

## **CABINET – 19 JULY 2011**

### **Car Parking Standards for New Residential Developments Responses to Public Consultation**

#### **Report by Head of Highways and Transport**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Council's current car parking standards are being revised because of the perception of council members and the public that insufficient parking is being provided in new residential developments. In November 2010 Cabinet approved draft revised car parking standards for public consultation. The responses to a questionnaire are in Annex 1 to this report; detailed comments are in Annex 2; and a revised document which members are recommended to adopt as policy is in Annex 3.
2. The revised standards are based on local research jointly commissioned by the county and district councils. It showed that the need to provide car parking spaces for new housing was lower in Oxford and the urban areas in Cherwell than the rest of the county. The revised standards require different levels of parking according to housing size and location.
3. The purpose of the County Council setting car parking standards is to provide consistent advice to district councils and developers. The standards will inform the shaping of new residential developments through the consultation process of planning applications.
4. The general thrust of Government guidance is that car parking should be restricted as part of the overall initiative to reduce private vehicle mileage to minimise greenhouse gases. It does not want to influence car ownership but to encourage the use of alternative means of transport. Research shows that restricting car parking spaces in residential areas does not affect car ownership: but insufficient spaces can lead to indiscriminate parking that has a detrimental impact on the appearance, functioning and safety of an area.

#### **Exempt Information**

5. The content of the report does not contain any confidential information.

#### **Consultation Process and Results**

6. The public consultation was launched on the Council's website in March 2010 and letters were sent to district and parish councils, MPs and industry practitioners. 33 responses were received. Annex 1 shows that in response to nine specific questions there was generally positive endorsement of the content and approach of the policy. Some respondents made detailed comments and those from people and organisations outside the Council are

summarised in Annex 2. There have been discussions with officers from within the Council and their views have been taken into account in revising the parking standards.

7. The main areas of concern were
  - The document is too long
  - Tables A1, B1 and C1, which show how the car parking requirements are calculated, are too complex and lack clarity
  - The standards are too restrictive - there is insufficient parking particularly in rural areas where there are limited or no alternatives to travel by car
  - There is not enough emphasis on alternative modes of travel to the private car, the implications for urban design, or how to treat houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
  
8. All of the comments have been carefully considered and changes proposed to the document (see Annex 2). Much of the background information in the report has been omitted as it was included to explain and justify the approach. The tables have been clarified; the section on alternatives to the car expanded and made more prominent; and references to good urban design and HMOs included. The document makes it clear that the parking standards are a guide that can be treated flexibly (for either more or fewer spaces) if justified by such factors as the location of development, proximity to frequent public transport, urban design issues, who it is for (e.g. students) and parking controls in the surrounding area.

### **Equality and Inclusion**

9. The content and application of the parking standards which is set out in the policy document has been screened with respect of all aspects of equality and inclusion. It does not favour or discriminate any group based on age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, social inclusion, or sexual orientation.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

10. There is no financial nor staff implication which results from this document.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

11. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - (a) **adopt the parking standards for new residential developments as set out in Annex 3 to this report;**
  - (b) **agree that the Deputy Director Highways and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport can make editorial changes prior to publishing, and keep the document up to date in response to other policy changes.**

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