

## Mark Edgerley

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**From:** James Firth  
**Sent:** 09 February 2010 15:06  
**To:** Mark Edgerley  
**Subject:** FW: Residential parking standards

**From:** Paul Hersey [mailto:Paul.Hersey@goeast.gsi.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 09 December 2009 16:11  
**To:** Keith Lawson Head of Development Management  
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**Subject:** Re: Residential parking standards

Dear Keith  
Cc Heads of planning

Apologies for the delay in getting back to you on this. As you are aware I was on annual leave for a number of weeks and have since also sought to get further clarification from colleagues on the matter. I have copied in heads of planning so they are aware of our interpretation of national policy.

### Government policy on parking standards

You will be aware the Government's intention, through PPG13, as part of a package of planning and transport measures is to promote sustainable travel choices, and para 49 states that reducing the amount of parking in new developments (and in the expansion and change of use in existing development) is essential. It states that policies in development plans should set maximum levels of parking for broad classes of development, and should be designed to be used as part of a package of measures to promote sustainable transport choices, reduce the land-take of development, enable schemes to fit into central urban sites, promote linked-trips and access to developments for those without use of a car and to tackle congestion. Although we recognise the need to prevent problems caused by under provision of car parking we are concerned that the use of minimum parking standards can encourage more parking than may be necessary for a development, pull against a design-led approach to integrating parking into new development and may not contribute to managing traffic demand.

Set against this, Planning Policy Statement 3 then asks Local Authorities to develop residential parking policies for their areas taking account of expected levels of car ownership, the importance of promoting good design and the need to use land efficiently. This has been deliberately devolved to local authorities so they can make the right choices for their local areas.

There is therefore some discretion to reflect local circumstances when setting parking policies. This means there may be exceptional circumstances which would justify an approach which is different to that put forward in national policy but it is up to local authorities to make this case. In particular you will need to justify why a minimum standards approach is a better method of providing the right amount of provision over an approach that sets out varying standards as maximums.

Therefore while we accept the need for local discretion to meet specific local circumstances, we still - for the reasons set out above - have some reservation about taking a minimum standards approach and particularly one which advocates such standards for an entire county area.

### **Government Office approach to commenting on SPD**

As you will be aware for a number of years resource constraints have dictated that we are no longer in the position to provide comments on SPD. This role was made clear in our letter to local authority heads of planning in December 2007.

I understand that Bob White has already met with colleagues at CLG and DfT to discuss this issue in relation to Kent and they have written to him to clarify the issue. Colleagues at GOSE will be in contact with Mr White separately to reiterate their position.

### **Going forward**

Unfortunately we are not in a position to dedicate any additional staff resource to this matter and as such are unable to accept your invitation for a meeting.

You have, of course, already adopted the Essex-wide SPD and respective local authorities are in the process of adopting some or all aspects of it for their own use.

However, while we have reservations about this approach it is ultimately for each individual LPA to take a view, based on evidence, about whether such an approach is appropriate to their own local circumstances.

I trust this is of assistance.

Kind regards,

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>>> "Keith Lawson Head of Development Management" <Keith.Lawson@essex.gov.uk>  
28/10/2009 11:59:16 >>>  
[Paul,](#)

[I have been copied in to your response to Karen Syrett at Colchester regarding the County's new Parking Standards and Good Practice Guide produced in partnership with the Essex Planning Officers Association which they have adopted. There is massive dissatisfaction with residential parking on new estates in Essex](#)

both from residents and local Members. The situation has reached such a position that addressing this problem is not an option. We are having bus services withdrawn from estates due to on street parking issues. We are not alone with this, Bob White in Kent has similar experience and is currently engaged with his government office and others in trying to bring some common sense to bear. My colleagues in Hertfordshire likewise have just the same problems.

You will see from our new guide that we have sought to address these issues in a pragmatic way having identified a number of contributing factors that have brought this sorry state about. The lack of enough well designed and located resident and visitor parking is the nub of the matter and rather than just give a parking standard we have sought to give best practice advice on location and other design factors. This work was supported by our urban design team.

Our evidence was collected by the working group visiting many sites across Essex and residents surveys, in line with the PPS3 approach, which I am happy to share with you. The resulting guide has received support from all quarters the problems being so obvious.

As this debate on residential parking is very much in the front line of planning document formulation in Essex I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this with you, possibly together with Bob White and your colleagues responsible for his area. It will not best serve our future residents who will have to live with these problems if we do not find a way through. Nor will it best serve them if we have this debate at some EiP in the future.

On a final note it was interesting that we received no response to our public consultation on the Essex Guide either from yourselves or DfT.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards, Keith.

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