4 also proposes to cancel the guidance contained in paragraphs 53 and 54 of PPG13, which state:
 - ◆ *53. There is a need for a consistent approach to maximum parking standards for a range of major developments, above the relevant thresholds. The levels set out in Annex D should be applied as a maximum throughout England, but RPBs and local planning authorities may adopt more rigorous standards, where appropriate, subject to the advice in this guidance. The maximum parking standards set out in annex D do not apply to small developments, that is, those below the relevant thresholds. Local authorities should use their discretion in setting the levels of parking appropriate for small developments so as to reflect local circumstances. By virtue of the thresholds, this locally based approach will cover most development in rural areas.*
 - ◆ *54. For individual developments, the standards in Annex D should apply as a maximum unless the applicant has demonstrated (where appropriate through a Transport Assessment) that a higher level of parking is needed. In such cases*

the applicant should show the measures they are taking (for instance in the design, location and implementation of the scheme) to minimise the need for parking.

- 1.6 As well as reviewing the potential impacts of the change in guidance set out in the draft PPS4, this review will also provide the Department with a view as to whether they should consider conducting their own detailed research or evidence gathering on this subject.

METHODOLOGY

- 1.7 As part of this study, the Department has identified two key questions which need to be answered with regard to the current national parking policy, as set out in PPG13, these are:
- ◆ Has the policy had a positive transport impact? For example, has it encouraged modal shift to more sustainable transport modes, thus achieving the objectives set out in PPG13 (esp. para's 52-56); or
 - ◆ Has the policy had a negative transport impact? For example, has it created further congestion (and associated environmental issues) as a shortage of space causes drivers to drive around looking for parking spaces?
- 1.8 To inform the answers to these questions, we are also considering the following issues in relation to the application and effects of maximum parking standards:
- ◆ The strength of current evidence in relation to the implementation and impact of the PPG 13 maximum parking standards.
 - ◆ An overview of the implementation of PPG13 by local authorities, examining what can be determined from where PPG13 has been either fully or only partially adopted and implemented in respect of maximum parking standards.
 - ◆ Considering whether current policy (PPG13 or the local interpretation of it) has had any effects upon economic development. In particular whether differing application of parking standards has led to, or conversely been caused by, competition effects between adjoining local authorities in attracting particular types of development.
 - ◆ Examining a sample of Second Round LTP's to assess if these have influenced or informed Local Authority planning decisions and vice-versa.
 - ◆ Assessing whether the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the associated Network Management Duty has informed planning decisions with regard to the application of parking standards.
 - ◆ Reviewing current proposals to introduce the workplace parking levy to assess whether this is likely to impact upon the parking standards which are applied and its likely effectiveness in reducing travel demand.
 - ◆ Reviewing existing research on the wider application and impacts of introducing maximum parking standards within the UK, Europe and Worldwide to see if there are any common findings from this experience.

These issues are addressed across a range of rural and urban authorities.

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

1.9 This report is structured in the following manner:

- ◆ **Chapter 2** provides information on how PPG13 has been implemented across the country. In addition information is provided from a small survey of local authorities indicating how the guidance has been interpreted and applied.
- ◆ **Chapter 3** provides an overview of currently published research from within the UK and Europe upon the effects of maximum parking standards.
- ◆ **Chapter 4** discusses the findings from new research undertaken from this study based upon a limited survey of English local authorities and consultations with academics and professional bodies.
- ◆ **Chapter 5** provides conclusions and recommendations based upon the findings of all of the research reviewed or undertaken for this study.

2. The Implementation of PPG13

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This chapter will review and discuss the implementation of PPG 13 from a sample of local authorities from across England.
- 2.2 It will highlight local authorities where PPG 13 has been fully implemented and those where it has not.
- 2.3 In both cases it will try and set out the reasons for the adoption of the authorities current parking standards.

POLICY BACKGROUND & IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.4 Following the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, the current planning system works in the following manner:
 - ◆ The Government sets out the national planning policy in a series of Planning Policy Statements (PPS) which are replacing the current Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes.
 - ◆ The national policy/guidance is then transcribed to the regional level via the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) the process for doing this is set out in Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS11). The RSS contains a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), one role of which is to set out the regional parking standards passed upon the national guidance set out in PPG13.
 - ◆ The RSS & RTS sets out the framework for the development of Local Development Frameworks (LDF's) and Local Transport Plans (LTP's), both of which need to conform to the RSS.
- 2.5 The Revised planning system, set out in the 2004 Act, is however not yet fully implemented with many RSS's still in development and many local planning authorities are only now beginning to develop their LDF's. In addition, during this transitional period, many authorities are still relying on policies which have been 'saved' from their previous or current Local or Unitary Development Plans and Structure plans. These saved policies will remain a material consideration in planning matters until the adoption of the relevant RSS.
- 2.6 The 2004 Act also removed the requirement for countywide structure plans. The plans which are currently in place are all set to expire within the coming years. In the revised planning system there is no equivalent of a structure plan.
- 2.7 The implication of this is that some local authorities may not yet have adopted PPG13 compliant parking policies.

NATIONAL POLICY

- 2.8 National planning policy continues to stress the need for land-use planning policies which reduce the need for travel. It is recognised however, that if such policies are to

succeed, they need to be supported by other demand management measures. It is also now generally accepted transport policy that in particular, the availability of car parking has a major influence on the choice of means of travel and therefore, appropriate car parking policies are necessary.

- 2.9 For new developments, PPG13 recommends that maximum parking standards should be set for a broad range of land uses and that by restricting and controlling parking provision within new development and in areas accessible by alternative modes of transport this should have the effect of encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour. In this way, reduced levels of parking should act as a demand management tool as part of package of measures designed to influence and encourage more sustainable travel behaviour.

REGIONAL POLICY

- 2.10 PPS11, Regional Spatial Strategies, sets out the procedural policy on the nature of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and focuses on what should happen in preparing revisions to them.
- 2.11 A key element of the RSS is the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The RTS sets out how the national transport policies and programmes will be delivered in the regions; outline the transport and related land use policies and measures required to support the spatial strategy; and provide a long term framework for transport in the region. It should also steer the development of LTP's and policies in LDF's.
- 2.12 In relation to parking the RTS should provide:
- ◆ advice on parking policies appropriate to different parts of the region; and
 - ◆ guidance on the strategic context for local demand management measures within the region.
- 2.13 The RSS, including the RTS, provides a spatial framework to inform the preparation of LDF's, LTP's and regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on land use activities.

LOCAL POLICY

- 2.14 The provision of car parking is seen as an important area of development control and a key tool in promoting sustainable transport at a local level. Single tier local authorities make decisions on both planning applications and all highway matters, whilst in two-tier authorities, district's and borough's, are responsible for planning decisions. Whilst, county council's, as the highway authority, offer 'highway advice' on some planning applications, particularly those with strategic transport implications. Therefore, both county council's and district/borough can often have their own parking standards.
- 2.15 At the present time many authorities are in the process of preparing their first Local Development Frameworks, whilst at the same time, at the regional level, the RSS's are being finalised. Therefore many authorities are relying on their existing development plans and structure plans for policy guidance.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PPG13

- 2.16 For this study we have looked at a sample of authorities from across the country to assess how they have implemented the maximum parking standards as set out in PPG 13. We have undertaken this assessment based on two data sources.
- 2.17 We have reviewed regional parking studies undertaken for the South East, East Midlands and North West Regional Assemblies. These parking studies were undertaken to inform the development of their respective RSS and RTSs.
- 2.18 We have also undertaken a series of telephone interview surveys with a variety of different authority types (urban/rural, unitary/two-tier) from across the English regions.
- 2.19 The results of this work provide a snapshot of the implementation of PPG13 at this time.

Results from the review of regional parking studies

- 2.20 We reviewed the following parking studies:
- ◆ Review of Regional Parking Standards for the South East of England Regional Assembly, MVA 2005;
 - ◆ Review of Regional Parking Standards for the North West Regional Assembly, Mouchel 2007; and
 - ◆ Parking Standards Review for the East Midlands Regional Assembly, Atkins 2006.
- 2.21 In addition we also reviewed the following parking study:
- ◆ Somerset Local Transport Plan - Parking Strategy, Atkins 2006.
- 2.22 In total this review looked at the parking standards adopted by 185 English local authorities.
- 2.23 Of these 185 authorities:
- ◆ 29% of authorities were fully comply with PPG13 maximum parking standards;
 - ◆ 23% have maximum parking standards that are more restrictive than PPG13;
 - ◆ 6% have maximum parking standards that are less restrictive than PPG13;
 - ◆ 17% of authorities have a combination of standards which are both more and less restrictive than PPG13 depending on use class;
 - ◆ 13% of authorities are mainly compliant with PPG13 on the standards which they have set. However, the standards are limited, as they may not have set standards for some of the use classes set out in PPG 13;
 - ◆ 8% of authorities are more restrictive than PPG13 on the standards which they have set. However, the standards are limited, as they may not have set standards for some of the use classes set out in PPG 13;

- ◆ 3% of authorities are less restrictive than PPG13 on the standards which they have set. However, the standards are limited, as they may not have set standards for some of the use classes set out in PPG 13; and
- ◆ Of the 185 authorities one was still undergoing a review of its standards and has therefore not been considered in the figures above.

