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**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**

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# **Bath & North East Somerset Car Parking Standards**

**December 2015**

## Introduction

The purpose of this review is to describe a new approach to the setting of parking standards for development in Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES), as required by emerging planning and transport policy.

The review is structured as follows:

- Relevant national and local policy.
- Current best practice.
- Bath city centre zone: residential and non-residential.
- Bath outer zone: residential and non-residential.
- B&NES outside Bath: residential and non-residential.
- Summary and recommendations.

## Relevant National and Local Policy

Existing government policy on the setting of local parking standards is given in the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 39 as follows:

*“If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:*

- *the accessibility of the development;*
- *the type, mix and use of development;*
- *the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- *local car ownership levels; and*
- *an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.”*

Further to the NPPF being adopted, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a statement on 26 March 2015 regarding the setting of local parking standards, to be read alongside the NPPF. This states that:

*“Local planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network.”*

In light of this, B&NES have needed to consider whether a clear and compelling justification exists for introducing parking standards to any areas which lie within the authority. Given the levels of traffic congestion and associated poor air quality currently present in Bath, combined with its designation as a World Heritage Site, B&NES believes that there is a clear case for imposing parking standards in Bath, including the new Enterprise Area. The use of parking standards within Bath is a critical demand management tool that will enable the local authority to manage the local road network.

The NPPF replaced earlier advice given in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) note 13 which set out national maximum parking standards for a range of major developments above relevant size thresholds, excluding residential uses.

The current B&NES Local Plan (2007) sets out the maximum standards for car parking required for new development proposals, designed to accord with the previous national planning policy set out in PPG13. These standards therefore need to be updated, to accord with current government policy, and best practice being adopted by other local authorities. However, the following demonstrates an approach which builds on the existing Local Plan policy where possible. The current adopted Local Plan policy is attached as Appendix 1.

The new standards have been developed for inclusion within the B&NES Placemaking Plan. For residential development, the Placemaking Plan approach is to introduce minimum parking standards throughout the authority with the exception of the Bath city centre zone, where there is a need to restrict parking in accordance with the Bath Transport Strategy (BTS), adopted 2014.

For non-residential development, the Placemaking Plan approach is to establish locationally differentiated parking standards, with maximum standards for employment uses, and stricter standards for city centre locations, in accordance with the BTS.

### **Current Best Practice**

Many local authorities have adopted an approach to setting parking standards for new development. One such example of best practice is provided by Wiltshire Council, which is summarised as follows:

- Private non-residential: maximum standards, reduced by assessment of (i) local circumstances and (ii) relative accessibility by sustainable means. (ii) is a two stage process, with 10% discount on the max standards for town centre locations; and up to a further 25% discount for development in 'very highly accessible' locations.
- Wiltshire's Car Parking Strategy gives maximum parking standards for all development types (except residential), and the assessment format for accessibility, which demonstrates weighting in favour of those locations most accessible by public transport (particularly bus).
- Residential: minimum parking standards are given for residential developments in line with best practice, with a Transport Assessment required to justify any reduction in parking provision below these. Wiltshire's approach has been informed by, and is generally consistent with, the methodology given in the DCLG's Residential Car Parking Research. The minimum standards are one space per one bed

dwelling; two spaces per two/three bed dwellings; three spaces per four+ bed dwellings; 0.2 space per visitor. Garages are generally excluded from these calculations.

The use of accessibility levels, as a basis for the discounting of maximum parking standards for non-residential development, is now an established policy among many local authorities. The adoption by B&NES of a similar approach where appropriate is therefore consistent with best practice.

