

Methods of Determining Parking Provision in New Developments

Research commissioned by the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, completed 1999.

Tim Pharoah

Summary of conclusions

- 1 Parking provision in new developments should be an output of an integrated process of land use, transport and accessibility planning.
- 2 Maximum levels of non-operational parking provision set at the national level will ensure consistency between areas at the regional and local level.
- 3 Locally determined maximum levels of parking provision for individual types of development can be set at the local (and regional) level within the prescribed national maximum level.
- 4 Substantially reduced levels of parking associated with new developments (compared to typical levels provided) will be needed to have any significant impact on travel choice other than the car.
- 5 Reductions in parking can be related to accessibility by non-car means. Accessibility of particular sites, or whole areas can be assessed using GIS-based accessibility measures.
- 6 The potential for access by non-car modes does not necessarily equate with actual mode choice. Fiscal and other measures will be needed in addition to infrastructure measures to achieve the desired travel outcomes.
- 7 To discourage migration of development to areas offering less choice of access mode, variations in parking maxima between areas and authorities should be confined to a relatively narrow range.
- 8 Negotiating practice in development control would need to be radically changed, whereby local authorities negotiate non-operational parking with the developer upwards from the operational requirement, but not exceeding the specified maximum (for non-residential development).
- 9 Developers could be required to show how users will access their schemes (an access profile, part of a Transport Assessment in major schemes) and to demonstrate how basic accessibility and location criteria are to be met. This requirement could be waived for smaller developments of, say, less than 500 square metres of gross

floor area.

- 10 Accessibility of particular sites, or whole areas can be assessed using GIS-based accessibility measures. These can assess the relative accessibility by car and non-car modes, and be weighted according to population.
- 11 Planning guidance could emphasise the benefits of shared and public parking in meeting the parking demand resulting from non-residential developments, especially in town and city centres.
- 12 Planning guidance could emphasise the benefits of a case-by-case assessment of residential developments to achieve parking provision that is sensitive to location and housing type.
- 13 Developer contributions could be related to securing adequate accessibility in line with local development and transport plans, rather than simply in lieu of parking provision. These could be based on one or more of the following: the development accessibility profile, accessibility of the site or area, specific schemes designed to facilitate this accessibility, and standard rates for wider packages of schemes specified in Local Transport Plans, including public transport Quality Partnerships and Contracts.
- 14 The potential for major upgrading of public transport and other non-car transport to bring into use sites that are currently less accessible should be the subject of further consideration. This includes planned extensions to current large-scale car-based developments such as regional out-of-town shopping centres.
- 15 In view of the pressure for consistency of approach, close monitoring will be required to ensure local authority compliance with policy.
- 16 Incentives for local authority compliance should be provided through the allocation of transport grants and credit approvals. Conversely non-compliance should lead to withholding of such financial assistance.
- 17 Consideration could be given to the establishment of short-term “mentor” facilities (perhaps regionally based) to kick-start expertise in delivering the new approach. Such a service should be made available to both public and private sectors.
- 18 In view of the importance of scale in determining the mode split of travel generated by non-residential developments, consideration could be given to ways of encouraging developers to alter their portfolios in favour of small scale developments to serve local catchments. These could include planning or fiscal measures.

- 19 Migration of some types of development to other countries with less restrictive parking policies is a possibility (for example footloose global commercial and industrial activities). The relevance of parking compared to other factors in such trends, and thus the risk of this happening, would need to be established through more specific research.
- 20 Some consultation responses suggested that there should be a transition period or phased implementation of lower parking provision. Both would be likely to tempt and prolong the destructive competitive behaviour which national maxima would seek to avoid.
- 21 There is evidence of considerable support for national maxima in both the public and private sectors. Most players indicate a willingness to adhere to the new rules, but only if the playing field is level.
- 22 The term “parking standards” should be replaced by “levels of parking provision”. Standards can too easily be adopted without thought; whereas what is required is objective assessment of appropriate levels, up to the prescribed maximum but as far below that as possible.
- 23 The study uncovered no distinct or robust method for objectively assessing operational parking requirements. There is therefore no case for an “operational minimum standard” of such provision, as stated in PPG13.
- 24 Separation of operational and non-operational parking would simplify negotiations between local authorities and developers on overall levels of provision.