

Local Plan – Parking SPD – Comment from Cycling UK Stevenage 24/11/24

The new Local Plan Policy SP1: Climate Change now includes: “b. We will require developments to prioritise active travel and public transport by providing the infrastructure necessary to maximise their use.”

There should therefore be significantly more ambition to provide the higher levels of cycle parking needed to promote modal shift from car use to active travel. This should be reflected in the number of cycle spaces required and the actual types of cycle parking infrastructure that are acceptable. All cycle parking must be convenient and accessible for all types of cycle and user.

There needs to be more detailed consideration of the needs of different users of cycle parking at each development. Residential developments will have residents themselves, visitors and deliveries. Non-residential developments will need cycle parking for employees, service users/customers and visitors/deliveries. There needs to be more clarity throughout the document to indicate where statements about “Parking” apply to cycle parking or car parking or both.

Quantity of Cycle Parking

2.11 Table 6 gives cycle parking standards that entirely match the levels given in section 7.1 of the previous SBC Parking SPD. That states, “Levels were originally set in the SBC Cycling Strategy (2018)”. These levels must be reviewed and increased in recognition of the new Local Plan SP1: Policy: Climate Change. They should be at least as high as the minimum numbers given in the LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance 11.3 Table 11-1.

Headings used throughout Table 6 under Development Type, do not match those given in either of the Car Parking standards tables in 2.1 Table 1 and 2.5 Table 3. For consistency, and ease of comparison, the cycle parking standards should be changed to match.

Both the cycle parking standards and car parking standards should be based on comparable measures – they currently are not. For example, for Development type E(e) Medical and health services, the Table 3 car parking standard is based on the number of employees and consulting rooms whereas the Table 6 cycle parking standards are based on numbers of staff.

The ratio between the car parking standard and the cycle parking standard should be considered for every development category. For example, B2 General Industry has 1 car parking space per 10 metres squared and 1 cycle parking space for 100 metres squared. This gives only 1 cycle space for 10 car parking spaces which is not in line with the aspirations to promote modal shift to active travel.

For all development types, the number of short-term cycle spaces needs to be related to the type of use: customers, visitors, service users, deliveries.

3.28 states “provision should be above the standard is strongly encouraged.” Instead of this, there should be a requirement for provision to be higher if a development in any of the Residential or Non-residential accessibility zones TC, 1, 2 or 3 as outlined in 2.4 Table 2 and 2.7 Table 4. If residents living in accessibility zones have lower car ownership levels due to better access to public transport, walkable amenities, and cycling infrastructure, the importance of cycle parking is raised. Cycling may not be chosen for a variety of local journeys beyond the town centre or local amenities which may not be convenient to walk or access by public transport.

3.32 states “units which have a private garage do not have to have any separate cycle parking”. A garage cannot be counted as a car parking space and cycle parking space(s) unless it is large enough to accommodate both car and cycle parking spaces with additional circulation space. An example of appropriate Garage dimensions can be seen in Figure L1 Appendix L: Car and cycle parking requirements of the Cambridge Local Plan <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/6890/local-plan-2018.pdf> (see p430 on pdf).

3.62 states, “Developers should also note that much of the town centre is pedestrianised and the council want to avoid cycling in the areas where it is prohibited”. This does not recognise the ongoing regeneration of the town centre to include significantly more residential properties. Improvements in permeability and cycle access to the town centre should mean that there is much better connectivity, and this statement is therefore not required.

2.11 Table 6 states that standards for cycle parking do not apply to householder development. This exclusion should not apply if additional bedroom(s) are added eg a loft conversion and/or cycle parking is removed eg a garage conversion. Cycle parking spaces meeting the standards should be provided, even if that householder does not expect to use them.

Cycle Parking specification and location

The proposed parking SPD does not include any requirements regarding the type of cycle parking beyond a general description of "secure and sheltered". General requirements are useful, but it is essential to provide additional detailed standards. For example, not all two-tier cycle stands are the same. Some two-tier cycle stands are acceptable under conditions while others are not. The right standards will provide the council with tools to help developers deliver cycle facilities that work for all users.