2.24 The majority of authorities in the East Midlands comply with PPG13, and the majority of authorities in the South East have at least some use classes with more restrictive standards than PPG13. In the North West, the majority of the unitary authorities have more restrictive standards than PPG13, whilst the other authorities vary, with many having more restrictive standards, but also having no set standards for some use classes. Somerset had not set standards for all use classes, but the standards they do have are PPG13 compliant.

Table 2.1 – Use Classes

| Use Classes from the Town and Country Planning Order 1987 and its subsequent amendments | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| A1 Shops | B8 Storage or Distribution |
| A2 Financial and Professional Services | C1 Hotels |
| A3 Restaurants and cafés | C2 Residential Institutions |
| A4 Drinking Establishments | C3 Dwelling Houses |
| A5 Hot Food Takeaways | D1 Non-residential Institutions |
| B1 Business | D2 Assembly and Leisure |
| B2 General Industry | B8 Storage or Distribution |

- 2.25 Use classes are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and its subsequent amendments. The Order defines broad classes of use for buildings or other land. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the use classes contained within the order.
- 2.26 Many authorities have set bands for certain uses which enable them to either be more or less stringent depending on circumstances. The use classes which were more likely not to have standards were D2, Assembly and Leisure, with further education (D1) often having less stringent, or no set standards.
- 2.27 Metropolitan and unitary authorities in the North West generally had more restrictive standards for B1 and food uses, compared to the districts in the North West which have a mixture of standards for B1 uses
- 2.28 The Unitary authorities in the South East are more likely to use ranges to set standards. This allows them to be either more or less restrictive depending on individual cases.
- 2.29 Surrey, East Sussex and Buckinghamshire tend to have more restrictive standards for non food retail (A1) than other areas of the country.

- 2.30 London boroughs are almost universally more restrictive on their standards for all uses, with especially stringent standards for B1 use.
- 2.31 Leicestershire has a variety of standards, with both B1 and food retail (A1) having both more and less restrictive standards depending on authority, which indicates that local circumstances are likely to be a factor in the setting of standards.
- 2.32 There does not appear to be any obvious pattern or reason for the difference in standards, it is more likely that the differences reflect the individual local circumstances of the authority.
- 2.33 The full details of this survey can be found in Appendix 1.

Results from Telephone Survey

- 2.34 To provide a snapshot review of the implementation of PPG13 by authorities outside of the regions considered above a phone survey was undertaken.
- 2.35 This survey was undertaken using a survey pro-forma, a copy of which is included as Appendix 3). The survey asked questions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of PPG13 as well as questions regarding Travel Plans and the Traffic Management Act.
- 2.36 This section will discuss the findings with regard to the implementation of PPG13. Section 3 of this report discusses these findings further, together with the other findings from our telephone survey.
- 2.37 In total we were able to obtain survey responses from seven different authorities.
- 2.38 These authorities were:
- ◆ Alnwick, North East of England (Rural);
 - ◆ Cambridge, East of England (Urban);
 - ◆ North Yorkshire, Yorks & Humber (Rural);
 - ◆ Mid-Devon, South West of England (Rural);
 - ◆ Liverpool, North West of England (Urban);
 - ◆ Guildford, South East of England (Urban); and
 - ◆ Staffordshire, West Midlands (Mixed).
- 2.39 Five of the seven authorities have implemented maximum parking standards which are similar to PPG13 and two authorities have implemented maximum parking standards which are more restrictive than PPG13.
- 2.40 The more restrictive standards tend to apply to the built up urban areas such as city and town centres. There is an overall trend for urban authorities to implement more restrictive parking standards in the central areas, where public transport provision is better. However, it has been found that some rural authorities also impose greater restrictions in central areas, with only one authority (largely rural) having a uniform set of standards.

- 2.41 The main rationale behind the authorities approach to setting the maximum parking standards has been to reduce the use of the car within city and town centres, encourage the use of other more sustainable forms of transport and to address congestion and traffic problems.
- 2.42 Some of the authorities highlighted the negative impacts which have occurred due to the implementation of maximum parking standards. Three authorities highlighted the increase in on-street parking demand and problems in areas where there are fewer parking restrictions in place. These effects were highlighted by both rural and urban authorities. In some areas this has led to safety problems and in addition to this it is considered that the implementation of maximum parking standards has led to increased parking in other nearby facilities. In particular, problems of overspill parking were highlighted as particularly acute in historic towns due to the narrow and more restrictive street layout.
- 2.43 In relation to negative impacts, one urban authority emphasised the need for a pragmatic approach to applying maximum parking standards in collaboration with introducing controlled parking zones to prevent indiscriminate parking.
- 2.44 We specifically asked these authorities whether they considered it useful for maximum parking standards to be set by national parking policy. We also asked what approach authorities would take in the absence of national guidance.
- 2.45 Although most authorities emphasised the need for policy to reflect a local level approach responding to local circumstances, there was a difference in the overall response received from urban and rural authorities. For example two urban authorities stated that PPG13 standards have been useful and reiterated the need for central government to guide local authorities in addressing their local needs. On the other hand the differences between rural and urban communities, such as car dependency and public transport links, were evident issues affecting the adoption of maximum parking standards.
- 2.46 In the absence of a national policy for parking standards, half of the authorities (mostly rural) stated they would set higher standards based on the outcome of local research and circumstances. One urban authority would set lower standards with the belief that a national guidance framework should remain and has also stated that without the national guidance it would be very difficult to adopt maximum parking standards.
- 2.47 On the whole most authorities would revise their standards to suit different urban and rural needs.
- 2.48 When considering these findings we must stress that the information for each of the local authorities is based upon anecdotal evidence and discussion with individual officers from Development Control teams. Due to this the views expressed may not represent the formal view of the authority. However, they do illustrate how parking matters are dealt with on a day-to-day basis.
- 2.49 The full results from this survey can be found in Appendix 2.

Results from discussions with Midlands Service Improvement Group

- 2.50 The Midlands Service Improvement Group, (MSIG), is a grouping of local authorities whose key objective is to:
- ◆ Provide credible benchmarking between authorities by instigating common methods of comparative data and performance data collection and analysis.
 - ◆ Review the methods and processes used by authorities to analyse quality of service provision, linked to outcomes.
 - ◆ Identify good working practices .within authorities and provide a regional input and contact group for other service improvement forums at national and regional levels.
- 2.51 MSIG is made up of the following members:
- ◆ Cheshire;
 - ◆ Derbyshire;
 - ◆ Herefordshire;
 - ◆ Lancashire;
 - ◆ Leicestershire;
 - ◆ Lincolnshire;
 - ◆ Northamptonshire;
 - ◆ Nottinghamshire;
 - ◆ Rutland;
 - ◆ Shropshire;
 - ◆ Staffordshire;
 - ◆ Warwickshire;
 - ◆ Worcestershire; and
 - ◆ Others.
- 2.52 One of MSIGs Task Groups is responsible fro Development Control matters. We spoke to the Chair of the MSIG Development Regulations Sub Group.
- 2.53 The Chair's view is that PPG13 maximum parking standards have only been effective in delivering the policy objectives when they have been used in conjunction with a package of other initiatives such as:
- ◆ A transport strategy designed to complement sustainable travel;
 - ◆ Robust travel plans with monitoring arrangements, targets, remedies, obligations on the highway/planning authority to audit, annual reviews and enforcement when there are contraventions.
- 2.54 In regard to negative impacts he stated that at some employment/retail development sites there is evidence that maximum parking standards have resulted in on-street parking problems. He stated that his authority is trying to avoid this by including appropriate remedies in Travel Plans.
- 2.55 The county council that he works for do not set their own parking standards, instead they rely on the standards set in the district councils adopted Local Plans and emerging LDF's.
- 2.56 The process was described in the following manner.
- 2.57 When consulted by the local planning authorities on emerging LDF's the county council has advised that the level of parking provision for proposed developments will be to PPG13 Annex D standards although within and on the edge of the town centres there might be scope to reduce these standards by up to 50% dependant upon:

- ◆ The sites relative accessibility by public, or alternative modes of transport;
 - ◆ The accordance with an accessibility framework and criteria;
 - ◆ The measures both on-site and off-site that the development provides to improve its accessibility;
 - ◆ The content of a Travel Plan and in particular the agreed outcomes, monitoring arrangements and sanctions in place to help control parking demand; and
 - ◆ The predicted traffic generation, which must correlate with the proposed standard of parking provision.
- 2.58 The county council have also advised LPA's that there maybe additional scope for reducing PPG13 car parking standards below the 50% minimum threshold within and on the edge of town centres dependent upon:
- ◆ The ability of mixed use developments to share parking space due to operational arrangements of the different land uses; and
 - ◆ The scope for developments to use public car parking supply at the least busy parts of the day i.e. not 1000-1400 hours. (e.g. uses that result in a parking demand outside the peak period).
- 2.59 Finally, the county council have advised that where parking cannot be provided on site this may be acceptable in exceptional circumstances within and on the edge of town centres, provided that a nominal level of space is set aside for access and servicing and where a transport strategy is in place. The county council will seek planning obligations to provide for the shortfall in parking, where appropriate, towards off site parking provision which may involve the improvement and or extension of public parking provision serving the town.
- 2.60 In terms of the use of national car parking standards he stated that they are a useful starting point, but parking needs vary according to location, accessibility etc. So if they are applied without thought to locational factors, then the likelihood is that the standard of provision will not meet other objectives.

