Ashford's Future

Car Parking Strategy

Technical Note

December 2010

Ashford's Future Car Parking Strategy – Technical Note – December 2010

Contents

Appendices:

1. Scope

1.1 This revised technical note has been written to update the Car Parking Strategy report of November 2006 and technical note of January 2009, in particular to update on the most recent transport modelling work used to provide revised car parking demand figures for the town centre, to revise the Car Parking Action Plan to take account of sensitivity testing and the likely rate of development coming forward, and to provide an evidence base in support of the Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan Document to be published for consultation in December 2010.

2. Revised Car Parking Demand Modelling

2.1 i-Transport consultants have been advising both the Borough and County Councils over the transport modelling of the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF), the car parking demand figures for the town centre and advice on the Parking Strategy, and the business case work on both the Park and ride and SMARTLINK proposals. i-Transport were also commissioned to review the car parking demand numbers resulting from the further transport modelling work undertaken since 2005, provide an evidence base for the Car Parking Strategy in readiness for the Ashford Town Centre AAP, and carry out sensitivity tests reflecting the current market conditions in order to advise on a short term Car Parking Action Plan for the next few years.

2.2 This technical note summarises background technical reports by i-Transport on:

ITM4088-001 TN Parking Provision and Parking Restraint
ITM4088-002 TN Parking Provision – Sensitivity Tests

2.3 The above technical reports and this revised note also make reference to:

SA of the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD – October 2010
Ashford Local Development Framework Core Strategy – adopted July 2008
Ashford's Future Car Parking Strategy report – Nov. 2006
Ashford Highways and Traffic Study (AHTS) – Highways Agency, Sept 2006
Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan – Adopted February 2010
Ashford Town Centre Development Framework – Urban Initiatives March 2006 Ashford Transport Strategy – KCC, Nov. 2005
Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF) – Urban Initiatives May 2005 Ashford Area Transport Study – RPS, April 2004
Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000
Planning Policy Guidance note 13 – DCLG, April 2001

2.4 The results of this further work show changes from the revised

modelling outputs from the AHTS model over those advising the previous parking strategy. These can be broadly attributed to:

Revised quantum and type of development in the Town Centre AAP
Changes to the number of car parks in the town used in previous reports
Changes to the number of town centre bound trips
Latest business case modelling for the SMARTLINK bus rapid transit scheme

2.5 The approach to the revised demand modelling has taken account of the need to restrain car parking demand from existing and new development in the expanding town centre to accord with the capacity of a transformed ring road and town centre streets, and to support modal shift targets and a business case for SMARTLINK.

2.5 The results in Table 1 show that the following demand for town centre parking before any restraint is applied, but taking account of a revised Town Centre AAP development quantum, as:

Table 1

Year	Parking Type	
	Long Stay	**Short Stay**
2011	4090	2100
2021	5550	3610
2031	5930	4200

2.6 Following the calculation of parking spaces needed to meet unrestrained demand, Table 2 shows the maximum parking provision by type that can be accommodated in town centre after capacity restraint has been applied (based on the Ring Road being constrained to the target level of 85% of 2003 traffic levels).
(Note * *figure of maximum provision (after restraint) is higher than the unrestrained demand).*

Table 2

Year	Parking Type	
	Long Stay	**Short Stay**
2011	2550	2220*
2021	3080	3350
2031	2790	3160

2.7 Table 3 below shows the difference between unrestrained and restrained demand (ie the demand which cannot be met because parking is restrained). The assessment work shows that around half of this restrained demand could be provided for in park and ride sites, but this could increase dependant on issues such as the quality of provision, price differential etc and should therefore be considered as the minimum demand for park and ride.

