



Bolton Parking Standards – Recommendations

The following recommendations outline an approach to parking standards to apply to new development proposals within Bolton. These have been developed following review of existing parking standards and recent policy approaches to parking standards for developments.

Balanced Approach

A key principle is the development of 'Expected' Parking Standards. The draft parking standards are provided as "expected" levels of provision, rather than blanket maximums or minimums.

The parking standards should be applied as the default level of provision that development proposals are expected to achieve. These standards provide a clear benchmark against which planning applications will be assessed and will be a material consideration in decision-making. Whilst developments are expected to meet the stated standards, it is recognised that site-specific circumstances may justify an alternative level of provision. In such cases, applicants will be expected engage with the Development Management team at the earliest opportunity and be required to demonstrate through robust evidence why a departure from the standard is appropriate. This approach provides certainty and consistency for applicants and decision-makers whilst retaining the flexibility necessary to respond to exceptional circumstances and innovative development proposals.

The emphasis is on achieving a balanced supply, enough spaces to meet typical demand without over-provision that encourages more car trips. The level of parking provision in a new development can influence choice of travel mode for users of that development. Parking provision, along with sustainable transport measures have a key influence the shifting the balance of which mode of travel is used.

Providing too much parking can encourage vehicle use and lock in car-dominance within a new development. However, providing too little parking can result in informal parking dominating the street scene and obstructing walking, cycling, public transport and emergency service routes. Therefore, a careful balance in parking provision needs to be considered.

Providing a balanced approach ensures that the recommendations support local, regional and national sustainable travel goals while remaining practical for Bolton's network conditions.

NPPF Alignment

Paragraph 112 of the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) sets out considerations for the development of parking standards which include accessibility, development type, public transport provision, car ownership level and EV Charging provision:

(Para. 112) - If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- A. the accessibility of the development;*
- B. the type, mix and use of development;*
- C. the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- D. local car ownership levels; and*
- E. the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.*

Paragraph 113 Notes a clear shift away from setting of maximum parking standards across an area: *'Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport'*

The latest version of the NPPF focuses on using a vision-led approach to identifying transport solutions that create well-designed, sustainable and popular places. Where appropriate and suitably justified, parking provision therefore can be informed and influenced by the vision for specific site.

Homes England Guidance- Parking: What Works Where (May 2026)

Recent Homes England guidance on parking has moved away from prescriptive parking standard and instead promotes a design-led, place-led and demand-managed approach. Parking should support placemaking and sustainable travel, not define the layout or scale of a development.

The Homes England guidance does not set national minimum or maximum parking standards. Instead, it suggests that parking levels should be context-specific (location, density, accessibility, car ownership trends) and aligned with sustainable transport objectives. This supports a wider national shift away from fixed standards and focuses more on how the range of transport interventions can support in the delivery of the sustainable vision set out for a given site.

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Alignment

While responsibility for setting parking standards lies with the local authority, TfGM provide a transport policy framework across Greater Manchester and are well positioned to advise and provide technical challenge to any proposed parking standards. This assists in ensuring standards align with regional strategies, transport visions and Places for Everyone.

As part of this work for Bolton Council, we have discussed both the Bury Council parking standards and the proposed approach to parking standards within Bolton Council area with TfGM. It is suggested that there should be continued engagement with TfGM to provide strategic alignment with their policies and guidance on key principles including Right Mix vision, reduced car dependency and increase use of active and sustainable modes of travel.

Bury Council Supplementary Planning Document 11 – Parking Standards in Bury (June 2025)

Bury Council published an update to their parking standards in June 2025 – Supplementary Planning Document 11 (SPD11): Parking Standards in Bury¹. As a neighbouring authority to Bolton and part of the wider Greater Manchester region, we have discussed with Bury Council how their SPD11 was developed to gain insights from this process.