SUMMARY

- 2.61 Based upon these responses PPG13 has played a key role in influencing the car parking policies within the MSIG members and the authority within which the MSIG chair works and is leading to the production and adoption of Travel Plans.
- 2.62 However, the application of the PPG13 has also been highlighted the need to consider the potential effects of PPG13 parking levels and to ensure that any potential issues are addressed at the outset, preferably through the production of a robust Travel Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

- 2.63 We have concluded, based upon the sample of authorities that we have looked at from the regional parking studies, that most authorities have implemented maximum parking standards for at least some land uses.

- 2.64 From this sample the majority of local authorities have implemented maximum parking standards that comply, or are more stringent than PPG13.
- 2.65 The remaining authorities have all adopted maximum parking standards to some extent, but perhaps not for all of the use classes set out in PPG13, or due to local circumstances have set standards for some use classes higher than the PPG13 maxima.
- 2.66 In addition to this the telephone survey indicated that in general most urban authorities impose more restrictive standards in central built up areas, with some rural authorities following a similar pattern. This shows a common approach to applying different parking standards across areas with different levels of development.
- 2.67 It is also important to note that the surveys did reveal some differences in the application of parking standards once they have been adopted. For example; one authority applies a very rigid interpretation of the adopted parking standards and has reported problems emanating from this approach. Whilst another authority still considers each planning application on its own merits and exercises a degree of pragmatism on its interpretation of the adopted standards.
- 2.68 Most other authorities fall somewhere between the two extremes we have highlighted above.
- 2.69 However, this illustrates that whilst most authorities have adopted PPG13 compliant parking standards, and the majority of authorities operate with maximum parking standards, the application of these adopted standards varies widely from authority to authority. This difference is also fairly evident when comparing rural and urban authorities. All rural authorities emphasise the need for a local level approach tailored to suit local needs such as high car dependency. Urban authorities on the other hand, apply a more pragmatic approach whilst recognising the need for freedom to meet local circumstances.
- 2.70 Whilst all authorities recognise the need to respond to local circumstances, the telephone survey has revealed a contradictory view held by rural and urban authorities. The majority of rural authorities would like the local flexibility to set their own parking standards to reflect their needs (as set out in the draft PPS4), however urban authorities have found parking standards to be more useful. One authority in particular claimed that without the national guidance it would be very difficult to adopt maximum parking standards. Therefore from our research it seems that some combination of the flexibility of the draft PPS4, together with the certainty of PPG13 is required to assist urban and rural authorities in achieving the correct balance which suits their local circumstances.
- 2.71 The telephone survey findings are from a very small sample of English authorities, but they do highlight the differences which currently exist between rural and urban authorities on a national level.
- 2.72 It must be noted that without further detailed research we are unable to estimate the likely effects of these differences

SUMMARY

- 2.73 In this section we have reviewed the parking standards adopted throughout the South East, East Midlands and North West Regions of England. We found that most authorities have adopted maximum parking standards, the majority of which are compliant with PPG13.
- 2.74 Our survey, from a small sample, of authorities from across England has also found that there are significant differences in the interpretation and application of parking standards across rural and urban authorities.

3. Review of Existing Research on Maximum Parking Standards

- 3.1 This chapter looks at existing research on parking standards with regard to their effects in terms of traffic and economic development. The case studies used are predominantly focused on urban locations.

UK STUDIES

Using Planning to Manage Parking – UK experiences, Tom Rye, Napier University 2005

- 3.2 This presentation from 2005 highlights previous empirical studies such as that undertaken by Young in 1991 and Topp in 1991 which showed a reduction in demand in response to parking management at specific workplaces.
- 3.3 The presentation also highlighted the results from transport modelling undertaken by Dasgupta et al in 1994 which showed that parking is much more effective than public transport fare cuts as a transport demand management tool.
- 3.4 Travel Plan initiatives were a major theme of this work. It determined that the most receptive organisations to Travel Plans were generally large ones, with an existing parking problem, these typically being hospitals, universities, drug companies and banks.
- 3.5 Some examples of the effectiveness of Travel Plans were given:

Egg banking plc, Derby, UK

- ◆ Call centre, 1400 staff (880 on site at once), 500 parking spaces, occupied 2001.
- ◆ 53 cars per 100 staff per day arrive at site; regional average is 62.
- ◆ Travel plan is related to planning application.

Bluewater Shopping Centre, Kent, UK

- ◆ Up to 8,500 permanent staff –up to 5,500 on site at any one time.
- ◆ 13,000 parking spaces but almost all for shoppers.
- ◆ Travel plan measures (aimed at staff and shoppers).
- ◆ 40% of staff drive to work; local average around 80%.
- ◆ Travel Plan is related to planning application.

Astra Zeneca, Cheshire, UK

- ◆ Drugs company, 4,200 staff, 3,277 parking spaces, greenfield out of town site.
- ◆ Travel Plan related to development of site.
- ◆ Solo drive mode share 90% in 1997, 73% in 2001.

- 3.6 Reference was also made to the DfT report; 'Making Travel Plans Work, Lessons from UK case studies, 2002'.
- 3.7 This report:
- ◆ Reviewed 20 different organisations – most said parking problems are the key to Travel Plan implementation.
 - ◆ Showed that Travel Plans can on average achieve a 14% decrease in drive alone.
 - ◆ Identified that 6 sites with parking charging averaged an 18% reduction.
 - ◆ States that "Parking restraint is a hallmark of high-achieving Travel Plans".
 - ◆ And found that Maximum parking standards drive Travel Plan implementation.
- 3.8 This presentation highlights the relationship between parking restraint (which can be achieved through the application of maximum parking standards) and the success and take up of Travel Plans. The presentation showed that the objectives of PPG13, in respect of encouraging a modal shift to more sustainable transport modes, can be achieved.

The Key findings from this research are:

- i) Restricting parking numbers leads to a reduction in demand;**
- ii) Modelling has shown that parking is a more effective demand management tool than public transport fare reductions; and**
- iii) Travel Plans, linked with restrictive parking policy can achieve significant modal shift.**

Oxford, 30 years of Car Restraint - Craig Rossington, Oxfordshire County Council, 2007

- 3.9 This paper outlined the effects of 30 years of limiting car access to Oxford city centre. It showed that the strategy meant that there was no growth in city centre traffic flows, despite population expansion of 17%, a doubling of car ownership and increased commercial activity in the city. Bus usage within the city also increased by 80% over 30 years, and there was also park and ride which has doubled its usage.
- 3.10 It was not considered that this level of car restraint had damaged the economic vitality of the city centre: retail floor space had increased by an estimated 15% since 1973, and Oxford had one of the lowest shop vacancy rates (less than 2% in 1997) and highest rental charges in the country outside central London. The University and businesses have continued to expand, and there is certainly no suggestion that restricting cars and car parks in the centre of the city has had a detrimental effect on tourists; a high proportion of whom use park & ride (41% of car users).

The Key finding from this research is:

- iv) Restrictive parking policy over a long time period has had no effect upon economic development**

Using the Land-Use Planning Process to Secure Travel Plans: An Assessment of Progress in England to Date, Tom Rye, Emma Young and Stephen Ison, 2008

3.11 This paper advances two principal arguments, these are:

- ◆ The planning system and maximum parking standards as part of it are the main factors leading to travel plan development in the UK today; and,
- ◆ The difficulties of using the planning system in this way means that there is a risk that many of these travel plans are unlikely to have a great deal of influence on travel patterns, thus making more unlikely the full achievement of the predictions of travel plans' overall impacts on travel behaviour change.

3.12 The paper presents results from a survey of 86 planning and transport authorities in England. The survey found that the planning process is the main means by which travel plans are now secured. In addition, maximum parking standards were shown to have a major influence on travel plan formation for organisations going through the planning process.

3.13 This paper states:

“Another reason for the adoption of travel plans, linked to the planning system, may be the advent, since 2001, of national maximum parking standards which act as a constraint on the number of cars that can be accommodated at the development. Asked about the influence of these on travel plan formulation, 30% (of local authority respondents) felt that they had a “strong” or “very strong” influence, and a further 46% believing that maximum parking standards have at least some effect. When asked about travel plans that have been set up on a voluntary basis in their area, respondents indicated that by far the largest impetus for these plans was parking problems – which may in some cases be “caused” by maximum standards.”

3.14 The paper identifies that:

“.....the planning system and maximum parking standards as part of it are the main factors leading to travel plan development in the UK today;”

3.15 The paper finally concludes that:

“.....maximum parking standards have been shown to have a major influence on travel plan formation for organisations going through the planning process.”

3.16 The paper and its associated research identified that maximum parking standards are a key driver behind the take up and implementation of Travel Plans. This indicates that parking plays an important part in realising travel plans and by implication realising the travel changes envisaged by the ‘Smarter Choices’ agenda.

3.17 This paper shows that parking plays a key role in demand management and encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport modes.