Table 3

Year	Parking Type	
	Long Stay	**Short Stay**
2011	1540	0
2021	2479	260
2031	3140	1040

2.8 To obtain the total parking demand for both existing and new development combined, we can use the total unrestrained demand (from Table 1), less 50% of that resulting from parking restraint (Table 3) that will need to be catered for by modes other than car journeys to either town or park and ride. This will provide the total parking demand to be met by a combination of town centre car parking and park and ride to insert in the revised Figure 3 in the Parking Strategy report. This is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Year	Parking Type		Total
	Long Stay	**Short Stay**	
2011	3320	2100	5420
2021	4310	3480	7790
2031	4360	3680	8040

2.9 From the above table we can see that the total parking provision to take account of restrained demand for both the existing and proposed developments in the town centre is now 5420 (7000) spaces in 2011; 7790 (8950) in 2021; and 8040 (10000) in 2031. (Previously assessed parking provision numbers in 2005 are shown in brackets).

2.11 As can be seen, the revised parking demand modelling makes a significant difference to the figures used in the Parking Strategy report in 2005. Issues of note though, are that this modelling assumed that SMARTLINK is provided by 2011. The previous modelling with GADF levels of development (60,600 sq m retail/leisure + 3000 jobs), has been revised by AAP town centre levels of development (57,500 sq m retail/leisure + 93,000 sq m commercial offices + 25,000 sq m education/community uses).

2.12 The economic downturn since 2008 has resulted in a slower rate of growth than previously anticipated. The housing trajectory for the Growth Area highlights that the quantity of development anticipated from the urban extensions by 2021 is significantly less than envisaged in the Core Strategy housing trajectory and even though it is anticipated that there will be a return to much higher levels of completions during the next decade this will not achieve the same level of development by 2021.

2.13 Taking account of the combined effects of para 2.11 (reduced parking demand) and para 2.12 (slower growth trajectory), the previous Parking Strategy and in particular, the Parking Action Plan are now amended as below.

3. Revised Parking Strategy - (revised Fig 3 appended)

3.1 The revised Parking Strategy provision to 2031 shows that future parking provision is still needed in line with that set out previously, i.e. 3 new Park and Ride sites and 3 new Park and Walk car parks, with a car parking relocation plan to phase out some existing town centre surface sites for redevelopment. However, some new car parking sites are not now envisaged to be needed to be delivered as early as previously anticipated. The main changes to reflect the reduced parking demand from the above revised modelling work and the implications of paras 2.11-2.13 above are:

- Future Park and ride provision is reduced from around 2800 spaces previously to around 2400 spaces, and some of this capacity can be deferred due to the slower housing trajectory. This is still broadly in line with the previous Park and ride study work (RPS 2005), and reflects the fact that new long stay parking sites (both public and PNR) in town should be minimised, in keeping with the phased transformation of the former Ring Road.
- PNR provision has been significantly reduced from that previously shown. Some new PNR will be needed to encourage new commercial development in a tougher than expected economic climate. It is envisaged that the provision of temporary car parks could be established to encourage, for example new office jobs in the commercial quarter in an initial phase, but which can be developed out later. Any new permanent PNR sites would be viewed as replacing existing PNR sites which are proposed to be redeveloped (e.g Charter House), and new PNR has been held at a maximum of 500 spaces by 2031. Thus PNR does not exceed the current levels of around 1200 total spaces.
- The 400 space car park at Mace Lane, previously shown as being needed by 2021 is not expected to be needed until well after 2021, and will only be needed at all if the sites allocated in this area in the Town Centre AAP are fully developed.
- Generally new Park and Ride capacity is shown as needed later in the programme than previously, and the provision of on-street parking is not as important, which is consistent with the likelihood that residential parking take up will be higher, leaving fewer spaces available to support other non residential developments,
- The effects of the new high speed domestic train services on the car parking needs at the station have been considered. It is likely that the reduced international train services will release

sufficient space for the increased take up of the new domestic high speed services in the short term. A travel Plan has also recently been implemented that aims to reduce trips to the station by car. This situation will be kept under review.