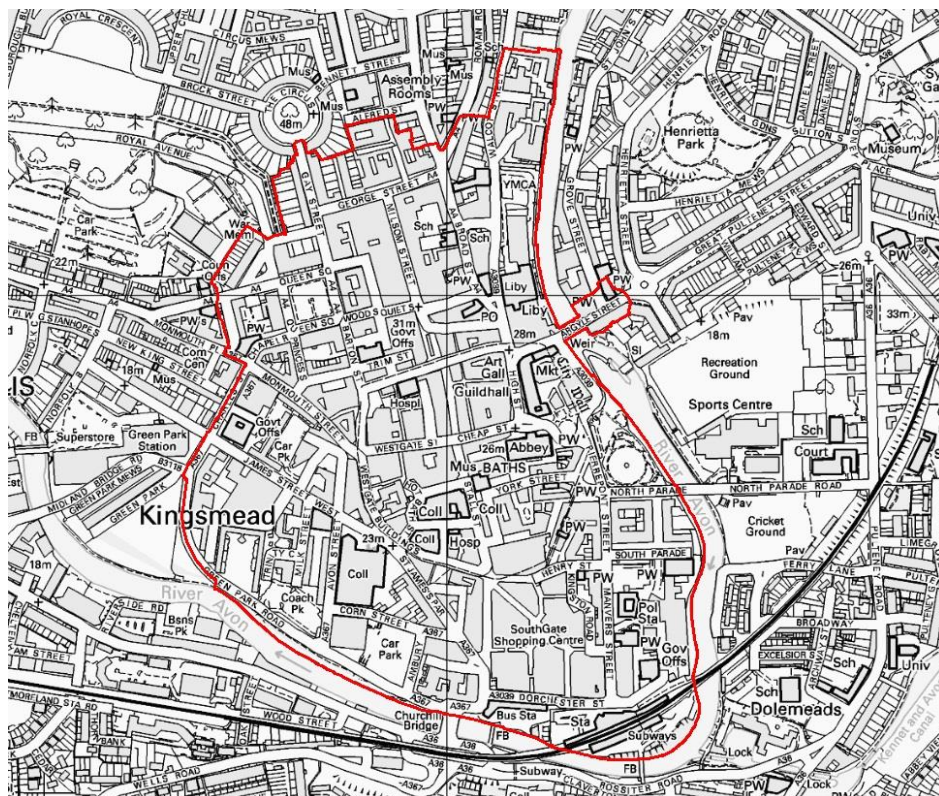
## Bath City Centre Zone

### *Residential*

For all residential development of any size in the Bath city centre zone, the parking standard should be 0.5 spaces per dwelling. This standard is based on Census 2011 car ownership data, which indicates that car ownership levels for those living in central Bath is 0.5 cars per dwelling on average. This reflects the fact that any residential development in this zone is within easy reach of key services/facilities, and is in the most accessible location within the B&NES Council area, benefitting from a range of travel options.

The city centre zone is given in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Bath City Centre Zone



Such an approach is consistent with current transport and planning policy which seeks to direct development to the most sustainable locations, and which aims to protect the environment of the City of Bath World Heritage Site. There is clear and compelling justification for introducing a prescribed parking standard for Bath because:

- Parking standards will effectively manage traffic generated by new developments to minimise the impact of traffic on the network including:
  - Poor air quality.
  - Congestion levels.

This approach is supported by the recently adopted Bath Transport Strategy which states that: *“additional parking in the core of the city is not really an option because space is scarce and more traffic would be undesirable.”*

This approach would also be consistent with adopted Local Plan policy (Appendix 1) which notes at D12.4 that: *“The Council may welcome “car-free” developments in which no or very little provision is made for the private car and residents make a conscious decision to live without one. In many instances where development includes the use of existing buildings or is in a sensitive location, it may be impossible, or undesirable to provide off-street parking.”*

The zero provision approach is however exclusive of any operational requirements, such as service/maintenance and possible provision of accessible parking specifically for Blue Badge Holders.

### ***Non Residential***

With the exception of B1 use, the parking standard should be zero provision within the Bath city centre zone, for non-residential development types of any size. This is because non-residential development in this zone is in the most accessible location within the B&NES Council area, benefitting from a range of travel options. This approach seeks to strike a balance between allowing proportionate and complementary parking provision in new developments whilst at the same time not discouraging businesses from locating or expanding in Bath.