The Key findings from this research are:

- v) **76% of Local Authorities believe that maximum parking standards are the major reason behind the adoption of travel plans.**

The Use and Impact of Maximum Parking Standards in Scotland, Tom Rye, Stephen Ison, 2006

- 3.18 This paper was presented at the 1st International Conference on Sustainable Mobility in Madrid, September 2006.
- 3.19 The paper looks at the use and impact of parking standards in Scotland. It sets out the prevailing car parking standards and demonstrates their implications in terms of availability of parking spaces, and possible mobility impacts.
- 3.20 A survey of Scottish local authorities was undertaken for this paper, to understand how widely the parking maxima are in fact used. It also considers some empirical evidence from various large developments of the impacts of maximum standards on travel patterns.
- 3.21 The study also looks at the available evidence of the inward investment and other economic development impacts of the maximum standards within Scotland. Finally, it draws some conclusions about the usefulness of such standards as a means of promoting sustainable travel.
- 3.22 The paper found that:

“It has generally been found that parking policy measures are likely to be relatively more important than many other traffic management measures in influencing mode choice. More specifically, in the limited studies undertaken, the decision to use a car for the journey to work is greatly influenced by the availability and cost of parking.”

and that:

“The literature would appear to support the basic premise that there is a clear link between parking availability and car use.”

- 3.23 The paper also found that:

“In general, it would appear that those areas that have had most success in linking parking controls and standards with their planning objectives are historic (university) cities such as York, Chester, Oxford and Cambridge.”

And:

“There is a sound theoretical basis for applying maximum standards, as it should, in the long term, limit parking supply and therefore influence travel demand. It will also lead to higher density development that is conducive to walking and cycling. Further, it reduces the opportunity cost of the land that is used for parking.”

And:

“Until this national benchmark (PPG13) was set, authorities may have been fearful that, in setting their own maxima, they would simply encourage development to relocate to areas with less stringent standards.”

- 3.24 The paper also considered the inward investment implications of maximum parking standards. In respect of this it refers to a report undertaken by FaberMaunsell for the Scottish Executive in 2002.

“Inward investment discussions revealed the following key conclusions:

- ◆ *In general, when considering locations car parking is a concern but one of many concerns that are to be considered throughout the decision making process.*
- ◆ *Car parking is unlikely to come into the decision making process until a specific area or range of locations has been identified.*
- ◆ *Whilst transport is a primary issue for locational decision making, parking is a secondary issue which will probably not be considered until comparing sites at a local level.*

Overall, the findings from the (FaberMaunsell) study suggest an acceptance of maximum parking standards...It would also appear that inward investors will not be deterred from Scotland on the basis of maximum parking standards.”

- 3.25 The study concludes in respect of economic development issues:

“On the basis of currently available research, therefore, it is difficult to sustain the argument that restrictive parking standards deter inward investment, particularly at the national level. When choosing more locally between sites, major developments may consider parking standards, however, thus strengthening the argument for national standards to provide a level playing field between local authorities.”

- 3.26 The overall conclusions from the paper were that:

“.....the restraint of parking can, in some circumstances, reduce car use. It has demonstrated the importance of a consistent, level playing field for parking standards across a region or country, if maximum parking standards are to be used to their full effect.”

“In final conclusion, the admittedly limited evidence in this paper shows that maximum parking standards can be implemented, that they are likely to be accepted by developers, that they do not deter inward investment or cause major secondary impacts, and that they have the intended effect of limiting car travel to developments.”

- 3.27 Although this report looks at the Scottish situation, we consider that its findings can be readily applied to the English situation. In particular the finding that maximum parking standards:

- ◆ Provide a level playing field for across a region or country;
- ◆ Do not deter inward investment; and
- ◆ Limit car travel to developments.

- 3.28 All of these findings provide support for the PPG13 approach and suggest that the approach set out in the draft PPS4 may be not be sufficiently robust.

The Key findings from this research are:

- vi) Restrictive parking measures influence mode choice;
- vii) There is a clear link between parking availability and car use; and
- viii) Maximum parking standards do not deter inward investment.

Making Travel Plans Work, Lessons From UK Case Studies, Department for Transport, July 2002

3.29 This guide was written for employers who want to reduce traffic congestion around their sites and improve the travel options available for their staff. The guide was based upon the findings of a research report (Making Travel Plans Work: Research Report, DfT 2002) which examined 21 case studies that were considered good practice with regard to Travel Plans.

3.30 In terms of effectiveness the Travel Plans which were examined achieved the following:

- ◆ 14% reduction in cars travelling to the site;
- ◆ 18% reduction in commuter journeys made by car; and
- ◆ Almost doubled the proportion of staff commuting by walking, cycling, bus and train.

3.31 The highest levels recorded were:

- ◆ 23% commuting on foot;
- ◆ 21% cycling; and
- ◆ 53% using public transport

3.32 In terms of car sharing the study found that the most successful organisations had:

- ◆ 48% of staff registered on car share database;
- ◆ 30% of staff car share at least one day a week; and
- ◆ 26% of staff car sharing on a daily basis.

3.33 The study found that:

“...the most successful travel plans combine parking restraint with a high number of ‘carrots’ – positive measures to support alternative travel.”

And

“Parking restraint is a hallmark of high achieving travel plans.”

3.34 In relation to managing parking levels at employment sites the study found that:

“.....the cost and availability of workplace car parking is likely to play a critical role in influencing travel patterns. In our study, those organisations that addressed parking achieved, on average, a considerably greater reduction in car driving.”

3.35 The report clearly states:

“Almost self-evidently, limiting the overall number of spaces available to staff is the most effective way to limit the number of cars arriving on site.”

3.36 The report identified the following areas of good practice for managing parking in relation to travel plans:

- ◆ Measures to prevent overspill parking in the immediate area.
- ◆ Travel improvements that are linked to parking restraint.
- ◆ Introducing new parking regimes on occupation of a new site.

3.37 This report clearly shows the clear linkages between parking restraint and successful travel plans. The inference being that individuals and organisations are unlikely to change their travel habits unless they are compelled to, either by the use of maximum parking standards at a new development or to address current parking problems at an existing site.

3.38 This report clearly demonstrates the benefits that can be achieved through travel plans, and by inference the wider ‘Smarter Choices’ agenda. However, it is clear that restrictive parking measures are an essential pre-requisite to producing a successful plan and delivering modal shift away from the private car.

3.39 Atkins consider that, without the maximum parking standards set out in PPG13, it will be difficult for local authorities to secure meaningful and comprehensive travel plans to the extent that is currently possible.

The Key findings from this study were:

- ix) **Travel Plans can reduce the number of cars travelling to a site by 14%;**
- x) **Limiting parking availability is the most effective way to limit the number of cars arriving on site; and**
- xi) **Parking restraint is a hallmark of high achieving travel plans.**

Parking Restraint Policy and Urban Vitality, Ben Still and David Simmonds, David Simmonds Consultancy, 2000

3.40 The objective of this paper was to examine how sensitive city centre activities are to parking provision. This paper looked at all types of parking provision including public parking and private non-residential parking.

3.41 In relation to parking and office activities this study found that:

“Parking is still seen as the key (by developers) to letting offices, especially those in out-of-town locations. However, the same is true of city centre locations.”

3.42 It also identified that

“There are other reasons why parking could be perceived as important for office (especially bespoke) developers. An example would be for developers to seek maximum parking provision, not because it is necessarily required by the likely occupants, but simply to make the development easier to sell on, and hence increase the value of the development as a company asset.”

- 3.43 In relation to empirical studies of parking policy on urban development the study referenced previous work which found:

“.....no meaningful correlation between specific elements of parking policy and the economic health of individual centres. From this they concluded that there is no ‘no evidence that a relaxed attitude to parking improves economic performance’ (Kamali and Potter 1997, p. 420).”

- 3.44 The findings from this study largely confirm the findings from others in that there is no clear evidence to suggest that restrictive parking has a negative economic impact. It also provides a useful insight into why developers can be seen to press for maximum parking standards for speculative developments as it is considered that sites with parking are easier to sell on.

The Key findings from this research were:

- xii) Developers see parking as being key to being able to let offices;
- xiii) Developers seek to maximise parking as they consider that it adds value to their assets; and
- xiv) There is no evidence that relaxing parking standards improves economic performance.

The Effect of Maximum Car Parking Standards including Inward Investment Implications, The Scottish Executive, 2002

- 3.45 This report presents the findings of a research study investigating the effects of maximum parking standards including the potential impact on inward investment.
- 3.46 The research was undertaken through discussions with local authorities in Scotland. A number of case studies were developed in Glasgow, Edinburgh and the North East. English case studies were also included in research where there is more experience with maximum parking standards.
- 3.47 The Scottish Executive report contains 19 case studies of developments (mostly from within Scotland, although some local authorities in England were contacted for their views) which had been subject to maximum parking standards, and drew the following conclusions from their findings:
- 3.48 The case studies showed that the implementation of maximum or restricted parking standards has encouraged the uptake of sustainable transport modes and travel plans. The increasing requirement for travel plans as a method of encouraging alternative means of transport is widely recognised and in many cases is being implemented through the use of planning obligations or planning conditions.

3.49 Based on the travel plans developed as part of the case studies looked at in this study, universities and hospitals genuinely embraced the environmental and health benefits of non car based travel options in conjunction with a level of restrained parking. However a lack of coordinated effort in business/industrial locations has meant less success in modal shift.

3.50 The report concludes that:

“.....maximum parking standards have a key role to play as part of an integrated package of physical and policy measures to restrict dependence on the private car and encourage the use of alternative modes of transport.”