3.2 By 2021, and taking account of the need to encourage modal shift from car use to public transport, walking and cycling, 5100 new car parking spaces were assessed as being needed to serve the expanded town centre, 3100 of these would be for long stays (over 5 hrs) and 2000 of these would be for short stays up to 5 hours. An estimated 400 of these new spaces would be new PNR replacing 400 PNR spaces to be redeveloped (or lost to change of use). 2400 of these new spaces would be provided by 3 Park and ride sites constructed on the town's outskirts. A total of 1776 (including 400 PNR) of the current spaces are due to be lost through redevelopment proposals. Therefore of the 2700 new car parking spaces would be provided in the town centre (1700 short stay, 1000 long stay), only 924 of these are net additional spaces. (note – but see section 4 and table 5 below)

3.3 The locations of these new (and relocated) car parks are also critical to ensure that traffic levels on the former inner ring road are kept within the target capacity levels.

3.4 Thus the 3 proposed new multi storey 'Park and walk' sites are to be located on the approaches to the town centre, rather than accessed off the former ring road, as set out in the strategy report. This will encourage drivers to park their car on their way into the town centre rather than to circulate the town looking for space.

4. Sensitivity Tests

4.1 The above section sets out the parking provision needed to meet demand on the basis that all of the land set out in the LDF is fully developed out by 2021 and by 2031 in accordance with GADF. However, we know that the rate of development is likely to be affected by the recent and current economic conditions.

4.2 i-Transport were asked to carry out some assessment of the changes to the car parking demand figures as a sensitivity test, to reflect the current economic downturn and development market conditions. This test is based on:

- A revised realistic assessment of the completed developments to 2011 ie County Square, Library Plus and some modest housing completions
- only 75%of the commercial and retail/leisure developments proposed for the town centre being completed by 2021 but with the same housing target completions,
- only 75%of the commercial and retail/leisure developments proposed for the town centre being completed by 2031 but with

the same housing target completions.

4.3 The results of this testing show that, predictably, no further parking provision is needed to 2011. This is consistent with the study into the parking needs of the County Square development, that showed that there is sufficient capacity in other car parks and at Dover Place temporary car park to make up the shortfall, provided that Dover Place car park can remain up to at least 2011.

4.4 In 2021 and 2031, the reduced development scenarios result in the demand for parking being reduced by around 15%.

4.5 The above sensitivity tests are for less retail/commercial developments coming forward in the town centre, and result in a 15% reduction in parking demand in 2021. If however, housing growth is also less than predicted there will be less journeys made to the town centre overall, but more particularly for long stay (employment) reasons. It has therefore been assumed that a 25% reduction in long stay provision and a 15% reduction in short stay provision are reasonable assumptions and result in reductions in new car parking space provision being needed by 2021:-

Table 5 – Effects of a slow down in growth on parking demand and provision targets to 2021

Parking type	Previous Parking Demand (from para 3.4 above)	Reduced demand (to reflect slower than predicted growth to 2021)	Target - New Car Parking Space Provision to 2021
Long Stay	3100	-775	2325
Short Stay	2000	-300	1700

5 Development Assumptions for the Next Few Years

5.1 In order to advise on a short term Action Plan of parking provision for the next few years, consideration has been given to the likely developments to come forward with an estimation of their phasing. Preliminary discussions are being held with the preferred developers of Elwick Place advising on the future car parking needed for the development scheme, which is likely to be the next major development in the town centre, and results in the following assumptions about phasing.

i) This assumes that the likely phasing of development at Elwick Place takes place in the period to 2021 broadly to the following phases:

a. to construct the retail /leisure uses on the former cattle market site west of Elwick Place;
b. to progress to the office/residential to the east of Elwick

Square;

c. possible hotel use on the current Elwick Place car park at the eastern end of the site;
d. possible residential development if the site is extended west to include the Quintain site;

ii) The phasing of the completion of other related developments in the town centre also need to be considered. Other developments include:

a. County Square – completed March 2008 - the need to provide a permanent car parking solution (currently provided temporarily in Dover Place car park).
b. The Learning Campus – The timescale for any new campus is now uncertain but an assumption has been made that the campus will be completed by 2021.
c. Zed Homes development has received planning permission and includes a substantial food retail element on the northern site which will need its own on site car parking.
d. Phasing of developing the Commercial Quarter to the north of the Station.
e. The phasing of the release of other car parks for development ie Dover Place and Vicarage Lane.