As noted above, such an approach is therefore consistent with current transport and planning policy which seeks to direct development to the most sustainable locations, and which aims to protect the environment of the City of Bath World Heritage Site. It would also be consistent with adopted Local Plan policy.

The zero provision approach is however exclusive of any operational requirements such as service/maintenance/loading, and possible provision of accessible parking specifically for Blue Badge Holders.



## Bath Outer Zone

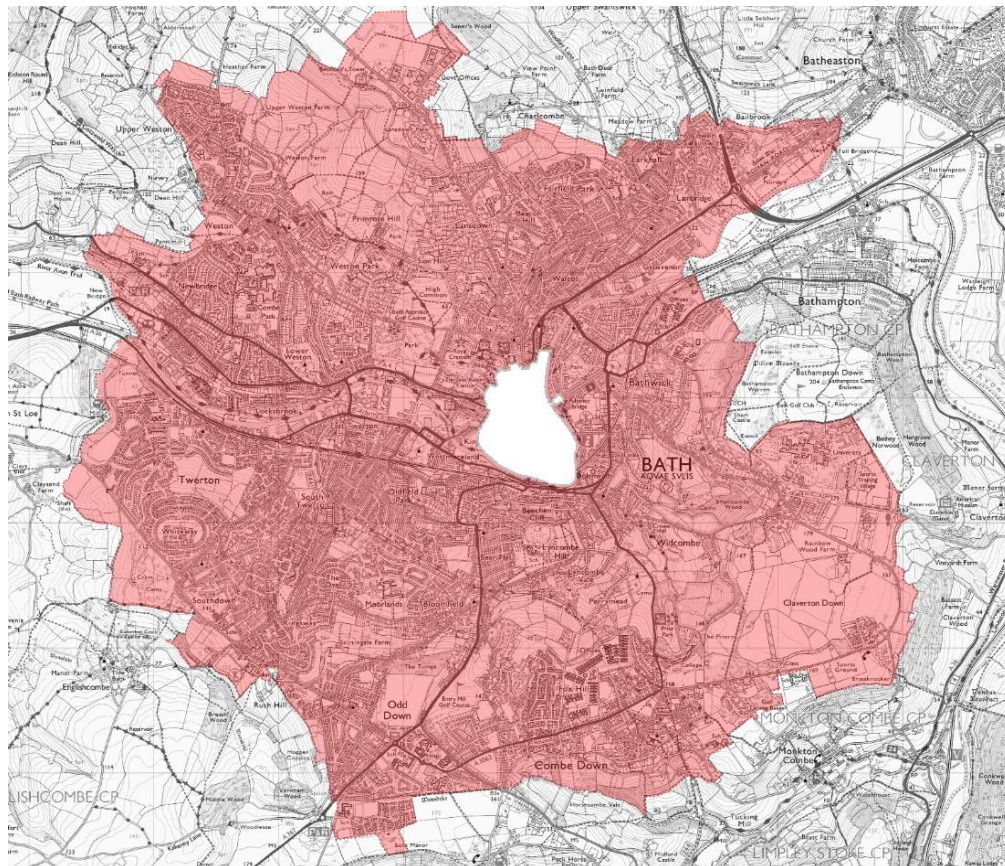
### *Residential*

Outside the city centre zone, but within the Bath outer zone, a best practice approach should be applied as follows:

- A minimum of one space per one bed dwelling.
- A minimum of two spaces per two-three bed dwelling.
- A minimum of three spaces per four+ bed dwelling.
- A minimum 0.2 space per visitor.
- Garages are included within the prescribed minimum standard provided they have minimum internal dimensions of 6m by 3m.

The Bath outer zone is given in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Bath outer zone



The above approach for development in the City Centre Zone should be pursued unless any reduction is justified by an accessibility assessment (detailed below) and car parking management strategy.

B&NES has previously advised developers (for example at the ex-Ministry of Defence Foxhill and Warminster Road sites) that this approach should be

adopted for residential sites. This new proposal is therefore consistent with the earlier advice.

