

Better Planning for Better Parking

Proposals for NPPF Reform

25 October 2022

Summary

The RHA is campaigning for more, better parking facilities for drivers.

Industry can fund new overnight parking facilities but plans to invest are slowed to torpor by the current planning system. Industry needs a fit-for-purpose planning framework with improved guidance for facility developers that can support this essential investment.

The RHA is calling for an amendment to the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure planning authorities consider all relevant factors when making decisions on applications for new or improved facilities.

The Parking Problem

Our assessment is that there is a national shortage of around 11,000 overnight lorry parking places¹. Allowing insufficient, sub-standard and often unsafe lorry parking to continue unaddressed is not acceptable. Having a lack of adequate parking places results in inappropriate parking and noise that impacts local residents. It can also result in increased levels of littering and increased attraction to organised criminals and opportunistic thieves that could be looking to steal fuel and/or cargo.

Government has already identified “a joined-up approach between the planning system, local authorities and industry”² as a potential solution to this issue.

The Planning Problem

Local Planning Authorities assess new planning applications in line with The National Planning Policy Framework. The current guidance is too narrowly drafted for it to be fit for purpose. Data on local shortages is difficult to determine and reinforces the conception of lorry parking as a nuisance activity. It does not adequately recognise the national significance of road haulage as the backbone of our economy.

The Solution: an amended NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework needs to be amended to ensure that local planning authorities consider the following additional factors:

- Regional & national requirements for lorry parking spaces, not just local.
- The welfare needs of drivers
- The need to minimise travel distances
- Logistics needs and requirements
- Any additional infrastructure required as vehicle move away from diesel towards alternative fuels like electric or hydrogen.

The precise language we would propose for this change is included below.

¹ This RHA estimate is for Great Britain and is based on published 2017 – 2019 estimates for England. It excludes lay-by parking. The Department for Transport is working to update earlier assessments.

² Page 72, paragraph 5.4 -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1085917/future-of-freight-plan.pdf

The Results of Reform

By reforming the NPPF and bringing national needs into consideration more applications should be approved at first application, and appeals to the Planning Inspector in the event an application is refused would have a better chance of succeeding.

Plentiful well-sited overnight lorry parking:

- reduces vehicle mileage on our roads,
- eliminates “nuisance” lorry parking for residents,
- reduces noise impacts,
- helps to fight vehicle crime,
- creates better conditions for drivers and employers, and
- helps accommodate the demands arising from the electrification of vehicles as part of the Government’s Net Zero ambitions.

Road haulage exists to serve the demand created by its customers, ultimately that demand is driven by the end consumer – you and me. The UK economy depends on goods vehicles existing in all areas to meet all market needs cost-effectively, efficiently, and sustainably.

Proposed New Language for the National Planning Policy

109. Planning policies and decisions should recognise the necessity of providing adequate safe and secure overnight lorry parking facilities, taking into account:
- a) local, regional and overall demand for lorry parking to meet all overnight lorry parking needs;
 - b) the facilities and welfare provision needs of drivers;
 - c) the need to minimise distance travelled by lorries when analysing a location, keeping local, regional and national needs in mind when making decisions;
 - d) the requirements of all users of the Strategic Road Network and Primary Route Network;
 - e) the benefits locally and regionally of reducing impacts of lorry parking in locations that lack proper facilities;
 - f) the logistics needs and requirements of businesses, residents and stakeholders in nearby towns and areas; and
 - g) the likely demand for overnight charging of electric lorries needed to meet climate change goals.

Proposals for new or expanded distribution centres and large multi-user business parks should make provision for sufficient overnight lorry parking for their anticipated use either on site or at identified locations.

This will require local authorities to take and maintain a proactive approach to assessing supply and demand for lorry parking facilities to solve the shortage locally, regionally and on the Strategic Road Network.