Key Elements adopted from Bury:

- **Zonal approach to parking standards** – varied standards depending upon accessibility and locations (e.g. Town Centres, Stations, rest of borough)

¹ [Supplementary Planning Document 11: Parking Standards in Bury - Bury Council](#)

- **Flexible, evidence-based standards** – use of expected provision rather than fixed maximum caps
- **Case-by-case assessment** – Allows for deviation from standard where justified by local standards
- **Inclusion of cycle parking and EV Standards**

The above elements have been locally tailored to Bolton by:

- **Applying Bolton specific zones and town centres** – Bolton Town Centre as the primary urban centre, along with inclusion of Blackrod, Horwich, Westhoughton, Farnworth and Little Lever as the districts towns as reference in Bolton Transport Strategy (Page 15).
- **Transport Nodes** - Accessibility based on proximity to railway stations rather than Metrolink stations due to differences in modes of public transport provision between the two areas.

Following a zonal approach to taking into account sustainable locations of development within town centres and near train stations, the following zoning is suggested for application in Bolton.

Table 1: Car Parking Zones

The resultant zonal mapping is provided overleaf showing which areas would be included within each zone.

Location	Within the Location	Within 400m of Location	Within 800m of Location
Bolton Town Centre	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Blackrod Town Centre	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Horwich Town Centre	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Westhoughton Town Centre	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Farnworth Town Centre	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Little Lever Town Centre	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Railway Stations	Zone 3	Zone 3	Zone 4
Rest of Borough	Zone 4	Zone 4	Zone 4

Land Use Tables

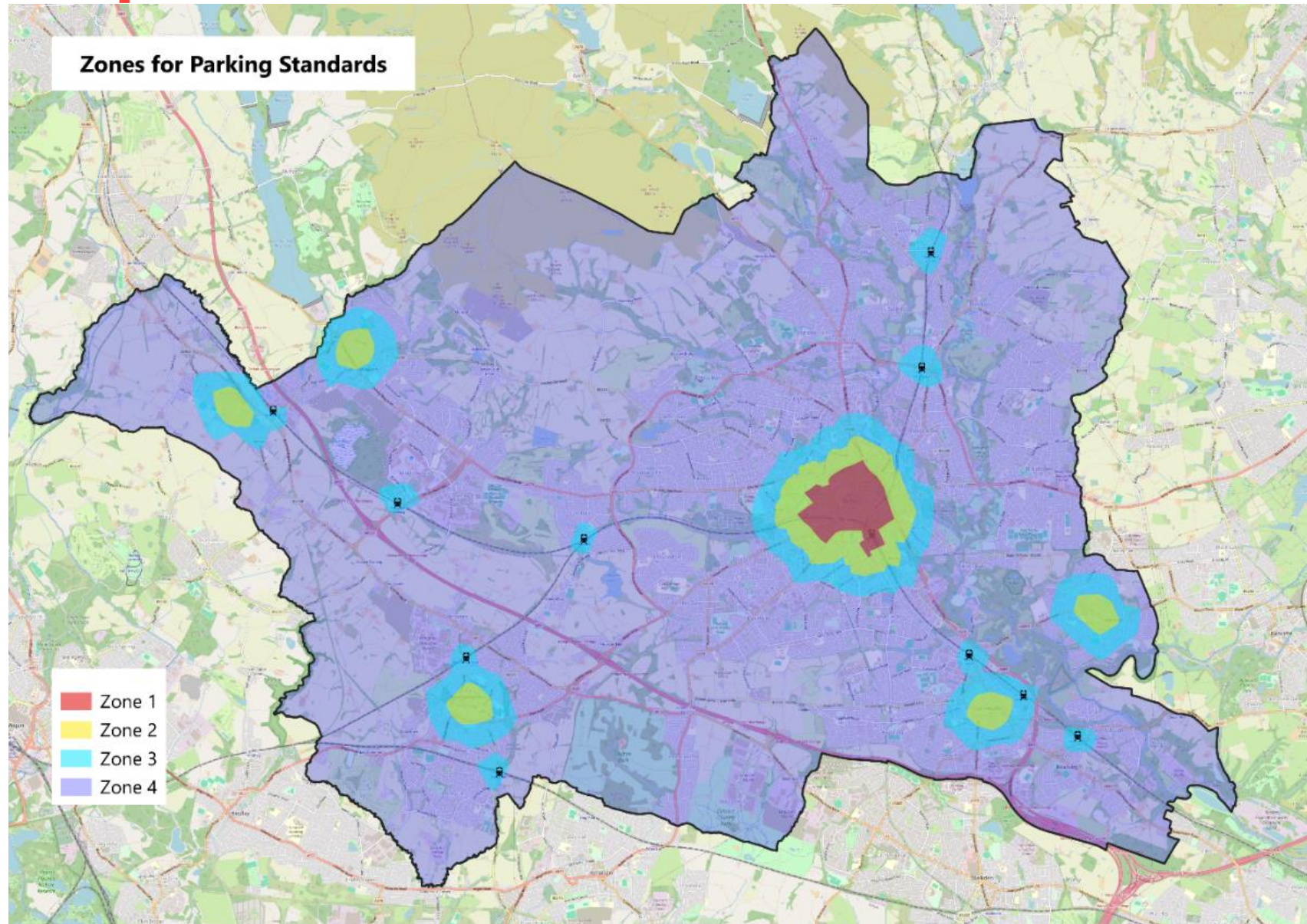
Following this, the parking standards for various land uses from the work developed by Bury Council are presented as an initial indication of suggested parking standards for Residential Developments and Non-Residential Developments. These tables include standards for the different zones as well as information on disabled parking and cycle parking (short and long stay).



Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

With regards to EV Parking the following standards are recommended:

- **Residential** – For every dwelling with allocated car parking, at least one parking space shall be provided with an active EV Charge point
- **Residential apartments (10 or more spaces)** – For every dwelling with allocated car parking, at least one parking space shall be provided with an active EV charge point plus passive charging provision for all remaining parking spaces
- **Non-residential, residential institutions and hotels with more than 10 parking spaces** – 10% of spaces to have access to an EV charge point and further 10% to have passive charging provision.



Parking Standards for Residential Development

Development	Description	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 1	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 2	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 3	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 4	Disabled Parking
Hotels (C1)	Hotels	Disabled parking only	1 space per 3 bedrooms	1 space per bedroom		6% of capacity or 3 spaces whichever is greater
Residential Institutions (C2)	Convalescent, Residential Car and Nursing Homes	1 space per 3 staff & 1 space per 10 beds	1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 5 beds	1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 4 beds		
	Residential School / College or Training Centre	1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 5 beds		1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 4 beds		Over 200 bays: 4% of total car parking capacity or 12 spaces whichever is greater
	Student Accommodation	Disabled parking only		1 space per 3 beds		
	Hospitals	Parking provision for proposal for hospitals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis				
General Residential (C3)	Dwelling flats and apartments	Disabled parking only or 1 space per 10 dwellings where clear need can be demonstrated	1 space per dwelling & 0.25 per dwelling allowance for visitor parking	1.5 spaces per dwelling		6% of the total number of units or 3 spaces whichever is greater
	Dwelling Houses	0.5 space per dwelling	1 space per 1 bed dwelling 1.25 spaces per 2 bed dwelling 1.5 spaces per three bed dwelling and greater	1 space per 1 bed dwelling 2 spaces per 2 & 3 bed dwellings 3 spaces per four bed dwelling and greater		N/A if parking is in curtilage of dwelling Where peaking is non-curtilage: 6% of total units or 3 spaces whichever is greater
	Retirement living or sheltered housing	1 space per 3 dwellings & 0.25 unallocated visitor spaces per 3 dwellings				

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) (C4) and Sui Generis HMOs	Houses in Multiple Occupation	Disabled parking only	0.25 unallocated space per bedroom Alternative provision levels to be considered on a case-by-case basis.	0.5 unallocated spaces per bedroom. Alternative provision levels to be considered on a case-by-case basis	To be provided based on likely need and requirement identified by developer, in collaboration with local planning authority
---	-------------------------------	-----------------------	--	--	---



Parking Standards for Non-Residential Development

Development	Description	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 1	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 2	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 3	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 4	Disabled Parking
General Industry (B2)*	Carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within the uses described in Class E	Disabled parking only	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 60sqm		6% of capacity or 3 spaces whichever is greater Over 200 bays: 4% of total car parking capacity or 12 spaces whichever is greater
Storage or Distribution (B8)	Storage / Distribution Centre	1 space per 500sqm	1 space per 250sqm	1 space per 100sqm		

**Specific and/or niche development types such as chemical and hazardous waste facilities will require additional bespoke considerations to be agreed with the Development Management team.*