5.2 From the further work on car parking demand modelling and sensitivity testing we can conclude that there is likely to be a reduced demand for parking overall and a reduced demand for park and ride from that previously envisaged in 2005 (development has not kept pace with predictions) as set out in table 5 above.

5.3 When taking these together (likely development phasing and revised predicted demand), it can be shown that provided that Dover Place temporary car park can be used until at least 2012, there is no need to provide additional car parking capacity to 2012. Victoria Way car park and a first phase of Park and Ride will be needed in the next few years, and it is recommended that both schemes be progressed in line with an action plan of parking provision to reflect a most likely phasing of developments as shown below.

6. Scenario testing of development progress against parking provision

6.1 Scenario Testing

To examine the parking need in more detail we need to look at the developments planned in the town centre as a whole and make an assessment of likely phasing and occupancy levels against the need for new parking provision and the triggers for other events and actions, such as car park closures for redevelopment (as shown in the ATCAAP), and charge and designation changes.

There are many possible scenarios, but two of the most likely scenarios for development progress showing the assessed parking demand generated have now been worked through to illustrate the likely parking needs provision and to understand the key issues arising.

Scenario 1 – Shows that the first Park and ride serving the town is opened before any major developments take place – this triggers a reduction in parking standards/demand more quickly and eliminates the need for temporary car parkng sites and reduces the need for on-site provision.

Scenario 2 – Shows that the first Park and ride serving the town is opened after Victoria Way car park and after the initial phases of development at Elwick Place and the Commercial Quarter have taken place. This results in the need for temporary car parks to be opened, but which can be developed out in later phases of those developments.

6.2 Key assumptions

1. The parking standards applied to developments are the maximum standards for retail/leisure and commercial office developments as set out in the Car Parking Strategy and Ashford Town Centre AAP, including allowance for reduced standards as new Park and Ride and multi-storey town centre car parks are implemented.

2. The standards applied assume that all car parking for new developments is 'commuted' to the car parking strategy sites, and developers agree to pay the commuted sum rates as shown in the Parking Strategy ie £10k per space for M/S car parks in the town centre and £5k per space for Park and ride. (appropriate allowance for inflation will need to be applied to growth up these 2006 base year prices).

3. In reality some developers will seek to provide some 'on site' (PNR) car parking. This should be minimised but where allowed for 'non-operational purposes' it should be provided in temporary car parking sites to be developed out later.
   No allowance has been made in the scenarios for 'on site' parking provision. Any allowed will need to be deducted from the 'commuted sum' total. Some allowance is made in Scenario 2 for the cost of providing temporary car parks (@£1,500 per space) as a deduction from the 'commuted sum'.

4. There is a strong case for applying lower than maximum car parking standards, in particular for retail and leisure developments located close to public transport hubs. eg at County Square extension – half the standard was applied to assess the additional car parking requirement.
   No allowance has been made in the scenarios for applying lower than

maximum standards – this will need to be assessed on a site by site basis.

5. The potential loss of car parking revenues by ABC have not been considered in detail. However, only Dover Place car park is shown as needing to close in the early years of development, (and in scenerio 2 this car park could remain in part for some time). This temporary car park was funded by GAF2 in 2008 and any revenues need to be balanced against the cost of leasing the site from SEEDA. Therefore the loss of revenues should not be significant.
   In later years Vicarage Lane car park is likely to be developed, but this is not likely until after Victoria Way car park is open and two Park and ride sites are opened. This will be a significant loss of revenue to ABC but will be offset to some extent by the receipts from the value of the development of the site.