In the case of student accommodation, zero parking provision will be made in all locations, exclusive of any visitor and operational requirements.

### ***Non Residential***

Outside the Bath city centre zone, but within the Bath outer zone a set of maximum parking standards should be introduced. The approach to non-residential parking based on maximum standards, is consistent with previous policy

### **Accessibility Assessments**

The use of accessibility levels as a basis for the departure from specific parking standards is now an established policy among many local authorities. In light of this, those parking standards specified for Bath, both for the City Centre and Outer Zones can be subject to an accessibility assessment which will be the responsibility of the applicant.

The following approach should be applied:

- The accessibility assessment should be based on review of (i) local circumstances; and (ii) relative accessibility by sustainable means.
- The review of relative accessibility by sustainable means (i.e. ii above) is a two stage process, with 10% discount on the maximum standards for town centre locations, and up to a further 25% discount for development in 'very highly accessible' locations.

The approach to discounting maximum parking standards follows Wiltshire's approach, and is given at Appendix 2, while the accessibility questionnaire is given in Appendix 3. B&NES will seek to develop a suitable format for the accessibility assessment following the adoption of any new parking standards.

### **B&NES Outside Bath**

#### ***Residential***

For residential development outside the City of Bath, a best practice approach should be applied as follows:

- A minimum of one space per one bed dwelling.
- A minimum of two spaces per two-three bed dwelling.
- A minimum of three spaces per four+ bed dwelling.
- A minimum 0.2 space per visitor.
- Garages are included within the prescribed minimum standard provided they have minimum internal dimensions of 6m by 3m.

The above approach, based on minimum standards, should be pursued unless any reduction is justified by an accessibility assessment and car parking management strategy.

### ***Non Residential***

For non-residential developments outside the City of Bath, parking requirements should be determined on an individual basis (i.e. case by case).

This approach reflects the position that B&NES are best placed to take account of local circumstances and are able to make the right decisions for the benefit of their communities, as opposed to these being dictated through national guidance and policy.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

- A new approach to setting parking standards for development is described, taking account of local and national transport policy, and designed to inform the emerging Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan.
- Best practice examples, from local authorities including Wiltshire Council, have been used to inform the B&NES approach. The use of accessibility assessments to discount maximum standards for non-residential development is an established policy among local authorities.
- **Bath city centre zone: residential.** The parking standard should be 0.5 spaces per dwelling unless any departure is justified by an accessibility assessment, exclusive of operational requirements. This standard is based on Census 2011 car ownership data, reflecting that any residential development in this zone is within easy reach of key services/facilities, and is in the most accessible location within the B&NES Council area, benefitting from a range of travel options.
- **Bath city centre zone: non-residential.** With the exception of B1 use the parking standard should be zero provision unless any departure is justified by an accessibility assessment, exclusive of operational requirements. This is on the basis that central Bath is the most accessible location in B&NES, and is consistent with transport and planning policy including adopted Local Plan policy which encourages car free developments
- **Bath outer zone: residential.** Minimum standards should be applied, unless any departure is justified by an accessibility assessment and parking management strategy. This is based on relevant policy and best practice. The expectation is that a minimum of one space per one bed dwelling should be provided, with further variation according to dwelling size.



- **Bath outer zone: non-residential.** Maximum standards should be applied, unless any departure is justified by an accessibility assessment. Again this is based on relevant policy and best practice. New maximum standards have been defined, together with a detailed approach to reviewing accessibility, based on the format adopted by Wiltshire Council.
- **B&NES outside Bath: residential.** Minimum standards should be applied, unless any departure is justified by an accessibility assessment and parking management strategy. This is based on relevant policy and best practice. The expectation is that a minimum of one space per one bed dwelling should be provided, with further variation according to dwelling size.
- **B&NES outside Bath: non-residential.** In accordance with the recent DCLG statement, no parking standards should be applied, and each development is assessed based on the DCLG guidance on a case by case basis.

