Measure title : National maximum parking standards as part of national government planning guidance to local authorities, PPG13 (now replaced by one national planning guidance document)
City, Country: All municipalities, England (UK)
Year(s): PPG13's maximum parking standards applied from 2001 to 2010

A1 Objectives

The main objective of PPG13 was to use the planning system to reduce the need to travel and to reduce the use of the car to access developments. Maximum parking standards are seen as an important way to achieve the second objective and indeed the limited literature on this topic bears this out (see COST342 report (2006)), for example.

A2 Description of the CS

In the English planning system, decisions on the shape of local area plans and on what is allowed to be built are taken by local authorities (municipalities). However, national government issues planning guidance that local authorities must take into account in their plans and in decisions on what is allowed to be built. One part of the guidance covers the transport aspects of new buildings (developments).

As their name suggests, England's maximum parking standards (MPS) set nationally-applicable maximum amounts of parking that were allowed to be built with new developments. The MPS were an Annex to the then PPG13, although they were only introduced in the last version of PPG13 in 2001. Earlier versions of PPG13 suggested that local authorities set their own maximum standards at local level, but many were reluctant to do so because of the fear that neighbouring authorities would set less restrictive standards in order to attract development. Therefore national standards were introduced to reduce this risk of local authorities competing for development by offering more generous parking. The standards in PPG13 did not apply to residential developments. The standards and the minimum size of developments to which they applied are shown below. This meant that many authorities were in the situation of having maximum standards for large developments and their previous minimum standards that continued to apply for smaller developments. PPG13's maximum parking standards applied from 2001 to 2010 at which point they were abolished due to central government concerns that they had negative economic development impacts. The empirical evidence for these impacts was however difficult to find (see DfT, 2008).

B Costs and who paid them

Costs are not known. However, the direct costs were low: only those involved in consulting on and then adopting a guidance document produced by central government. Implementation costs – in terms of the parking provided with new developments – were paid by the builders of these new developments, as they were when minimum parking standards applied, previously. This means that the standards could in many cases reduce the land and construction costs associated with new developments.

C Project objectives, indicators, data and impact/results

This was not a single project – rather, it was a regulation that was intended to have impacts across all large developments in the whole country. No systematic data were collected to assess the impacts of the regulation. Maximum parking standards were applied in Scotland also, and the author collected from City of Edinburgh Council data about three large developments in that city, which also undertook travel surveys to measure the modal share for employees based at each development (2004 and 2005). All these three developments are located in the suburbs of this city of 450,000 people, at a distance of between 4 and 8 km from the city centre, so in areas with moderate to poor accessibility by public transport. Had they been built with minimum parking standards, a mode share of 90-95% drive alone by car could be expected.

	Employees	Parking spaces	Car (drive alone) mode share
Hospital	4000	1200	60%
Bank	3000	1200	75%
Business park	7000	4000	57%

This was a period of continuous economic growth for most parts of the UK.

D Implementation process

There was really only one stage for implementation, which was to produce a draft of the standards and then to consult on them and adopt them. This was a process run by two central government departments (those responsible for planning and for transport) with input from mostly expert consultees – although any member of the public was free to respond to the consultation.

D2 Barriers –key problems or difficulties in implementing the CS

The standards were developed by central government but had to be implemented by municipalities, so it was these latter organisations that had to deal with any barriers. Principally these barriers – or problems – related to reports from a one authority (cited in DfT 2008) that the land that they had earmarked for development became less attractive to developers when it was subject to maximum parking standards; and that developments built with maximum standards led to overspill parking on surrounding residential streets. The former barrier was difficult to deal with but was an intention of the policy – to steer development towards areas more accessible by car. The latter was dealt with by the application of parking controls on residential streets, sometimes paid for by the developer, sometimes by the municipality; or, if less acute, it was not dealt with at all.

D3 Drivers –factors that really helped in implementing the CS

Demand from municipalities for national maximum standards, along with supportive national civil servants who were genuinely interested in demand management, and a supportive national minister, helped to drive the adoption of the national maximum standards. The experience of authorities that had already adopted their own local maximum standards prior to 2001 was also important.

References

City of Edinburgh Council (2004, 2005) Internal Travel Surveys

Department for Transport (UK), (2008) Research into the Use and Effectiveness of Maximum Parking Standards. DfT UK, London.

PPG13 (2001) available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1758358.pdf

This case study also uses text from the MAX project MaxLupo Case Study C20 available at http://www.epomm.eu/index.php?id=2755, written by the same author as this Push and Pull case study.

Further information available from the case study author tom.rye@tft.lth.se