The original SPD states that best practice guidance should be used. The proposed SPD does not. It is important that this is included again. This reference should be to the latest version of a number of specific guidance and standards documents and the latest government guidance. This way cycle parking standards used for planning will stay up to date automatically. Examples of best practice are found in:

- A Guide to Understanding UK Cycle Parking Standards - Turvec, Supported by Sustrans
- LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design - Department for Transport
- London Cycling Design Standards - Transport for London
- Cycle Parking Guide For New Residential Developments - Cambridge City Council
- E-cycle and E-scooter Batteries: Managing Fire Risk for Premises - Department for Transport
- Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide - Hertfordshire County Council
- Residential cycle parking Improving cycle parking for people on a low income or not in employment, Sustrans
- Standards for Public Bicycle Parking - Bicycle Association, Sustrans, Secure By Design Official Police Security Initiative

Location

The original SPD mentions that cycle parking must be as close to the entrance as possible, which has been left out of the proposed SPD. This should be reinstated while adding details regarding the different requirements for long- and short-term parking. Different categories of people will need to be

considered when providing details. Under residential: residents, visitors, deliveries. Under non-residential: customers/visitors, deliveries.

Cycle parking locations should be located at a location that is strategic, accessible, convenient and secure (see LTN 1/20 11.2.3).

Cycle parking should be located near to safe cycling routes and must be safely reachable from nearby links to the cycle network without the need for detours. Access routes where needed across a development should be safe and convenient. For example: It should be made explicit that needing to cross a car park without dedicated cycling infrastructure is not acceptable as this is an unsafe environment for cyclists to have to negotiate.

More details on the proximity to the destination should be included. For example, for short stay parking the Standards for Public Bicycle Parking (chapter 4) recommends a general rule of 15 metres if it is a single destination and 25 metres for multiples sites. For longer stay parking, 50 metres is recommended. London Cycling Design Standards has adopted these recommendations (see section 8.4.1).

Cycle parking should be reachable by cycle as "Proximity of cycle parking is essential for disabled cyclists who might be unable to walk very far" (see LTN 1/20). Especially for commuters and shoppers, cycle parking should be as close to the desired destination as possible and "It is a waste of time and money putting in facilities which are inconvenient to use" (Standards for Public Bicycle Parking, chapter 4).

The HCC Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide states that long stay parking should be sheltered. There are two additional important reasons for providing shelter; when car parking is sheltered and when loading and unloading is likely to occur such as at supermarkets.

Facilities

Cycle parking design is vital. Cycle parking facilities that are not usable by potential users render the network unusable for them and whole journeys inaccessible (based on LTN 1/20 4.2.4)

A guide to understanding UK Cycle Parking Standards provides an excellent overview of best practice with reference to the relevant standards documents.

The use of double tier cycle stands should be minimized and alternatives always provided for users who are unable to use these stands and for cycles that will not fit:

- "Ideally cycles should be wheeled into the cycle parking stand. For some people, any requirement to lift the cycle will make the parking inaccessible." (Standards for Public Bicycle Parking 6.8.1)
- "Additional provision for three-wheelers, tandems, recumbents and other "non-standard" cycles should also be provided where two-tier racks are in use." (LTN 1/20 11.4.10)
- LTN 1/20 recommends a ceiling height of 2.7m for two-tier stands (11.4.11). It is very important that two tiered racks are designed to utilize this space as some suppliers promise that their double tiered racks are suitable for 2.4m ceiling heights. These stands do not work in practice, which is why the LTN 1/20 recommends a taller ceiling height.

- When double tiered racking is part of a developers' plan, it should be required to make clear what exact double tiered racking will be used. (see Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide - Chapter 6 2.1).
- While inherently not inclusive for every type of user or bike, it is possible for manufacturers to take some mitigating measures. Developers should explain how their choice of cycle stands complies with the guidance. This should include the motivation for a particular type of double tier stand. (e.g. does it have features that increase the ease of use?)

Vertical and semi-vertical cycle stands without mechanical assistance should never be used due to the lifting requirements. The Standards for Public Bicycle Parking considers them outside of their standards (6.8.3).

Inclusivity

A requirement for cycle parking to be inclusive for all types of bikes and users that is present in the original SPD (7.8) has been removed, which is a step backwards. Inclusivity should be a key element and be considered early in design processes. (see LTN 1/20 1.5.4)

"Ensuring cycle parking remains accessible to as wide a range of people as possible is a major priority for standards documents. This also has knock-on benefits in accounting for the growth of cargo bikes and Dutch-style 'Bakfiets' bikes, both of which require similarly well-spaced stands." (LTN 1/20, (11.3.2) The encouragement of a modal shift towards deliveries by cargo bike is in line with SBC aspirations to address climate change.