6.3 The key conclusions from this scenario testing work are that:-

1. The above tables demonstrate that that the Car Parking Action Plan is flexible and how the progress on town centre developments is not entirely dependent on early public sector funding. This is important given the likely delays to the public sector funding of the provision of SmartLink and Park and ride services

2. In both scenarios – sufficient parking provision can be provided to keep pace with demand, but;
   a. The early provision of Park and ride can avoid the need for temporary car parks to be located and therefore reduce overall costs, help bring development forward on all sites, and generated increased commuted sums for early provision of permanent car parking sites. However this relies on public funding for P+R coming forward early.
   b. The early provision of Victoria Way MS car park by the private sector is also essential to the delivery of a number of developments and to provide an acceptable balance between town centre provision and P+R.
   c. Whilst sustainable transport provisions are being fully implemented, it is recognised that developers/occupiers may want more on site car parking rather than have all their car parking ‘commuted’, and so some temporary car parking may be desirable even in Scenario 1.
   d. Increased parking provision at the Station resulting from the introduction of high speed trains services is provided for by a combination of utilising over provision from reduced international train services, and a station travel plan (supported by ATOC) that aims to maximise journeys to the station by a combination of improved bus services (including P+R), cycling and walking routes.

3. In both scenarios sufficient commuted sums are generated to keep the pace of parking provision in line with demand, and;
    a. This should give developers confidence that the overall parking plan is deliverable to time,
    b. Significant sums are left in balance to enable the further provision of New Street MS car park and an expansion of Waterbrook P+R in the next phase.

4. Victoria Way multi-storey car park and the first two Park and Ride sites are all absolutely essential to be provided to support the early phases of development in Ashford Town Centre. If any or all of these car parks cannot be provided early then significant temporary car parking provision will need to be provided. In addition to Dover Place remaining (at least in part) further provision is needed in both Elwick Road and Victoria Road. Victoria Road is the preferable location for the bulk of this parking from a transportation/congestion view point.

7. Delivery of Park and Ride Fully Integrated with SMARTLINK

7.1 Previous work shows that without an enabling development scheme providing significant revenue support for Park and Ride, a business case for a stand alone park and ride operation for Ashford will not work in the short term. Park and ride is however needed early in the programme to provide a headroom of car parking provision for the town centre, to provide a permanent solution to the County Square planning commitments, and to support the modal shift targets and transformation of the former ring road.

7.2 A major scheme business case and bid has been prepared in outline for submission to DfT with a view to drawing down funding for implementing a SmartLink bus rapid transit scheme and the first Park and ride site. The consideration of any bid going forward has been affected by the Government's spending review with the likelihood that public funding support for SmartLink will not be available before 2015. The exact timing of the opening of a new park and ride facility will also depend on a number of other factors, including economic conditions and the rate at which development is built in relation to the predictions set out in the business case.

7.3 The programme for delivery of the first SmartLink/Park and Ride services is at least 2 years from the date of 'Conditional Approval of the bid by government, and subject to further scheme design and preparation costs being funded by Kent County Council.

8 Rationale for New Car Parking Sites

8.1 The locations for car parks up to 2031 remains as in the Car Parking Strategy report of 2006.

8.2 **Park and shop** – confined to two main car parks close to the town's main shopping hubs County Square and Park Mall, although the car parks at the 'International Station Quarter' to the south of the station and at Station Road to serve possible new retail frontages also come into this category. Requires a high quality 'space availability' signing system to redirect drivers to park and walk/ride sites when full.

8.3 **Park and walk** – three new multi storey car parks planned for Victoria Way, New Street and Mace Lane but located close to the main approach roads to serve the town centre but encouraging drivers to park on their way into the town to reduce circulating traffic. Requires high quality public realm links to enhance walking routes into town.