“..... it was evident that maximum parking standards often acted as the catalyst for discussions, and in most cases co-operation, between local authorities and developers to improve the range and choice of non car based travel to and from development sites.”

“The situation where a developer or investor did not proceed with a development due to a lack of car parking resulting from the application of maximum parking standards and instead choose to go elsewhere was not one familiar to many local authorities, although a previous study by Symonds Travers Morgan showed that such considerations can result in an office not relocating, and therefore not entering into the development control process.”

“All in all, this research study has shown that there is little or no evidence to suggest that maximum parking standards has a detrimental effect on developer confidence or where relevant, inward investment.”

“Overall, whilst this study has concentrated on the impact of maximum parking standards on developer perceptions and inward investment, it is important to set out the context that transport and car parking plays in the locational decision making process. Factors such as public sector incentives, workforce availability, sector track record, transport and communications, quality of life, research and education are usually more important in the decision making process and therefore unless the correct conditions exist within these areas, car parking provision will not even feature in the decision making process.”

3.51 The result of the research undertaken for the Scottish Executive report are clear, and provides clear evidence that the proposals within the draft PPS4, in respect of parking, may unnecessary to encourage economic development.

3.52 The finding that restraining parking has a key role to play in encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport to the car also suggests that the ‘sustainability’ of draft PPS4 needs to be questioned.

3.53 Overall this is a very useful piece of research that demonstrates that, overall, restrictive parking standards do not effect inward investment or economic development decisions.

The Key findings from this study were:

- xv) **Maximum parking standards have encouraged the uptake of sustainable transport modes and travel plans; and**
- xvi) **There is little or no evidence to suggest that maximum parking standards have a detrimental effect on inward investment.**

Review of Regional Parking Standards, Mouchel, 2007

- 3.54 Mouchel was commissioned by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) in March 2007 to undertake the review of the North West Regional Parking Standards.
- 3.55 The report states that during the course of the review of the regional parking standards, no evidence has been revealed to suggest that parking standards at their existing numerical levels (in the RSS) have a significant negative impact on economic development.
- 3.56 Again, this is useful evidence which confirms the findings from several previous studies.

The Key finding from this study was:

- xvii) **There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development.**

EUROPEAN STUDIES

- 3.57 Research on the effects on parking at the European level has been undertaken through the European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research programme (COST.) COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research, allowing the co-ordination of nationally funded research on a European level. COST actions cover basic and pre-competitive research as well as activities of public utility.

Parking Policy Measures and their Effects on Mobility and the Economy - Report on COST Action 342, T de Wit, 2006

- 3.58 COST Action 342 examined Parking Policy Measures and their Effects on Mobility and the Economy. The final report was published in 2006.
- 3.59 The study identified from research across Europe, that parking standards for new developments are shifting from minimum towards a maximum guidance; influenced by the availability of space. European case studies imply that maximum, not minimum, parking standards should be set, as minimum standards can hinder the development of sustainable parking policies. These maximum standards may also vary according to local conditions. It is also recommended that peak demand and combined use must be taken into account in order to avoid over provision of parking.

- 3.60 In the Netherlands, local authorities, business and social organisations play a role in parking policy and standards are considered in collaboration with accessibility and mobility profiles for locations and developments. (COST 342/19 NL- Sub Report, August 2000). In addition to this, research shows that Park and Ride across Europe links to reductions in congestion and urban centre traffic and suggests that the provision of capacity at these sites should be influenced by local parking policies.
- 3.61 The final conclusions of this report were that:
- ◆ In modern 'mobility management'¹ parking is the largest single management tool.
 - ◆ Such a car parking policy set out carefully will support business and economy instead of harming them as is often suggested.
- 3.62 Overall there is no hard evidence to suggest the negative impacts of parking on the economic viability of an area and instead well introduced parking policy can result in improved attractiveness of areas due to a reduction in the number of parked cars and increased levels of accessibility.
- 3.63 The study COST recommended that:
- ◆ In the field of land use planning the application of maximum parking standards is recommended. The exact values of these standards must not be fixed in national legislation but brought as a guideline or guidance paper. This is to facilitate adaptation to regional variation.
- 3.64 The findings and recommendations of this study endorse the approach set out in PPG13 and by implication, suggest that the proposals contained within the draft PPS4 could have significant negative effects.

The Key findings from this study were:

- xviii) **Parking is the most effective demand management tool;**
- xix) **Restrictive parking policies will support business and the economy; and**
- xx) **Maximum parking standards should take the form of national guidance which incorporates the flexibility to adapt to regional variations and local conditions**

- 3.65 The final finding shows that urban and rural contexts may also be addressed here in England through National Maximum Parking Standards.

The Effects of Restrictive Parking Policy on the Development of City Centres, Dr. Karel Martens, Radboud University Nijmegen, 2005

- 3.66 This study was conducted for the Israeli Ministry of Transport, based in Tel Aviv.
- 3.67 The study looked at the effects of parking restrictions in four cities across Europe Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Rotterdam and Zürich.
- 3.68 Some of the main conclusions from this study were:

¹ Within Europe, Mobility Management is equivalent to the UK practice of Travel Planning

- ◆ *“The cities and city centers show an ongoing economic vitality after the introduction of the restrictive parking norms.”*
- ◆ *“The city centers remain the dominant office location in all case study cities.”*
- ◆ *“Parking is a relatively unimportant location factor in the location decisions of offices.”*
- ◆ *“The city center has strong qualities that make it attractive for a large part of the office sector and that compensate for the parking restrictions.”*
- ◆ *“The decentralization of offices and the rise of peripheral office concentrations is the inevitable result of the dynamics in the office market, in which parking considerations play only a minor role.”*

3.69 The above observations and conclusions lead to the following overall conclusion of the research:

- ◆ *“Parking restrictions have had no significant influence on the economic development of the selected cities and city centers.”*
- ◆ *“The economic dynamics in the case study cities suggest that parking restrictions will not have negative economic impacts if implemented in cities with a strong and vibrant economic structure.”*

3.70 The study concluded that restrictive parking policies do not significantly impact on economic development as issues such as location are influenced by factors other than parking.

3.71 However, this study was based upon a relatively small sample of cities, each of which can be considered to have strong and vibrant economies. Therefore, although one of the main conclusions of the research states that:

- ◆ *“...parking restrictions will not have negative economic impacts if implemented in cities with a strong and vibrant economic structure.”*

The study provides no evidence that suggests that there could be negative impacts in cities which do not have strong or vibrant economies.

3.72 This again confirms the findings of research conducted within the UK and again suggests that from an economic development perspective there are no negative impacts to having restrictive or maximum parking standards.

The Key finding from this study was:

- xxi) There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development in the existing economic structure within an urban context.**

CONCLUSIONS

3.73 From reviewing the existing research that is available from within the UK and Europe it is evident that several key themes are apparent.

3.74 Table 3.1 contains a summary of all of the key findings from the review of existing research.

Table 3.1 - Key Findings from the Review of Existing Research

| | |
|---|--|
| The Key findings from the review of existing research are: | |
| i) | Restricting parking numbers leads to a reduction in demand; |
| ii) | Modelling has shown that parking is a more effective demand management tool than public transport fare reductions; |
| iii) | Travel Plans, linked with restrictive parking policy can achieve significant modal shift; |
| iv) | Restrictive parking policy over a long time period has had no effect upon economic development; |
| v) | 76% of Local Authorities believe that maximum parking standards are the major reason behind the adoption of travel plans; |
| vi) | Restrictive parking measures influence mode choice; |
| vii) | There is a clear link between parking availability and car use; |
| viii) | Maximum parking standards do not deter inward investment; |
| ix) | Travel Plans can reduce the number of cars travelling to a site by 14%; |
| x) | Limiting parking availability is the most effective way to limit the number of cars arriving on site; |
| xi) | Parking restraint is a hallmark of high achieving travel plans; |
| xii) | Developers see parking as being key to being able to let offices; |
| xiii) | Developers seek to maximise parking as they consider that it adds value to their assets; |
| xiv) | There is no evidence that relaxing parking standards improves economic performance; |
| xv) | Maximum parking standards have encouraged the uptake of sustainable transport modes and travel plans; |
| xvi) | There is little or no evidence to suggest that maximum parking standards have a detrimental effect on inward investment. |
| xvii) | There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development. |
| xviii) | Parking is the most effective demand management tool; |
| xix) | Restrictive parking policies will support business and the economy; |
| xx) | Maximum parking standards should take the form of national guidance which incorporates the flexibility to adapt to regional variations and local conditions; and |
| xxi) | There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development in the existing economic structure within an urban context. |

3.75 Three key themes are apparent from this review, these themes are:

- ◆ Parking is a very important demand management tool;
- ◆ Developers see parking as important as they consider that it adds value to their asset; and
- ◆ There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development within urban areas.

4. The Findings of Research Undertaken For This Study

- 4.1 The inception stage of this project identified that there was a shortage of research into the effects of maximum parking standards within England. Due to this it was decided to undertake a limited amount of new research to assist in answering the main questions of this study.
- 4.2 Due to the limited timescale available for this study the new research was limited to a phone survey of local authorities from across the country and consultations with a range of individuals and groups from the academic and professional arenas.

