

Vehicle Crossings Policy

AND INSTALLATION CRITERIA

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC PROTECTION
HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT
VEHICLE CROSSINGS POLICY AND INSTALLATION CRITERIA

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Related Linked Documents: -

- Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) and Flood Risk Information Note.
- Highway Development & Design, Sefton Developers Pack.

1. **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

Vehicle crossings are provided to assist vehicle access across footways into driveways. They are provided at the request of householders, subject to Highway Authority approval and payment of the costs of installation. This Policy sets out the criteria that will be applied to determine the acceptability of individual vehicular crossing applications. It also sets out the process and standards for installation.

The construction of a vehicle crossing by the Highway Authority does not give the occupier of the premises any particular rights, except to drive across the footway to gain access to their property with a private light goods or similar vehicle. The crossing itself forms part of the public highway. From the date that the Highway Authority accepts the completed crossing, they will assume responsibility for its maintenance at no cost to the occupier, apart from any damage caused by illegal use by heavy vehicles, etc. In some cases, planning permission will also be required for a vehicle crossing and /or for the construction of a driveway or hard-surfacing of a front garden. There is a separate, additional consent process for planning applications.

This Policy is not applicable for commercial premises or medium to large developments.

2. **BACKGROUND**

The Council is the Highway Authority and as such responsible for the maintenance of the adopted highway. We recognise that residents might want to park their vehicles on their frontage but this requires the installation of a dropped crossing to facilitate this. When considering such requests we must ensure that they are safe, do not incur additional maintenance costs for the Council and balance the needs for off-road and on-road parking.

The approach to vehicle crossings has evolved over time, as such prior installations do not set a precedent for what will be allowed now.

3. **HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT**

Highways Management will be responsible for the Vehicular Crossing Policy and its subsequent revisions based upon Cabinet Member approval and any changes in Government legislation. This policy includes the following:

- Approval criteria.
- Application process.
- Specification of crossing.
- Construction of crossing.

4. **APPROVAL CRITERIA**

4.1 **DEPTH OF FRONTAGE TO PROPERTY**

Many applications are received for properties, where the depth of garden frontage (i.e. from back of footway to building) is insufficient to permit a motor vehicle to be parked at right angles to the footway and wholly within the curtilage of the property. This photo shows an adequate parking arrangement.



Failure to have the requisite depth of frontage, and width for a motor vehicle (Minimum 2.4 metres) will result in the potential for vehicles to overhang the footway. This will create an obstruction to the free passage of pedestrians and will offer a potential danger, particularly, to those pedestrians with impaired vision.

Regrettably, there are numerous locations across the Borough where an adequate depth of frontage does not exist but where crossings have previously been installed. These locations require vehicles to be parked at an acute angle or lengthways to the property, which is not ideal.

Such a situation promotes the need for excessive manoeuvring over and across the footway as the vehicle is 'shunted' into position. This excessive manoeuvring has safety implications and can potentially damage the adjacent footway / verge hence can no longer be supported as an acceptable option. In addition, to accommodate this parking arrangement, this requires an increased length of boundary wall to be removed and an associated increased length of kerb adjustment, which can then impact upon the availability of the on street parking facilities.

This is particularly relevant in some of the older more established residential streets where house frontages are relatively narrow, and adjacent crossings are 'side by side'. At these locations 'extended length' crossings provided to each property (if permitted) would virtually remove any on-street car parking capability.

The length of individual vehicles can vary, and below represents the range of the more popular models:

Vehicle category	Approximate dimensions
City Cars	lengths vary from 2695mm to 3665mm and widths from 1475mm to 1665mm.
Small Cars	lengths vary from 3821mm to 4084mm and widths from 1665mm to 1780mm.
Compact Cars	lengths vary from 4109mm to 4370mm and widths from 1729mm to 1823mm.
Family Cars	lengths vary from 4425mm to 4726mm and widths from 1703mm to 1871mm.
Executive Cars	lengths vary from 4628mm to 5004mm and widths from 1810mm to 1910mm.
Luxury Cars	lengths vary from 4631mm to 5264mm and widths from 1877mm to 1980mm.
Sports Cars	lengths vary from 3915mm to 5027mm and widths from 1735mm to 1992mm.
Estate Cars	lengths vary from 4236mm to 4966mm and widths from 1693mm to 1895mm.
MPVs	lengths vary from 4068mm to 5130mm and widths from 1695mm to 1928mm.
Small Crossovers	lengths vary from 3700mm to 4300mm and widths from 1660mm to 1822mm.
Compact SUVs	lengths vary from 4255mm to 4732mm and widths from 1780mm to 1920mm.
Large SUVs and 4x4s	lengths vary from 4662mm to 5130mm and widths from 1760mm to 2008m.
Pick-ups	lengths vary from 5205mm to 5362mm and widths from 1840mm to 1954mm.

Details from Google and www.automobiledimension.com.

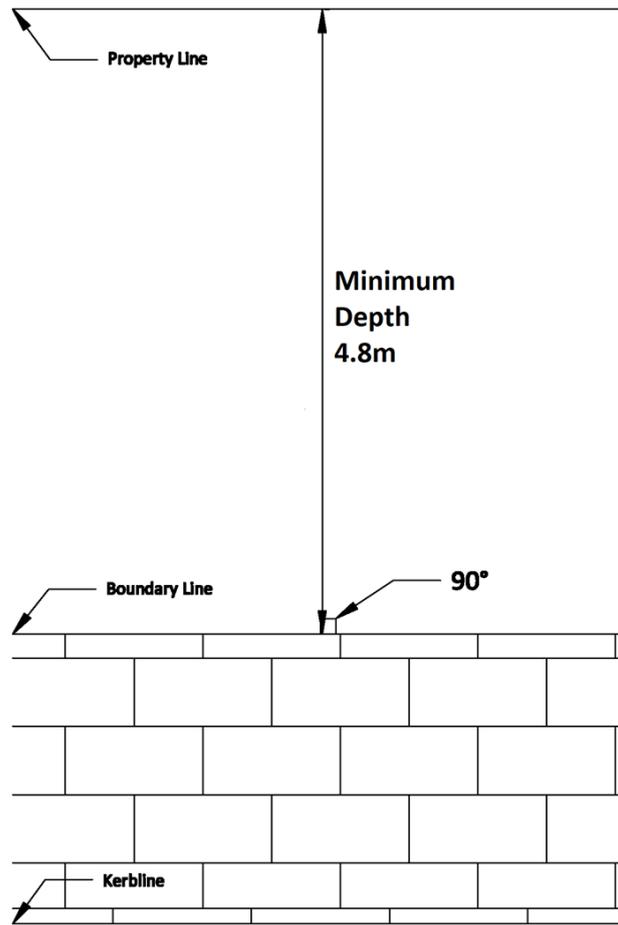


Diagram 1

Criteria 1

The minimum depth of private land required to allow for safe parking off the highway is set at 4.8 metres measured at 90° to the boundary line. Please note this distance is to be clear and unobstructed, i.e. by a porch or bay window etc.

4.2 STANDARD WIDTH KERBED CROSSINGS

The traditional width of an opening within the boundary wall of a property to permit the passage of a vehicle is up to 2.4 metres. Consequently, the associated kerb alignment for the vehicular crossing will generally be 5 kerbs long or 4.5 metres total length (comprising one left hand dropper kerb, 0.9 metres long, three runner (low) kerbs, totalling 2.7 metres, and a further dropper kerb, right hand, 0.9 metres long) (see Diagram 2 below). The area enclosed in red will require full reconstruction to vehicular crossing standards to ensure suitability for long term maintenance.