8.4 **Park and Ride** – three new sites at the edge of the town along key corridors, firstly at The Warren, then linked through the town, stations and Designer Outlet Centre to Waterbrook, then a spur to Chilmington Green coupled with frequent, high quality bus rapid transit systems and passenger facilities.

9 Revised Car Parking Action Plan to 2017

9.1 Reflecting on the above predictions and assumptions for the next few years, and the demand forecasting, scenario testing and sensitivity tests, a carefully phased delivery plan is set out below that supports both the demand from new development as it arises and the need to provide a 'headroom' of car parking that encourages new commercial and retail development to come forward. This replaces and revises the Phasing Strategy in section 6 of the Car Parking Strategy report of 2006. The phasing strategy needs above all, to remain as flexible as possible to adapt to market needs and changes in the economy.

9.2 2009-17: Park & Ride

Finalise design, acquire land, and implement The Warren Park and Ride scheme to be fully integrated with the SMARTLINK bus rapid transit scheme providing the full range of priority running and passenger facilities.
Preparation work funded by GAF3 (design, business case, planning permission and major scheme bid).
Implementation to be funded by DfT through LTP bid (Further detailed design costs post Conditional Approval to be funded by Kent County Council).
Any supporting revenue costs to be met from developments benefiting from the service.
Some extended on street parking controls implemented.
Some redesignation of town centre car parks to short stay only/car parking charge changes.
Allows the possible closure of Dover Place temporary car park and permits the development of the Commercial Quarter.
Provides up to 800 new spaces

9.3 2009-17: Park & Walk

Continue to discuss with potential developers, the best means of delivering the proposed multi-storey car park at Victoria Way. If necessary, consideration is given to public borrowing against future revenues, to ensure that the car park can be delivered promptly.
(See 'Park and Walk' car park viability report by PBA Sept 2009 which examines the full range of delivery and funding options).
Funding likely to be primarily by private developers of Victoria Way and /or Elwick Place sites. Allows the closure and redevelopment of Dover Place temporary car park and Elwick Road car park (subject to approval by rail authorities).
Provides 400 new spaces over and above the Victoria Way on site food retail store.

9.4 2011-17: Park & Ride

Prepare feasibility/outline design/costings for Waterbrook Park and ride using further growth are/LIP funding. Acquire land, and implement the scheme as demand arises utilising development funding through 'commuted sums', as a further phase of the SMARTLINK bus rapid transit scheme. Relies on revised Waterbrook junction being in place with full bus priority provision.
Triggers a change in adopted car parking standards for new developments in the town centre and those on/close to SMARTLINK routes.
Provides 800 new spaces.

9.5 2014-17: Park & Walk

Prepare feasibility study on potential for New Street car park to be developed as part of a comprehensive development with residential frontage to New Street, either to include or adjoin the current food store on the corner of Forge Lane. Work with land owners to explore master planning of the site and delivery options. If necessary consideration should be given to public borrowing against future car park revenues to ensure the car park can be delivered towards the end of the decade.
Envisaged as being needed to support the redevelopment of Park Mall/ Farm Foods sites in order to minimise on site provision at Park Mall (within former ring road) - could attract a commuted parking sum.
Funded by a combination of developer contributions (from commuted sums) and private or public sector borrowing in lieu of revenue receipts.
Provides about 200 new spaces over and above those currently on site.

10. Car Parking Standards and Private non-Residential parking (PNR) – (revised figure 4 appended and extract from PPG13 appended)

10.1 Further clarification is needed, to build on the current section 4 and figure 4 of the Parking Strategy report of 2006 in relation to the parking levels that would be acceptable on site (PNR), and those to be commuted to either town centre car parks or Park and Ride. Above all, consideration needs to be given to enabling and making new commercial developments in the town centre work. Car parking provision for new developments needs to be made by a combination of on site provision (allowance has been made for some expansion of PNR in the revised figure 3, but generally this should be minimised and be seen as replacing the level of PNR already in the town, not exceeding it); and commuting parking into the new 'Park and Walk' and 'Park and Ride' car parks.