## **Appendix 1: Extract from B&NES Local Plan (Adopted 2007) - Parking Standards**

D12.3 The PPG13 Transport sets out national maximum parking standards for large developments but makes it clear that these will not be appropriate in many locations. The Council will use the criteria in Policy T.26 to determine an appropriate level of provision, taking account of any Transport Assessment submitted in line with Policy T.25. Development at locations which have good accessibility by non-car modes or where there is adequate public off-street or shared parking available will be expected to provide less than the permitted maximum level of parking. The Council will expect that applicants for development with significant transport implications should show (where appropriate in a Transport Assessment) the measures they are taking to minimise the need for parking. The standards set out in the schedules to Policy T.26 should therefore be regarded as only the starting point in determining what would be acceptable provision in any specific location.

D12.4 The use of the criteria in Policy T.26 to determine parking provision will mean that for many uses very little off-street parking will be permitted within and close to the centres of Bath, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock. The Council may welcome “car-free” developments in which no or very little provision is made for the private car and residents make a conscious decision to live without one. In many instances where development includes the use of existing buildings or is in a sensitive location, it may be impossible, or undesirable to provide off-street parking. It is however recognised that the availability of secure offstreet parking can encourage residents to leave the car at home and use public transport.

D12.5 The Council proposes to provide clearer guidance to developers by defining accessibility zones within which different parking standards will apply. This will be possible when a methodology can be devised which is sufficiently sensitive to the differing circumstances and characteristics of individual sites and locations and yet is not too complex to preclude its practical application in development control. Such refinement of the Council's parking standards will be introduced by way of Supplementary Planning Document or future revisions of this Plan.

D12.6 The car parking standards in Policy T.26 will be applied as maximum standards unless the applicant can satisfactorily demonstrate (when 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 to minimise the need for parking. Conversely developers will not be required to provide more offstreet parking than they themselves wish unless the likely increase in onstreet parking would have irresolvable implications for road safety or seriously detract from the amenities of local residents.

D12.7 When the environmental capacity of a site is being evaluated (clause iii. of Policy T.26) account should be taken of the potential to provide underground or underbuilding parking.

*POLICY T.26*

Development will only be permitted if an appropriate level of on-site servicing and parking is provided having regard to:

- i. the maximum parking standards and the suggested provision for drivers with disabilities and cycle parking set out in the schedules attached to this policy and any additional standards which may be adopted by the Council;
- ii. the proposed use, any need for on-site provision to ensure its efficient operation, and the likely extent of movement to and from the site;
- iii. the environmental capacity of both the site and its surroundings to accept parking;
- iv. the capacity of the local highway network and the need to control any increase in traffic levels;
- v. the need to ensure highway safety;
- vi. the accessibility of the site by public transport, including Park and Ride;
- vii. the ease of access by cycle or on foot;
- viii. the availability of public car parking in the vicinity of the site;
- ix. the provisions of any travel plan which may be submitted by or on behalf of the proposed occupier of the premises.

**Appendix 2: Discounting Maximum Parking Standards (based on Wiltshire Council Car Parking Strategy)**



### Appendix 3: Accessibility Questionnaire (based on Wiltshire Council Car Parking Strategy)

Mode	Criteria	Variation	Possible score	Actual score
Walking	Quality of pedestrian facilities	<b>Good:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footways of at least 1.5m wide</li> <li>Choice of pedestrian access points to the site in at least three directions. (60° apart)</li> <li>Pedestrian routes are well maintained, well lit and designated for disabled access.</li> </ul>	3	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Moderate:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footways present at a min width of 1m</li> <li>Choice of pedestrian access points to the site in at least two direction (90° apart)</li> <li>Pedestrian routes are maintained to a reasonable standard, with some street lighting and some disabled facilities</li> </ul>	2	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Poor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No footways adjacent to the site</li> <li>Pedestrians use an access where vehicles have priority</li> <li>Access from only one point</li> <li>No street lighting or disabled facilities</li> </ul>	0	<input type="text"/>
Cycling	Quality of cycling facilities	<b>Good:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choice of cycle parking types</li> <li>Good choice of safe access routes for cyclists</li> <li>Design and maintenance of surrounding area sympathetic to cyclists</li> </ul>	3	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Moderate:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycle parking above standard</li> <li>On-road facilities and surfaces adequate quality for cyclists</li> <li>Some choice of safe access routes for cyclists</li> </ul>	2	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Poor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling parking to standard</li> <li>Poor on-road cycle facilities and surfaces</li> <li>Limited choice of safe access routes for cyclists</li> </ul>	0	<input type="text"/>