Development	Description	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 1	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 2	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 3	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 4	Disabled Parking
Commercial Business and Service (E)	Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 50sqm	1 space per 25sqm	1 space per 20sqm	6% of capacity or 3 spaces whichever is greater Over 200 bays: 4% of total car parking capacity or 12 spaces whichever is greater
	Shops (a) – Food Retail	Disabled parking only	1 space per 20sqm	1 space per 15sqm	1 space per 10sqm	
	Cafes and Restaurants (b)	1 space per 100sqm public floor area	1 space per 50sqm public floor area	1 space per 15sqm public floor area	1 space per 5sqm public floor area	
	Financial / Professional Services (c) (i) (ii) (iii)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 50sqm	1 space per 35sqm		
	Indoor Sport and Fitness (d)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 25sqm	1 space per 20sqm		
	Medical and Health Services (e)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 2 staff and 3 spaces per consulting room	1 space per 2 staff and 4 spaces per consulting room		
	Nursery, Creche and Day Centres (f)	1 space per 2 staff	1 space per 1.5 staff	1 space per staff		

	Offices (g) (i)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 70sqm	1 space per 50sqm	1 space per 40sqm		
	Research and Development (g) (ii)	1 space per 35sqm	1 space per 35sqm	1 space per 25sqm			
	Light Industrial (g) (iii)	1 space per 500sqm	1 space per 250sqm	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 50sqm		
Learning and Non-Residential Institutions (F1)	Primary and Secondary Schools (a)	0.5 space per classroom	1 space per classroom	2 spaces per classroom		6% of capacity or 3 spaces whichever is greater Over 200 bays: 4% of total car parking capacity or 12 spaces whichever is greater	
	Higher/Further Education (a)	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 2 staff	1 space per 2 staff plus 1 per 15 students			
	Special Education Needs (SEN) Schools	Parking provision for proposals for Special Education Needs (SEN) Schools will be assessed on a case-by-case basis					
	Art Gallery, Museums, Exhibition Halls (BCE)	Disabled parking only or 1 space per 100sqm public floor area (to be agreed with the Development Management team)	1 space per 50sqm public floor area	1 space per 30sqm public floor area			
	Library (d)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 50sqm of public floor area	1 space per 30sqm of public floor area			
	Public Workshop (f)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 20sqm of public floor area	1 space per 10 sqm public floor area			
	Law Courts (g)	Parking provision for proposals for law courts will be assessed on a case-by-case basis					
Local Community (F2)	Halls or Meetings Places (b)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 20sqm	1 space per 10 seats			
	Outdoor Sport/Recreation (c)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 5 people expected to use the facility at any one time (typical peak occupancy)	1 space per 2 people expected to use the facility at any one time (typical peak occupancy)			
	Swimming Pools / Ice Skating Rinks	Disabled parking only	1 space per 30sqm of public floor area	1 space per 25sqm of public floor area			

Development	Description	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 1	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 2	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 3	Number of Car Parking Spaces in Zone 4	Disabled Parking	
Sui Generis (no class specified)	Cinemas, Theatres, Bingo Halls and Casinos, Conference Centres and Concert Halls	Disabled parking only	1 space per 10 seats	1 space per 5 seats		6% of capacity or 3 spaces whichever is greater Over 200 bays: 4% of total car parking capacity or 12 spaces whichever is greater	
	Public Houses, Wine Bars, Other Drinking Establishments	Disabled parking only	1 space per 20sqm of public floor area	1 space per 10sqm of public floor area			
	Car Related Uses	Parking provision for proposals for car related uses will be assessed on a case-by -case basis					
	Petrol Filling Stations	Parking provision for proposals for petrol filling stations will be assessed on a case-by -case basis					
	Hot Food Takeaways (Including Drive Throughs)	Disabled parking only	1 space per 35sqm of gross floor area	1 space per 20sqm of public floor area			
	Rail stations/ park and ride/ tram stops	Parking provision for proposed rail stations, park and ride or tram stops will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.					
	Stadia	Parking provision for proposals for Stadia will be assessed on a case-by-case basis					