10.2 It is recommended that parking standards applied to commercial office, leisure and retail developments in the town centre be progressively reduced to favour increased use of public transport (including park and ride), walking and cycling.

10.3 The amount of parking that can be accommodated on site will be determined on a site by site basis taking into account both the nature of the development, the end users need for 'operational' parking and the capacity of the road network. For example, at Elwick Road where the new 'shared space' scheme has been implemented, new on site parking needs to be minimised, but some parking could be accepted to replace some of that relocated from the current car parks at Elwick Road and Vicarage Lane which could be closed for redevelopment when the new Victoria Way car park is open. It is recommended that on site PNR should be no higher than 50% for new commercial office development and no more than 10% of new retail/leisure developments located in the town centre.

10.4 The remaining parking up to the maximum standard specified should then be commuted via s106 payments to support the provision of public car parking at the proposed Park and Walk and Park and Ride sites (even if these car parks have already been provided through 'forward funding' from the public purse). Commercial office developments will be expected to contribute to Park and Ride as use will be predominantly long stay, and retail, leisure developments will be expected to contribute to town centre multi-storey Park and Walk sites.

10.5 <u>In the short term</u> (following adoption of the Ashford Town Centre AAP):

The Parking Strategy 2006 says that half the level of maximum standards shown in PPG13 are appropriate by 2011. This already reflects those standards agreed in the most recent major town centre redevelopment at County Square, on the basis that the location of sites in the town centre are very closely related to good public transport facilities ie the train station and bus stops eg the level of new car parking provided at County Square was less than 500 spaces

(PPG13 max. standard was just under 1000 new spaces).

10.6 It is therefore recommended that a reduced maximum car parking standard can be applied to retail/leisure developments of 1:30sq m, but that maximum PPG13 standards of 1:30sq m should be applied to commercial office developments, until the completion and opening of the town's first Park and ride site planned at The Warren..

10.7 Then, following completion of the first Park and ride site (or at the time when the town's first Park and Walk car park site is completed, if that is sooner), the maximum parking standards applying to developments in the town centre can be reduced to 1:40sq m for retail/leisure, and 1:60sq m for office developments

10.8 In the medium term;

By the time of completion of the phase 1 SMARTLINK scheme and two park and ride sites that would allow a high quality of alternative transport provision, accessible for most drivers heading for the town, parking standards should be controlled more tightly to encourage modal shift and support the business case for these schemes. It is therefore recommended that for new retail/leisure developments in the town centre a maximum standard of 1:50 sq m, and for commercial office developments in the town centre a standard of 1:85 sq m could typically be applied from this period. Operational on site parking (PNR) would continue to be minimised. Commuted sums would continue to be used to support the new parking provision proposed in the parking strategy.

10.9 In the longer term:

Once the full SMARTLINK scheme and 3 park and ride sites are in operation and a higher level of alternative local bus services and cycle paths have been developed, the standards for both retail/leisure uses and commercial office developments in the town centre should be further restricted to typically 1:75 sq m and 1:120sq m respectively. This will further encourage modal shift and ensure that the traffic flows on the streets forming the former inner ring road remain within target levels without causing serious congestion to build up. Operational on site parking (PNR) would continue to be minimised. Commuted sums would continue to be used to support the new parking provision proposed in the parking strategy.