There are many different types of cycles and cycle parking should be able to accommodate these. - "The BA public standards dictate that as well as correct spacing, the access and manoeuvrability within cycle parking facilities should be convenient for all. This includes all cycle types – cargo bikes, tandems, tricycles, and non-standard bicycles designed for disabled users. " (A guide to understanding UK Cycle Parking Standards and how to follow them, Accessibility section)

Reference should be made to the Standards for Public Bicycle Parking and should be given weight as they capture more detail than we or SBC can provide. Examples of the provided standards are a 50cm maximum height that cycle wheels are required to be lifted, a limit of 105 Newtons of force required from any users during the parking operation.

"Cycle parking must be included in substantial schemes, particularly in city centres, trip generators and (securely) in areas with flats where people cannot store their bikes at home." (LTN 1/20, 1.6 principle 9). For this reason, bike sharing schemes can never be considered a substitute for a private cycle. They generally only include standard e-bicycles, costs can be prohibitive, and possible destinations are limited to the area in which the scheme is operational. Limiting the cycle parking availability due to the presence of a bike sharing scheme will significantly hurt the mobility of people and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

Security

Personal sense of safety should be considered under accessibility using factors such as the right location, passive surveillance, lighting (see LTN 1/20 11.2.2). Large isolated cycle parking facilities can, similar to car parks, feel unsafe, making them less accessible to vulnerable groups. Measures should be taken to make them pleasant to use.

Access to common residential cycle parking should be controlled. With every additional person who has access to the space where cycles are parked, security decreases. For large residential developments there should therefore be a limit to how many cycles one space should accommodate. (see for example 4.3.1 of Cycle Parking Guide For New Residential Developments)

Compartmentalisation of larger spaces with additional access control is suggested within larger cycle parking compounds that do not have dedicated security staff. Metal mesh panels are known to be used to create 'cages' in larger spaces as they do not impede the passive surveillance that provides a sense of safety.

In mixed use facilities, a benefit of this approach is that staff cycle parking can be in the same space as residential cycle parking without exposing staff to unacceptable risks of cycle theft.

The fear of vandalism or theft deters cycling. Cycle parking near shop fronts provides good passive surveillance. More guidance should be provided on mitigating this. (LTN 1/20 1.2.3)

Adapted cycles, e-bikes, and tricycles are valuable and more frequently used by vulnerable groups. A lack of secure parking can seriously limit the mobility of members of this group. The parking of these bikes should be a consideration from the start of the design process.

E-bike charging

For fire safety reasons e-bike charging facilities should be provided in a way that charging e-bike batteries outside of the residence is encouraged. Fire safety is increased by creating fire-safe charging facilities where cycles are parked (see E-cycle and e-scooter batteries: managing fire risk for premises)

The European Cyclist Federation recommends minimum requirements for e-bike charging infrastructure for new residential buildings. Given the increasing popularity of e-bikes in the UK and the hilly character of Stevenage, future-proof development will require e-bike charging facilities.

References:

A guide to understanding UK Cycle Parking Standards and how to follow them, Produced by Turvec Supported by Sustrans Published June 2023, Version 1.0. (<https://turvec.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Guide-to-UK-Cycle-Parking-Standards.pdf>)

LTN 1/20, Department for Transport (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>)

London Cycling Design Standards (<https://content.tfl.gov.uk/lcds-chapter8-cycleparking.pdf>)

Cycle Parking Guide For New Residential Developments (<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/6771/cycle-parking-guide-for-new-residential-developments.pdf>)

E-cycle and e-scooter batteries: managing fire risk for premises, Department for Transport (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-cycle-and-e-scooter-batteries-managing-fire-risk-for-premises/e-cycle-and-e-scooter-batteries-managing-fire-risk-for-premises#managing-premises>)

European Cyclist Federation (<https://ecf.com/system/files/EPBD%20Revision%202021%20-%20ECF%20position%20paper%20-%20November%202021%20-%20final.pdf>)

Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide - Chapter 6

(<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>)

Residential cycle parking Improving cycle parking for people on a low income or not in employment, Sustrans (https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/x4shu4d1/240904-residential-cycle-parking-report-v7_digital_v1b.pdf)

Standards for Public Bicycle Parking, June 2021 - Bicycle Association, Sustrans, Secure By Design Official Police Security Initiative (<https://bicycleassociation.org.uk/resources/cycle-parking/15/standards-for-public-cycle-parking>)