Cycle Parking Standards for Residential Development

Development	Description	Staff/Resident Parking (Long Stay)	Visitor Parking (Short Stay)
Residential Institutions (C2)	Convalescent, Residential Care and Nursing Homes	1 space per 5 staff	1 visitor cycle stand per 20 residents
	Residential School / College or Training Centre	1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 2 students	1 visitor cycle stand per 20 residents
	Student Accommodation	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 20 bed spaces
	Hospitals	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 10 beds (short stay)
General Residential (C3)	Dwelling flats and apartments	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per unit	1 visitor space per 10 units
	Dwelling Houses	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (if no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	
	Retirement living or sheltered housing	1 space per 6 residents & 1 space per 4 staff	
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (C4) and Sui Generis HMOs	Housing in Multiple Occupation	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (if no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	

Cycle Parking Standards for Non-Residential Development

Development	Description	Staff/Resident Parking (Long Stay)	Visitor Parking (Short Stay)
General Industry (B2)	Carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within the uses described in Class E	1 space per 300sqm	1 space per 500sqm
Storage or Distribution (B8)	Storage / Distribution Centre	1 space per 300sqm	1 space per 500sqm

Development	Description	Staff/Resident Parking (Long Stay)	Visitor Parking (Short Stay)
Hotels (C1)	Hotels	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 10 bedrooms

Development	Description	Staff/Resident Parking (Long Stay)	Visitor Parking (Short Stay)
Commercial Business and Service (E)	Shops (a) Display or Retail Sale of Goods, other than Hot Food & F2(a) Non-Food Retail	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
	Shops (a) Food Retail	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
	Shops (a) Comparison/Non-Food Retail	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
	Cafes and Restaurants (b)	1 secure covered space and locker per 100sqm	1 space per 100sqm
	Financial / Professional Services (c) (i) (ii) (iii)	1 secure staff space and locker per 50sqm	1 secure staff space and locker per 500sqm
	Indoor Sport and Fitness (d)		10 spaces plus 10% of vehicles spaces
	Medical and Health Services (e)	1 secure covered space & locker per 4 staff	1 space per 50sqm
	Nursery, Creche and Day Centres (f)	1 secure covered space & locker per 4 members of staff	1 space per 10 children with a minimum of 2 spaces
	Offices (g) (i)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 500sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
	Research & Development (g) (ii)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 500sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
	Light Industrial	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 500sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces

Development	Description	Staff/Resident Parking (Long Stay)	Visitor Parking (Short Stay)
Learning and Non-Residential Institutions (F1)	Primary and Secondary Schools (a)	1 space per 4 staff & 1 space per 5 pupils	1 space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
	Higher / Further Education (a)	1 space per 20 staff & 1 space per 5 students	1 space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
	Art Gallery, Museum, Exhibition Halls (bce)	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 100sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
	Library (d)	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 100sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
	Public Worship (f)	1 space per 200sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	
	Law Courts	1 space per 200sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	
Local Community (F2)	Halls or Meetings Places (b)	1 space per 4 staff	Additional cycle stands at 1 space per 40sqm open to the public or 1 space per 60 seats (minimum of 5)
	Outdoor Sport / Recreation (c)	10 spaces plus 10% of vehicle spaces	
	Swimming Pools / Ice Skating Rinks (d)	1 space per 4 staff	Additional cycle stands at 1 space per 40sqm open to the public or 1 space per 60 seats (minimum of 5)

Development	Description	Staff/Resident Parking (Long Stay)	Visitor Parking (Short Stay)
Sui Generis (no class specific)	Cinemas, Theatres, Bingo Halls and Casinos, Conference Centres and Concert Halls	1 space per 10 staff	Greatest of 1 per 40sqm or 1 per 60 seats / capacity
	Public Houses, Wine Bars, Other Drinking Establishments	1 space per 400sqm short stay) with a minimum of 2 spaces	
	Car Related Uses	1 space per 10 staff	Assess on a case-by-case basis
	Petrol Filling Stations	1 space per 10 staff	Assess on a case-by-case basis
	Hot Food Takeaways (Including Drive Throughs)	1 space per 100sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces	
	Rail stations/ park and ride/ tram stops	Cycle Parking provision for proposed rail stations, park and ride or tram stops will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.	
	Stadia	1 space per 10 staff	Greatest of 1 per 40sqm or 1 per 60 seats / capacity