

### **Policy Approach for Regional Parking Standards**

- The Regional Parking Standards, set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, provide the framework for the identification at a local level of appropriate parking provision for new developments.
- The current parking standards have remained unchanged since the publication of RPG13 in 2003 and an undertaking was given to review them within 5 years.
- Consequently the North West Regional Assembly, as part of the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy is proposing a revised set of standards, with the consultants report providing the evidence base upon which the proposed regional parking standards will be based.
- An overwhelming proportion of responses accepted that adopting Option 1 and retaining the Regional Parking Standards as set out in draft RSS would fail to meet the requirement of RPG13, which states that the standards should be reviewed every five years.
- The outcome from the Options Consultations and associated workshop was in support of Option 2:

*“Adopt the revised standards set out in the consultants report”*

### **Recommendations from Sustainability Appraisal**

1) The language used in the table related to discouraging certain types of development could possibly be toned down so that it is not so exclusionary. In particular, employment should not be discouraged in locations not accessible by public transport if it can be demonstrated that parking spaces won't be needed since most employees reside nearby.

2) The standards could give higher priority to cycling spaces to reflect the importance of active transport in the NW. In particular, the standards for spaces for cycles could be more ambitious for A1-A4, B1-B8 developments.

3) Whilst increasing the provision of public transport should encourage people to use alternatives to the car it is important that the cost of these services supports this approach. We recommend that where possible economic analysis is undertaken to ensure that alternatives to the car are financially viable.

### **Supporting text**

- In March 2007, the North West Regional Assembly commissioned the consultants Mouchel to undertake a review of the North West Regional Parking Standards.
- A significant number of respondents felt that retaining the existing standards (Option 1) was inappropriate, as categorising parking standards on the basis of Key Service Centres and Regional Centres is too rigid and doesn't take into account the local variations in accessibility across a diverse region.
- Respondents accepted that there is a requirement to review and update the standards to ensure that they are in line with current transport policy and planning requirements at national, regional and local level.
- It was accepted that the standards provided a positive way forward in allowing local authorities to tailor the precise standards to meet their local needs as well as linking parking provision to accessibility, which was viewed as a more sophisticated tool that is more adaptable in achieving the aims for which maximum parking standards are intended.
- A number of concerns and issues were raised by the stakeholders regarding the adoption of the new standards as outlined below:

1. The revised standards were prepared in line with draft RSS but in advance of the Panel Report (following the Examination in Public) and the Government's proposed changes. In light of these changes the links between key RSS policies and the new parking standards need to be reviewed, in particular how they will operate as part of the regional spatial framework given the removal of a settlement hierarchy.
2. It was proposed that there may be a case for applying a scale threshold to the use of the accessibility questionnaire, considering the ever increasing amount of information needed to assess applications.
3. The Area Accessibility Categories which have been used to identify different levels of parking provision need to be revisited as they do not fairly reflect accessibility levels.
4. The accessibility questionnaire may start to complicate the process of identifying the levels of parking provision and that there may be a perverse incentive for developers to limit the quality of pedestrian connections and cycle facilities if high quality connections would put them into a higher accessibility category that would reduce the maximum car parking permitted. It was therefore suggested that if the accessibility questionnaire is to be used to maximise accessibility then there may be a requirement to develop a specific policy to ensure that this approach is adopted.

### **Linkages with other policies in RSS**

**Policy DP1 – Spatial Principles** - In particular links to tackling climate change.

**Policy DP2 – Promote sustainable communities**

**Policy DP3 – Promote sustainable economic development**

**Policy DP5 – Manage travel demand; reduce the need to travel and increase accessibility.**

**Policy DP6 - Marry opportunity and need** - as success at achieving this will reduce the requirement for car parking.

**Policy DP7 – Promote Environmental Quality** - In particular managing traffic growth in order to mitigate the impacts of road traffic on air quality, noise and health.

**Policy DP9 – Reduce Emissions and adapt to climate change** - Focus on reducing carbon dioxide emissions from transport, in particular centring on car parking standards for residential and commercial development to reduce traffic growth.

**Policy RDF1 – Spatial Priorities** - In particular maximising the growth opportunities of Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire to reflect their role as key economic drivers in the Region, their potential for enhanced economic growth, and their capacity to handle large scale new development in a sustainable way.

**Policy W1 – Strengthening the Regional Economy** - Ensuring the safe, reliable and effective operation of the region's transport networks and infrastructure in accordance with the policies of the Regional Transport Strategy.

**Policy L4 – Regional Housing provision** - Relevant as parking standards now encompass new residential developments.

**Policy RT2 – Managing travel demand** - Parking controls considered in the effective reallocation of road space in favour of public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Linkages to other strategies**

- The revised parking standards should be seen as part of an effective demand management policy.

### **Monitoring**

- Links to Indicator 6.2 in the Regional Spatial Strategy Monitoring Report:  
*“Percentage of new non-residential development by type of development (minimum gross floor space 1,000 sq.m) complying with the regional car parking standards set out in the Regional Transport Strategy”.*

Note: this indicator is linked to the Regional Parking Standards set out in RPG13 (Option 1). It may be necessary to reconsider the indicator in line with the work being carried out as part of the Partial Review.

### **Implementation**

- Local Authorities will use the regional standards as a framework to determine local parking standards as set out in their Local Development Documents.
- 4NW transport and planning officers have met with representatives from CLG who were supportive of the approach taken in developing the standards detailed in Option 2.