SURVEY OF ENGLISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- 4.3 To assist with gathering information for this study it was decided that a sample phone survey of English local authorities would be undertaken to obtain information on their experience of the implementation and effectiveness of maximum parking standards as set out in PPG13.
- 4.4 In total we were able to obtain survey responses from seven different authorities. These authorities were:
- ◆ Alnwick, North East of England (Rural)
 - ◆ Cambridge, East of England (Urban)
 - ◆ North Yorkshire, Yorks & Humber (Rural)
 - ◆ Mid-Devon, South West of England (Rural)
 - ◆ Liverpool, North West of England (Urban)
 - ◆ Guildford, South East of England (Urban)
 - ◆ Staffordshire, West Midlands (Mixed)
- 4.5 To each of these authorities we asked the following questions:
- Q1.** Does your authority have maximum parking standards that it applies to non-residential developments?
- Q2.** Are these standards applied uniformly across the authority, or do different areas have different standards?
- Q3.** If there are different standards for different areas within an authority area what is the rationale behind this?
- Q4.** Overall, how do these standards compare to PPG13? Are they: More Restrictive, Less Restrictive?, The Same as PPG 13?, Other?
- Q5.** What is your opinion of the effectiveness of maximum parking standards in delivering the following policy objectives of PPG13, that is: Promoting sustainable transport choices (walking, cycling, public transport); Tackling congestion;
- Q6.** Do you consider that maximum parking standards have any negative impacts?

- Q7.** Do you think that it's useful that maximum parking standards are set by national planning policy?
- Q8.** If there was no national policy on maximum parking standards do you think your authority would be likely to? Retain their current standards? Set Higher maximum Parking Standards?, Set Lower Maximum Parking Standards?, Set Minimum Parking Standards?, Other
- Q9.** Do you routinely require the production of Travel Plans where maximum parking standards are used?
- Q10.** Since the introduction of the 2004 Traffic Management Act has the Traffic Manager ever sought to influence the parking standards which have applied to a development to ensure that the Network Management Duty (NMD) is complied with?
- 4.6 The full results from this survey can be found in Appendix 2.
- 4.7 All but one of the seven authorities surveyed, have maximum parking standards in place.
- 4.8 The one exception was Staffordshire, which is a mainly rural county highway authority. In Staffordshire they rely on the LDF's and adopted Development Plans from the borough councils within the county to set out appropriate parking policy and standards. The county council make representations to the local planning authorities when consulted on their LDF's with regard to highways and transport issues, including parking, and expect their views to be taken into account when finalising the planning policy.
- 4.9 The contribution these standards can make to sustainable transport choices is recognised by all authorities. However, in terms of actual impact, there is only anecdotal evidence and the outcomes are based on the experience and knowledge of the officers consulted.
- 4.10 Across urban and rural authorities the parking standards are used as a tool to contribute to the promotion of more sustainable forms of transport in order to avoid the use of the car. The impact of the implementation of parking standards on tackling congestion was less well observed.
- 4.11 For example one rural authority found that congestion got worse within its town centre as a result of introducing the standards, whereas another rural authority stated that congestion was not an issue to begin with.
- 4.12 For some of the remaining urban authorities, standards were specifically aimed at reducing congestion.
- 4.13 Several authorities highlighted some of the negative impacts which have surfaced from the implementation of maximum parking standards. A mixture of rural and urban authorities have highlighted the increase in on-street parking demand and problems in areas where fewer parking restrictions in place, which has led to safety problems for one rural authority.
- 4.14 An urban and a rural authority have also identified an increase in the number of people driving around town centres looking for parking spaces. In addition to this

there have been reports of increased parking in nearby facilities and problems encountered by rural authorities in historic towns due to the narrow streets which are not suitable for on-street parking.

- 4.15 In relation to negative impacts, one urban authority emphasised the need for a pragmatic approach to applying maximum parking standards in collaboration with introducing controlled parking zones and other traffic regulations.
- 4.16 In relation to Travel Plans, almost half of the authorities require Travel Plans in line with the application of PPG13 parking standards. Two of these are urban authorities. One rural authority requires travel plans at levels which are more restrictive than PPG13. The remaining authorities require travel plans based on developments exceeding thresholds in the Transport Assessment Guidance or guidance from the County Highway Authority.
- 4.17 Generally, travel plans are required in relation to the type, location and size of new developments. An impression of the relationship between travel plans and restrictive parking is provided by both urban and rural authorities, with one authority highlighting the difficulty with insisting on parking levels below the maximum threshold, due to precedents set in planning case law.
- 4.18 Several authorities reiterated the role of travel plans in ensuring the effectiveness of parking standards; for example one authority described the use of travel plans to address problems with increases in on-street parking, resulting from the use of the maximum standards. All rural authorities emphasised the importance of the location of development and the requirement of travel plans in line with greater levels of restricted parking. Urban authorities largely require travel plans at the PPG13 maximum level. Therefore whilst both rural and urban authorities demonstrate a relationship between parking standards and the requirement for travel plans; urban authorities have shown a stronger need for travel plans in their areas.
- 4.19 Three of the seven authorities have implemented maximum parking standards which are similar to PPG13 (two of which are rural), and four authorities have been more restrictive, especially in the more built up areas such as city and town centres. There is an overall trend for urban authorities to implement more restrictive parking standards in the central areas, where public transport provision is better. However, it has been found that some rural authorities also impose greater restrictions in central areas, with only one rural authority having a uniform set of standards.
- 4.20 The main rationale behind this approach has been to reduce the use of the car within city and town centres, encourage the use of other more sustainable forms of transport and to address congestion and traffic problems. Factors taken into consideration include site accessibility and existing travel plans.
- 4.21 With regard to the usefulness of a national policy and the approach to parking standards which would be taken by authorities in its absence; most authorities have emphasised the need for a policy which allows a local level approach and responds to local circumstances.
- 4.22 Only two urban authorities stated that the PPG13 standards have been useful yet reiterated the need for central government to guide local authorities in applying standards suited to their local needs.

- 4.23 The level of compliance by developers and the differences between rural and urban communities, (with high car dependency and poor public transport links), were also highlighted as issues affecting the adoption of maximum parking standards. In the absence of a national policy for parking standards, half of the authorities (mostly rural) would set higher standards based on the outcome of local research and circumstances. One urban authority would set lower standards and another would retain the current standards. Overall most authorities would revise their standards, with one urban authority highlighting the need for a national guidance framework to remain.
- 4.24 During the general conversation with officers from the authorities that were surveyed, it became apparent that authorities differ in their interpretation and application of maximum parking standards.
- 4.25 One authority was very rigid in their interpretation and application of their adopted parking standards. Whereas, another authority adopted a more flexible approach, making full use of the guidance provided by paragraph 54 of PPG13. However, both rural and urban authorities applied more restrictive parking standards within built up areas.
- 4.26 The phone surveys did not, on the whole, reveal specific issues relating to the impact of restrictive parking standards on the economic viability of an area; apart from some concern over the impacts of restrictive parking on congestion, the ability to attract retailers and increased competition between authorities to attract investment in the absence of national policy guidance. These concerns are shared across rural and urban authorities.
- 4.27 In general all authorities have demonstrated a level of integration between transport and planning departments when dealing with parking issues relating to new developments. Liaison between Traffic Engineers, Development Control and Planning teams seems prominent and two authorities specifically outlined the role of their Traffic Managers in promoting the consideration of TMA issues. This includes the involvement and awareness of Development Control teams in the Network Management Duties of the council, which are applied to new developments.

The Key findings from this research were:

- a). Most authorities are using maximum parking standards;**
- b). All authorities recognised that parking is a key demand management tool;**
- c). There can be significant differences between authorities in terms of their interpretation and application of maximum parking standards;**
- d). Rural and urban authorities have experienced similar problems with an increase in on street parking as a result of implementing maximum parking standards; and**
- e). There is an identifiable difference in the approach which would be taken by rural and urban authorities in response to the absence of national policy.**

CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CHIEF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS SOCIETY, CEDOS

- 4.28 The Chief Economic Development Officers Society [CEDOS] provides a forum for Heads of Economic Development in upper tier local authorities throughout England. Membership includes county, city and unitary councils in non-metropolitan areas, which together represent over 47% of the population of England and provide services across over 84% of its land area. The Society carries out research, develops and disseminates good practice, and publishes reports on key issues for economic development policy and practice. Through its collective expertise, it seeks to play its full part in helping to inform and shape national and regional policies and initiatives.
- 4.29 Following discussions with the chair of this group it was agreed that they would consult their members with a view to answering two questions related to economic development and parking standards.
- 4.30 These questions were:
- Q1.** Has the imposition of maximum parking standards affected the ability of local authorities in your area to attract inward investment or affected other aspects of economic/business development?
- Q2.** If neighbouring local authorities in or adjacent to your area have adopted different parking standards, has this had an impact on the relative attractiveness of their areas in terms of economic development?
- 4.31 Responses were received from Dorset, Hampshire, Lancashire and Swindon in relation to urban based developments.
- 4.32 The responses to Question 1 were as follows
- ◆ “Parking restrictions are affecting the way business space is being taken up”.
 - ◆ “We consider this a serious issue. We currently have two applications, which are being frustrated (in the view of the applicants) by the imposition of restrictive car park standards. The two applications represent 2,000 jobs, which this Council does not wish to lose. At the moment we are at an impasse between business needs and the application of what is to them a very restrictive policy”.
 - ◆ “We are often under great pressure from developers to allow higher levels of car parking and economic viability is usually the reason given. A recent example is a proposed development, which has recently been granted permission. The first occupier were claiming that even with a robust travel plan the maximum standard would not be enough. In the end, agreement was reached on the maximum standard”.
 - ◆ “The Council has no direct evidence that the imposition of maximum parking standards has influenced developers decisions but it has certainly been used as a threat ‘to go elsewhere’ on a number of occasions. There may be one or two proposals where the developer has not proceeded citing this as one of the reasons, although I am sure there were also other reasons”.
- 4.33 The above responses to some extent concur with the views from the published research that parking standards do not have an effect upon the economic

development potential of an area. Indeed the example above shows that despite protestations agreement was reached on the maximum parking standard.