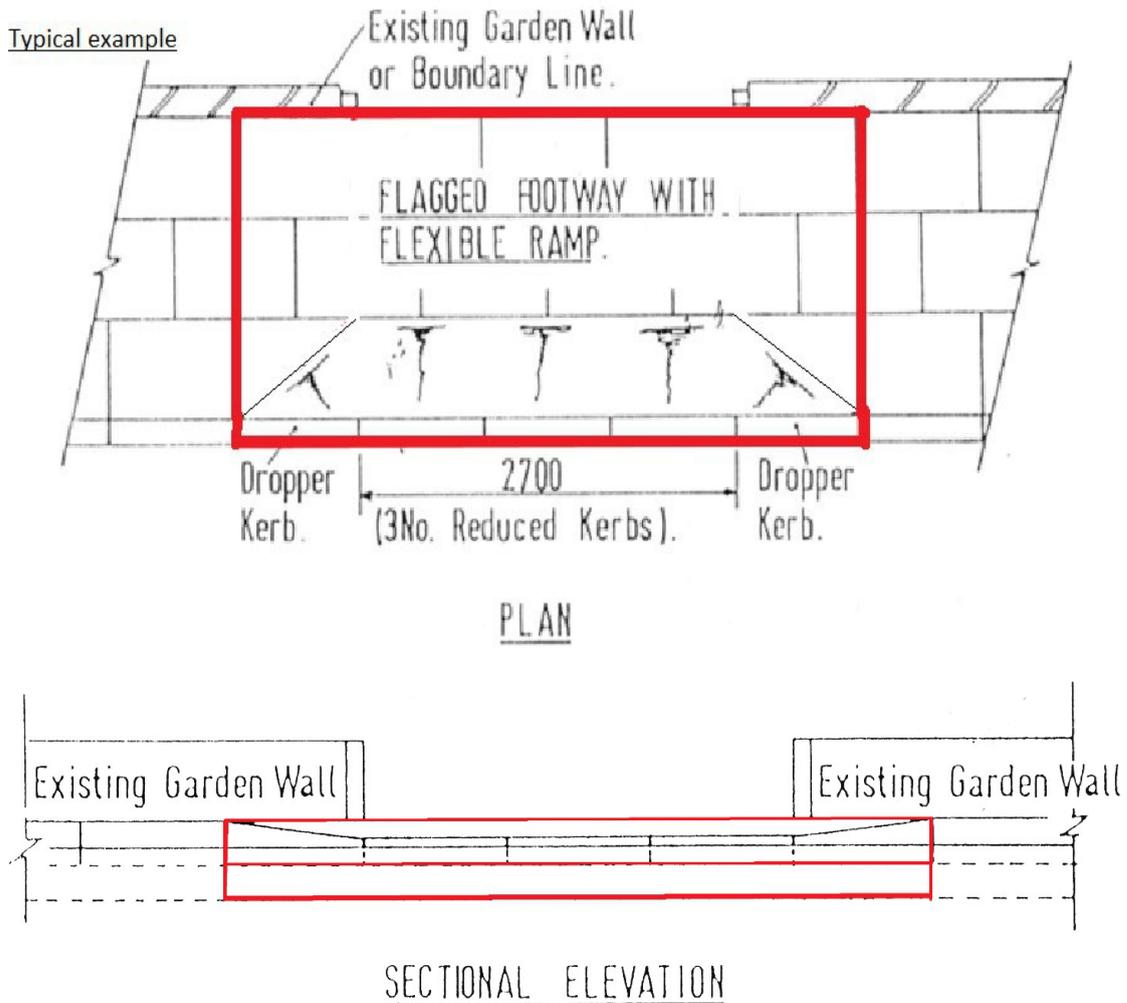


Diagram 2

On occasion, in existing residential streets, and because of the alignment of the existing kerbs in relation to the 'opening' it has proven necessary to provide an additional runner (or low) kerb to ensure that the runner (or low) kerbs coincide. In doing so, this has extended the overall crossing facility to 5.4 metres in length (6 kerbs long). Please note this is the maximum permitted crossing width.

Criteria 2

The standard width of a vehicle crossing will be 4.5m. Where the existing construction requires this may be extended to 5.4m.

4.3 EXTENDING AN EXISTING STANDARD CROSSING

Criteria 2a

The standard width of a vehicle crossing will be 4.5m. Where there is an existing crossing and a change requires this to be extended this may be extended to 5.4m.