Mode	Criteria	Variation	Possible score	Actual score
Bus	Walking distance to nearest bus stop	Less than 100m	3	<input type="text"/>
		Less than 400m	2	<input type="text"/>
		More than 400m	0	<input type="text"/>
	Frequency of principle bus service at nearest bus stop (if within 800m)	15 mins or less	4	<input type="text"/>
		30 mins or less	2	<input type="text"/>
		60 mins or less	1	<input type="text"/>
		Over 60 mins	0	<input type="text"/>
	Distance to nearest bus station/ major interchange (5 or more routes)	Less than 200m	5	<input type="text"/>
		Less than 400m	3	<input type="text"/>
		Less than 800m	2	<input type="text"/>
		More than 800m	0	<input type="text"/>
	Number of bus services with at least (60min weekday frequency) stopping within 400m of site	6 or more	5	<input type="text"/>
		2 to 5	3	<input type="text"/>
		1	1	<input type="text"/>
		0	0	<input type="text"/>
	Quality of nearest bus stop (if within 800m walking distance)	<b>Good:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelter, seating and flag</li> <li>Timetables and Real-time information</li> <li>Raised curbs and adequate footway width</li> <li>Well lit, CCTV and overlooked buildings</li> </ul>	2	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Moderate:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelter and flag</li> <li>Timetable information</li> <li>Adequate footway width/no raised curb</li> <li>Adequate lighting</li> </ul>	1	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Poor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marked only by pole and flag</li> <li>Little or no timetable information</li> <li>Little or no street lighting</li> <li>Narrow footway</li> </ul>	0	<input type="text"/>

Mode	Criteria	Variation	Possible score	Actual score
Trains	Walking distance to nearest railway station	Less than 400m	5	<input type="text"/>
		Less than 800m	3	<input type="text"/>
		Less than 1,200m	2	<input type="text"/>
		More than 1,200m	0	<input type="text"/>
	Trains per hour per direction from nearest station (if within 1,200m walking distance)	5 or more	4	<input type="text"/>
		3 to 4	2	<input type="text"/>
		1 to 2	1	<input type="text"/>
		Less than 1	0	<input type="text"/>
	Quality of the nearest railway station (if within 1,200 of the site)	<b>Good:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heated and enclosed waiting facilities</li> <li>• Toilets</li> <li>• Timetable and real-time information</li> <li>• More than one line served by station</li> <li>• Ticket office and machines</li> <li>• Staffed for majority of the day</li> <li>• CCTV and other security measures</li> <li>• A good range of retail facilities</li> <li>• Fully accessible with lifts and ramps</li> <li>• Bus and taxi interchange within close proximity</li> </ul>	2	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Moderate:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiting facilities – part enclosed</li> <li>• Toilets</li> <li>• Timetables and real time information</li> <li>• Ability to purchase tickets</li> <li>• Part-time staffing</li> <li>• CCTV and other security measures</li> <li>• Some retail facilities</li> <li>• Some disabled accessibility</li> <li>• Taxi rank only</li> </ul>	1	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Poor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor waiting facilities – not enclosed</li> <li>• No toilets</li> <li>• Timetables only</li> <li>• Not staffed</li> <li>• No security measures</li> <li>• No retail facilities</li> <li>• No disabled accessibility</li> <li>• No taxi rank</li> </ul>	0	<input type="text"/>