

From: Clerk <Clerk@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 November 2022 16:19
To: Strategic Transport
Subject: Sandy Town Council response to CBC Consultation on Draft Parking standards for New Developments.

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Dear Sirs

Please see below the comments from Sandy Town Council regarding the Parking Standards for New Development.

Introduction

This consultation was discussed by Council Members on 21st November 2022 at their Community Services and Environment Committee. The response below is our official position on these issues.

We broadly welcome this document as it goes some way to recognise the existing problems and new measures that can be undertaken to reduce further impacts. The draft policy also seeks to avoid the issues that can face residents in some current developments.

We have restricted our comments to residential properties as we believe this is the more critical issue for our community.

Comments relating to specific sections of the draft strategy

Section 3: we welcome the new and improved provisions for storing and securing cycles.

Section 4.3.1: We welcome the recognition of issues faced by motorists in this section. We are particularly keen to see the removal of so called "shared spaces" as this is confusing for pedestrians and motorists alike. The move back to clearly marked areas for pedestrians and parking bays is welcomed.

Section 4.4: parking layouts. We agree that careful consideration needs to be given here. Small areas at the front of properties will only encourage more on-street parking.

Section 4.4.1: We are pleased to note that single garages will no longer be considered parking spaces. Current planning allows for garages to be converted under building regs into residential and other uses and therefore their long term availability for parking is not guaranteed.

Section 4.4.2: we agree that the use of rear courts should be avoided.

Sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4: access for bins and cycles. We feel that it is important that these considerations are included. Not only its affect on parking but the street environment is not enhanced with bins permanently at the front of properties.

Section 4.4.6: EV Charging points. We welcome this proposal. This Council has limited options to provide sites for residential uses to charge vehicles and therefore it is important for new developments to include these.

Section 4.4.7: We welcome these new dimensions for parking areas.


Section 4.5.2: We welcome the provision of one space per bedroom for 1 and 3 bed houses. However, we do not agree with the policy regarding 3rd, 4th and 5th bedroom properties. To leave it to the developer to provide green/garden space for a future resident to change to parking is not the way forward for several reasons. The resident may not wish to pay for the areas to be paved and instead use the road. We would not wish to see valuable green/garden areas removed in favour of more hard standing. This is not the environmentally friendly approach we wish to have in our community. The policy states that this can only be used on private dwellings, however, housing associations do buy residential houses and unless there is a covenant covering this type of purchase then this policy is unenforceable.

Section 4.9: We are concerned regarding the 1 mile radius of schools, shops etc that would permit non-car developments to be permitted in town centres, especially in areas where parking cannot be met. This is unrealistic and will cause issues in already compact town areas with parking for residents. Whilst walking to shops and schools may be possible, this does not apply to employment opportunities which it is acknowledged that most residents travel around and out of the Central Bedfordshire area. We can not rely on public transport ie buses as the recent changes and cancellations of services by Stagecoach have demonstrated. Residents who need to travel to Biggleswade to take advantage of the employment opportunities there with the new distribution and retail sites now have no option but to use cars as the bus service to leave Biggleswade does not operate past 16.37 – far too early for workers to get home. There is also no service on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Section 4.6 and Appendix 15: relaxed parking standards. We do not support this proposal for Sandy. We are particularly concerned about this proposal to measure 500-meter radius from a railway station and allow vastly reduced parking provision, this measurement is far too big and would have an impact on residents who live close to stations which already face parking issues with commuters and holiday travellers using streets rather than pay for parking at the station. This situation would only be exacerbated by this policy. We also believe that this radius measurement should not exist in any form. The assumption that residents and visitors alike will use the train service and therefore negate the need for personal vehicles is flawed. We do not have a railway system that goes East/West only North/South and therefore severely restricts travel to most destinations in the UK, including local areas of employment of Bedford and Cambridge. Whilst there are plans for an East/West rail link the route for this has not been determined and its junction with the current railway is likely to be in another county.

22nd November 2022

Kind Regards


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Sandy Town Council

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