Where the access point to a property has been amended e.g. a new boundary wall has been constructed and a crossing of standard size already exists, it may be possible for an applicant to apply for a new crossing up to a maximum of 5.4 metres where safety is not compromised and the depth of 4.8m as per the latest Policy is complied with. Any existing crossings with a depth of less than 4.8m will not be granted approval for and extended crossing. Any application for an extension may require the reconstruction of the entire vehicle crossing to meet the demands of vehicle usage.

4.4 DISIBILITY ISSUES & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

It is important that visibility for emerging vehicles is not restricted by the presence of boundary walls, fence lines, hedgerows etc. Requested locations will not be approved unless there is an uninterrupted visibility splay of 2.0 m x 2.0m, within which, there would be no obstruction to visibility over a height of 1.0m (see Diagram 3 below) otherwise the height of the adjacent feature would not permit the driver of the emerging vehicle to see or be seen by pedestrians walking along the adjacent footway.

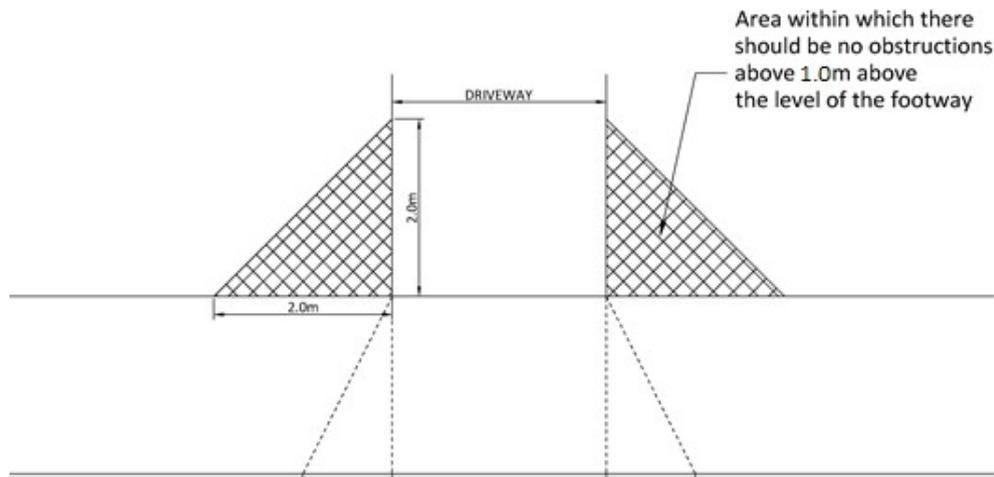


Diagram 3

Criteria 3

There must be an uninterrupted visibility splay of 2m by 2m for vehicles emerging from the drive.

More than two-thirds of urban road accidents occur at junctions. Forward visibility for turning vehicles is often limited and driver's attention has to cope with a variety of factors in addition to the turning manoeuvre e.g. other traffic and pedestrians. It is important therefore that the highway authority ensures, as far as reasonably possible that additional potential conflicts, such as parking or vehicular accesses are kept to a minimum at these locations.

The impact of an access on pedestrians also has to be considered. The majority of pedestrians crossing the side road will do so close to the junction, probably across the corner radii, unless the footway along the main road is very wide.

It is clearly necessary to separate the vehicle access from any pedestrian crossing locations. This means that the vehicle access must be set back sufficiently to allow a pedestrian crossing and associated tactile paving (where required) to be laid closer to the junction, with a short length of full height kerb before the dropper kerb starts for the vehicle crossing.

Where access is required near a junction either to the side or front of the property it should always access the minor road of the two and will preferably be located as far from the junction corner as possible, but in any event the dropper kerb of any vehicle crossing location **must not start less than 4.5m from an envisaged back of footway line elongated to the junction** (See Diagram 4 below) for safety reasons.

Also, any dropper kerb of a vehicle crossing must be a minimum 0.9m from any Pram Ramp kerb.