- 4.34 The final bullet point is very helpful as it highlights the difficulties of working with developers who are highly focused on their commercial aims and again highlights a previous research finding that parking is just one factor in the decision making chain and not necessarily the main deciding factor.
- 4.35 One council also forwarded the following views from a local planning consultant, who expressed no doubt that maximum parking standards have had a significant impact, citing two 2008 examples:
- ◆ “An office development site, an opportunity that “would have been of considerable interest to us and I believe that there would be good demand from occupiers, but for the very low amount of parking to be provided on site. Experience of many similar projects shows that no matter how good the public transport facilities are, buildings which cannot provide at least one space per 1,000 sq ft of floor space do not prove attractive to occupiers. Perhaps just as important, without provision of parking at that level, most funding institutions we deal with would not be prepared to support the project.”
 - ◆ “I am currently working with a client who is refurbishing a very large building which could have been considered to have come to the end of its economic life. There was no way our client would have built a new highly energy efficient building with its ‘maximum parking standard’ because his business simply could not have operated with the lower provision. So we end up with inefficient refurbished old stock and all of the consequences to the local economy”.
- 4.36 When viewing these responses it must be taken into account that the respondent works on behalf of the development industry and therefore is coming at this issue from a different angle to the local authorities. It is interesting to note that the respondent appears to be representing speculative developers in providing office space to rent. As was noted previously developers tend to want to maximise the amount of parking they have at a development as they consider that the increases the value of their asset and also makes it easier to sell on.
- 4.37 The responses to Question 2 were as follows
- ◆ “A list of maximum standards for non-residential uses was included in PPG13 and these were adopted as County Council policy in the summer of 2002. We believe that all of the adjoining County Councils apply the PPG 13 standards or something very close to them”.
 - ◆ “Parking standards within the county boundary are used by all Districts and by the unitary authorities. The adopted approach includes influences of site accessibility, level of centre (town) and also having regard to immediate local circumstance. Neighbouring authorities outside the county apply a different approach but the resulting standards are not dissimilar. Therefore the County Council is not aware that this has had an impact on our level of attractiveness. Please note regional parking standards are also similar to those of the county. In addition other major populated areas that surround the county are generally far enough away as not to compete with Districts/Unitaries within it for development opportunities”.

- 4.38 These responses highlight the usefulness of having national guidance on maximum parking standards. If this was not in place there could be significant differences in the permitted level of parking permitted in adjoining authorities.
- 4.39 PPG13 provides a level playing field in terms of parking provision. By implication, the removal of the maximum parking standards could lead to local or regional distortions in parking provision, potentially leading to increased traffic and problems of congestion and the related environmental issues.

The Key findings from this research were:

- f). **Local authorities can be placed under great pressure by developers to accept levels of parking which may be in excess of the adopted maxima;**
- g). **PPG13 has provided a level playing field between authorities in terms of the level of parking provision; and**
- h). **There are no consultation responses to suggest that developments are not occurring due to maximum parking standards.**

REVIEW OF A SAMPLE OF LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS

- 4.40 In view of the transport and demand management implications emanating from the use of maximum parking standards we undertook a review of a sample of second round Local Transport Plans, LTP's, to assess whether they are influencing Local Authority planning decisions and vice-versa.
- 4.41 For this review we selected the following LTP's.
- ◆ Cumbria (Rural, North West);
 - ◆ Devon (Rural, South East);
 - ◆ North Yorkshire (Rural, North East);
 - ◆ Staffordshire (Mixed, West Midlands);
 - ◆ Warwickshire (Mixed, West Midlands);
 - ◆ West of England (Urban);
 - ◆ West Buckinghamshire (Mixed/Urban, South East); and
 - ◆ Derby Joint (Unitary, East Midlands).

- 4.42 Our findings from this review were as follows

Cumbria LTP

- 4.43 This LTP contained the following policy statement:
- ◆ Policy RT9: Parking guidelines:- The council will review the parking guidelines for Cumbria with the planning and parking authorities to reflect current planning policy and promote sustainable transport use where appropriate.

Devon LTP

4.44 This LTP contained the following policy statement:

- ◆ The implementation of parking strategies in liaison with District Councils, on a basis which reflects the demand restraint requirements.

North Yorkshire LTP

4.45 This LTP contained the following policy statements:

- ◆ To co-ordinate on and off street parking management with District Councils, National Park Authorities and where possible other providers.
- ◆ Parking control as a demand management measure is significantly more effective when co-ordinated for the whole parking supply [on road and off road] in an area.
- ◆ Parking policy will also need to be adhered to and enforced to discourage private car use in the major urban areas where there are viable alternative transport modes.
- ◆ Parking policy will also be reviewed by the County Council in conjunction with the District Councils and National Park Authorities.

Staffordshire LTP

4.46 This LTP contained the following policy statement:

- ◆ Within available resources, the County Council will work in partnership with the District Councils, the City of Stoke-on-Trent, Chief Constable and other plan partners to achieve the objectives of the plan through the implementation of the following parking policies:

Warwickshire LTP

4.47 This LTP contained the following policy statement:

- ◆ The County Council will work with District and Borough Councils to deliver a co-ordinated approach to on and off-street parking provision in a way that supports the objectives of the Local Transport Plan including the economic competitiveness of town centres

West of England LTP

4.48 This LTP contained the following policy statement:

- ◆ Parking standards: the provision of new parking spaces will be tightly controlled, through the Local Development Frameworks, in all new developments with numbers linked to how accessible a location is by public transport, walking and cycling. When considering new development the user priorities set out in the JLTP will be adhered to.

Buckinghamshire CC LTP

4.49 This LTP contained the following policy statement:

- ◆ Working with District Councils for our three main urban areas (and responsible for off street parking provision) we have the potential to collectively influence travel choices and demand using parking policy and strategies. Whilst we cannot directly influence parking policy and charging on private land, using our combined County / District Council Planning and Development Control powers, we can influence and control future private parking provision and, hence affect demand for travel.

Derby Joint LTP

- 4.50 This LTP contained the following policy statement:
- ◆ We will review the parking standards currently applied within the Derby Joint LTP are to ensure that parking standards and levels are used. RSS8 incorporates the regional transport Strategy and together with the Three Cities sub area objectives these will inform future parking standards as well as any future parking strategy.
- 4.51 On the basis of all of the policy statements obtained from this small sample of LTP's it appears that these transport and planning authorities are working together in regard to the application of parking issues.
- 4.52 Of particular note is the recognition within LTP's of the role that parking can play in demand management. This is an important consideration as it goes to the core of the current national transport policy.

The Key findings from this research were:

- i). **Many authorities have set out policies within their Local Transport Plans which seek to influence planning policy in terms of parking and parking standards.**

THE IMPACT OF THE WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY ON PARKING STANDARDS

- 4.53 A specific issue that we have been asked to address as part of this study is to assess whether proposals to introduce the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL), are likely to have an impact upon the parking standards which are applied in that area and its likely effectiveness in reducing travel demand.
- 4.54 In answer this question we approached Nottingham City Council as this authority has the most developed scheme that we are aware of within the UK.
- 4.55 At Nottingham City Council's Executive Board on 18 December 2007, councillors considered the conclusions of the public consultation and the Public Examination of the Workplace Parking Levy proposals.
- 4.56 They decided to proceed in principle with developing the details of the scheme so that if the legal order containing the scheme is ratified by Full Council in 2008, an application could be made to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation of the scheme in order to introduce a WPL in Nottingham from April 2010.