10.10 These revised maximum standards are summarised in the table below:

Development/ Parking type	From AAP 2009	1st P+R opens	2nd P+R opens	3rd P+R opens
Long stay – office	1:30 sq m	1:60 sq m	1:85 sq m	1:120 sq m
Short stay – retail/leisure	1:30 sq m	1:40 sq m	1:50 sq m	1:75 sq m

10.11 The parking strategy has been set out to encourage, as far as possible, drivers to be intercepted 'en route' to the town centre by either Park and Ride or Park and Walk. The parking demand numbers have therefore been taken to serve the town 'as a whole', not on a site by site basis. Some flexibility must therefore be allowed in the phasing of delivery of new parking sites in relation to the developments they are most likely to serve. It is therefore seen as essential that Park and Ride is delivered early in the programme to provide a 'headroom' of parking, but also to provide this flexibility. Park and ride will be designed to attract existing (mainly long stay) users of car parks in the town centre thereby releasing space in existing car parks for use by shoppers, for business and shorter stay visitors. Park and Ride sites can be more easily phased with sites extended as demand increases, and they will also be used increasingly by shoppers as the retail offer expands and /or possibly congestion worsens in the short term.

10.12 Other commercial developments outside of the town centre:

Para 4b of the Parking Strategy report of 2006 explains that sites outside of the town should be provided at 20% less than PPG13 maximum standards. This is already being applied to sites affected by the SATS area (SPG6) and should be extended to apply throughout the Ashford Growth Area. In future developments that are well located to the SMARTLINK scheme there is scope to extend this reduction in standard when the scheme is fully implemented, perhaps up to 50% less than PPG13 maximum standards. This could be defined by using the 10 minute walk isochrone defined in the SMARTLINK report.

10.13 Ashford International Station:

At the time of writing the Parking Strategy 2006, no predictions were available for future use of the high speed domestic trains to and from London that were introduced in December 2009. Also no account was taken of the reduction to international Eurostar services due to the switch of some services to Ebbsfleet and St Pancras. The current domestic rail operator Southeastern has now predicted an increase in domestic train use to and from Ashford that will make use of spaces in the Eurostar car parks to the south of the station, due to reduced international services in the short term, but estimates that a further 222 spaces might be needed by 2014 (the end of the current franchise

period). In addition the current Southeastern trains car park at Elwick Place is due to be redeveloped which will lose a further 161 spaces to train users. A combination of the adoption of a Station Travel plan supported by ATOC and a comprehensive master planning of the International Precinct currently being carried out, will aim firstly to minimise the additional on site car parking around the station in favour of better integrated transport provision with other modes, and secondly provide sufficient and easily accessible car parking for station users probably located mainly to the south of the station via undercroft.

10.14 Residential Parking Standards:

The Council has adopted residential parking standards for the area within the scope of the Town Centre AAP (policy TC23) and also within the Residential Parking and Design Guidance SPD (adopted October 2010).

11. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations for the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD

11.1 This technical note, as revised, attempts to set out what will be needed to make the town work, balancing the needs of the market with the need to keep traffic flow to within target future levels of 85% of 2003 flows around the streets forming the former ring road. The note also confirms most of the contents and Action Plan contained in the Parking Strategy 2006 report, but inputs the latest modelled parking demand figures, taking account of a reduced growth trajectory due to the economic downturn and scenario testing likely development progress in the town centre. As a result some of the 2006 reports findings are reviewed including the phasing strategy, but this note explains the reasons behind the changes and in particular the need for flexibility in terms of delivery of new parking sites.

11.2 What is absolutely clear is that the local authorities, supported by the Ashford's Future Company need to work closely with the land owners and future developers of sites in the town to actively promote and fund the early delivery of new parking sites to ensure that the town continues to prosper in economic terms and fully realises the ambitious plans and timescales for expansion. This note reflects on the current market conditions and proposes that pubic sector funding is maximised in the short term to deliver a headroom of car parking that will 'kick start' the market, and ensure that Ashford is truly 'best placed' to take full advantage of the high speed trains to and from London starting later this year.

11.3 This technical note, as revised, has advised the Urban Sites and Infrastrcuture DPD over the allocation of the site for The Warren Park and Ride scheme. A site capable of providing up to 800 parking spaces should be sufficient for Ashford's needs well beyond the plan period .