- 4.57 Discussions with Nottingham City Council Officers and their consultants have revealed that the potential impacts of the WPL package on travel demand may be complex.
- 4.58 This will include changes in workplace parking supply and management that will result in some behavioural change, reductions in car use through increased motoring costs (where the WPL charge is passed on) and through improved travel choices generated by Levy funded/facilitated investment.
- 4.59 The improvements in public transport provision, primarily NET, the LinkBus network and improvements to Nottingham Station would be expected to generate additional travel demand, but using sustainable travel modes.
- 4.60 Enhanced travel planning/smarter choices may similarly reduce car demand, but could result in increases in public transport or non-motorised mode usage. Assessment of the wider economic impacts of the WPL package suggest support to the economy of Nottingham, with increases in employment levels likely to result from net improvements in accessibility in Greater Nottingham. Such changes in employment may also result in increases in travel demand.
- 4.61 However, of primary interest in relation to parking standards is the impact of WPL on car demand, both in general and specifically at the workplace.
- 4.62 It is estimated that 10% of workplace parking spaces will be taken out of operation when WPL is introduced, based on what happened to parking supply when a similar Levy scheme was implemented in Perth, Australia. This reduction in spaces may not necessarily translate into reduced travel demand as efficiency savings in supply may be possible before demand is impacted. The potential impacts of WPL funded travel planning/smarter choices measures could significantly reduce car usage at the workplace, though the extent of reduced demand will be employers/site specific.
- 4.63 Forecasting work underpinning the business case, for the Workplace Parking Levy, is reported in the Appendices to the Business Case., This indicates that 2.35 million vehicles per annum travelling to/from locations in the WPL chargeable area will be removed from the road network in 2013 as a result of the WPL charge and investment in NET and the LinkBus network, increasing to 2.8m in 2021.
- 4.64 This represents around 8,000-10,000 vehicles being removed from the urban road network per day. As noted above travel planning/smarter choices measures have the potential to generate further reductions in car demand.
- 4.65 Overall the impacts on traffic levels of WPL throughout Greater Nottingham are modest; the charging area does not cover the whole of Greater Nottingham, charging levels are relatively low compared to public parking charges and it is expected that a significant proportion of employers will not pass on the charge to employees. However, when focusing on radial movements into central Nottingham it is clear that WPL can have a significant impact in slowing demand growth over time. Further indicators of the modelled impacts on demand levels and traffic flows are provided in the Appendices to the Business Case.

4.66 Further information, including the full Business Case, can be found on the Workplace Parking Levy website at:

- ◆ <http://www.nottinghamwpl.com>

The Key findings from this research were:

- j). The potential impacts of the Workplace Parking Levy package on travel demand may be complex;**
- k). 10% of workplace parking spaces could be taken out of operation when the Workplace Parking Levy is introduced; and**
- l). Around 8,000 10,000 vehicles could be removed from the urban road network per day.**

CONCLUSIONS

- 4.67 Based upon the research undertaken for this study several themes are apparent.
- 4.68 Table 4.1 contains a summary of all of the key findings from research undertaken for this study.

Table 4.1 - Key Findings from the Research Undertaken for This Study

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| <p>The key findings from the new research undertaken for this study were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a). Most authorities are using maximum parking standards;b). All authorities recognised that parking is a key demand management tool;c). There can be significant differences between authorities in terms of their interpretation and application of maximum parking standards;d). Rural and urban authorities have experienced similar problems with an increase in on street parking as a result of implementing maximum parking standards;e). There is an identifiable difference in the approach which would be taken by rural and urban authorities in response to the absence of national policy;f). Local authorities can be placed under great pressure by developers to accept levels of parking which may be in excess of the adopted maxima;g). PPG13 has provided a level playing field between authorities in terms of the level of parking provision;h). There are no consultation responses to suggest that developments are not occurring due to maximum parking standards;i). Many rural and urban authorities have set out policies within their Local Transport Plans which seek to influence planning policy in terms of parking and parking standards;j). The potential impacts of the Workplace Parking Levy package on travel demand may be complex;k). 10% of workplace parking spaces could be taken out of operation when the Workplace Parking Levy is introduced; andl). Around 8,000 10,000 vehicles could be removed from the urban road network per day. |
|--|

- 4.69 Although considering a wider subject area, including LTP's and the workplace parking levy, similar consistent themes have emerged which tie into the findings from existing research, these are:

- ◆ Parking is a very important demand management tool;
- ◆ Developers see parking as important as they consider that it adds value to their asset; and
- ◆ There is no evidence to suggest that parking standards have a significant negative impact on economic development.

4.70 In addition, another important and highly relevant finding is that:

- ◆ PPG13 has provided a level playing field between authorities in terms of the level of parking provision.

4.71 These findings reinforce those found previously and provides a weight of evidence behind them.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This study has shown that the adoption of PPG13 maximum parking standards is widespread throughout the country across rural and urban areas. However, it has also shown that there can be significant differences in the interpretation and application of these standards, especially between rural and urban authorities.
- 5.2 A clear relationship, backed up by strong evidence from many sources, has been shown regarding the implementation of maximum parking standards and the take up and success of Travel Plans. It is through this process that the positive benefits of PPG13 have been achieved in terms of encouraging modal shift to more sustainable transport modes.
- 5.3 Extensive research undertaken within the UK and Europe has clearly shown that there have been no adverse economic development impacts following the introduction of maximum parking standards. It is acknowledged that these studies have largely focused on urban areas. However, due to the amount of different studies which have come to this conclusion it must be considered a very significant finding. This finding to a large extent questions the rationale in the draft PPS4 for completely removing the national guidance on maximum parking standards.
- 5.4 It is the application of parking standards by local authorities which have led to the small amount of problems that we have discovered. In particular the lack of a comprehensive transport strategy for new developments has generally led to the recorded problems of on-street parking nuisance.
- 5.5 Rural authorities have identified the need for greater flexibility in the adoption of maximum parking standards according to the different needs which exist in comparison to urban areas. Most Urban authorities have found these issues can be anticipated and mitigated prior to them becoming a problem through the requirement of robust travel plans backed up with robust monitoring arrangements and penalties secured through planning obligations. National parking standards have already performed well in guiding development control decisions; however greater emphasis is required for making the best use of parking as a demand management tool. This needs to be balanced with a greater level of flexibility allowing local needs to be met, especially those characteristic of rural areas.
- 5.6 There is significant flexibility within the current PPG13 as set out in paragraph 54. This paragraph clearly places the onus on the developer to demonstrate the need for parking in excess of the national maximum parking standards. If there is a need then the developer should be able to demonstrate this within their Transport Assessment. Based upon this the authority should be able to determine whether to permit parking levels in excess of the standard.
- 5.7 Parking is just one of a series of transport related issues which are related to new developments. Depending upon the size of the development the Transport Statement or Assessment should be able to quantify all of the transport related effects and provide a comprehensive transport strategy to mitigate these effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.8 Following this review our recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1

There is a very strong need to retain the maximum parking standards as set out in PPG13 for urban areas. Without urban maximum parking standards there is a very real risk that there will be significant negative effects on other areas of transport policy.

Recommendation 2

Rural areas benefit from the guidance provided by PPG13, however these authorities specifically require a greater deal of flexibility to meet their local needs with regard to higher levels of car dependency and the reduced availability of public transport.

- 5.9 Maximum parking standards have been shown by many pieces of research, based on case studies from within the UK and Europe to be a key part of a local authorities demand management toolkit.
- 5.10 National maximum parking standards and guidance, as set out in PPG 13, have provided local authorities with a strong framework within which they can base their development control decisions. It has provided them with the necessary support to seek and obtain comprehensive transport assessments and travel plans from new developments. These plans can be secured through the planning process and provide significant incentives to travel to the development site using sustainable travel modes.
- 5.11 Overall, it can be concluded that without the support provided by the standards and guidance within PPG13 it will be very difficult for local authorities to resist developer pressure and could indeed lead to many authorities adopting less restrictive parking policies than they currently have.
- 5.12 If this were to happen it would lead to an increase in car based commuting to these and other development sites. It would make it very difficult to secure travel plans through the planning process, and it is likely to have negative impacts in terms of addressing key national policy areas in terms of congestion, accessibility and air quality.
- 5.13 Our research, including evidence obtained from many different sources, has found no indication that maximum parking standards have had any effect upon inward investment or economic development. Indeed some evidence suggests that maximum parking standards will support business and the economy.
- 5.14 All of these findings question the rationale for the proposed cancellation of national maximum parking standards in the draft PPS4 as the evidence indicates that there

are not the economic reasons to adopt such a policy and that there are many sound reasons, in terms of traffic demand management, to retain the current situation as set out in PPG13. A revised approach may however be required to meet the varying needs of rural and urban areas. Consideration needs to be given to achieving the best balance between effective guidance allowing specific policy objectives to be achieved and a degree of flexibility allowing local needs to be met. Such an approach would prove to be of higher value to local authorities.

Recommendation 3

More promotion, guidance and advice is required by local authorities to enable them to secure robust travel plans which can minimise the negative effects of maximum parking standards and deliver significant positive transport benefits by encouraging modal shift to more sustainable transport modes.

- 5.15 Our survey, of admittedly a small sample of local authorities, highlighted a large variance in the interpretation and application of maximum parking standards.
- 5.16 Our interpretation of this is that this is due to the different professions and disciplines at work within and between local authorities; as well as the different needs of rural and urban areas.
- 5.17 Our survey found that the development control officers in local authorities, those who enact the planning policy are sometimes unaware of the rationale behind maximum parking standards.
- 5.18 It seems to us that current government guidance in respect of PPG13 and travel plans has been largely taken up by land use planning policy professionals and transport planners. However, none of this appears to have been targeted at the development control professional.
- 5.19 This means that sometimes there is a lack of understanding and communication regarding the need for maximum parking standards, travel plans and other measures which should be secured through the planning system.
- 5.20 This leads to the potential for bad planning decisions to be made.
- 5.21 In view of this, and because of the clear links to other areas of government transport policy, we consider that it would be useful to undertake promotional activities and provide more advice and guidance to local authorities to help them make better planning decisions, particularly targeting the development control professionals who may not be aware of the full transport context in which they are expected to make planning decisions.

6. Appendices

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