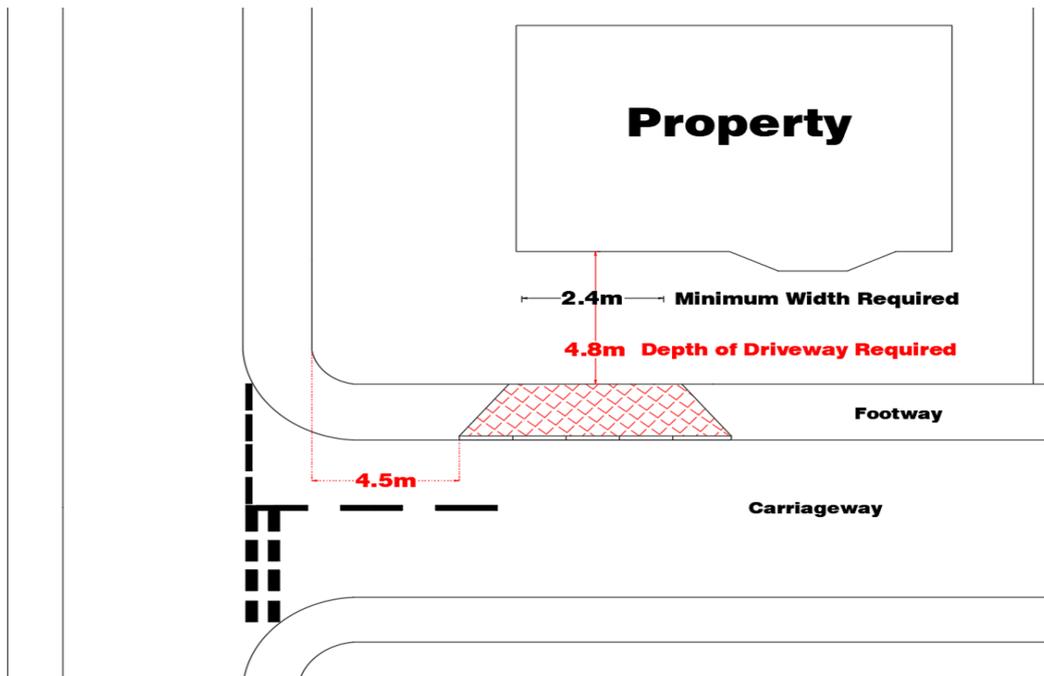


Diagram 4

Criteria 4

Where possible the vehicle crossing must be on the minor road.

Criteria 5

If the vehicle crossing is close to a junction it must be at least 4.5m away from the back of the footway of the adjacent road.

4.5 PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of practical considerations relating to construction of a dropped crossing:

- obstructions like street furniture,
- trees and shrubs which may be obstructions or so close that the work could not be undertaken without damaging them,
- highways layout such as pedestrian crossings, traffic calming or parking restrictions (single or double yellow lines are unlikely to be an issue), and
- utility boxes that might require relocation or lowering.

The cost associated with moving some utility apparatus can be prohibitive. Where trees or shrubs are allowed to be removed they would be a requirement to replace them with a greater number elsewhere. There will be some obstructions that cannot be moved for highway operational and safety reasons.

Criteria 6

If the vehicle crossing is obstructed or has a tree or shrub within 1 m of it may not be possible to approve the crossing. Any approval would be subject to it being possible to relocate or remove an obstruction and the applicant paying the associated costs. In the case of trees or shrubs this would include the cost of replacement elsewhere.

4.6 PERMISSIONS

There are a number of permissions that you may require such as:

- If you are not the owner of the property you will need their permission.
- You need to comply with any covenants on your property.
- If the vehicle crossing is over a watercourse you will need permission from the Lead Local flood Authority or Environment Agency.
- If the vehicle crossing is onto a classified road you will need planning permission.
- You may need planning permission if your property is in a conservation area or is listed.

Criteria 7

The applicant must have the relevant permissions from third parties for this work to be undertaken.

4.7 MANAGING SURFACE WATER

The hardstanding parking area within the property must be built so that water does not drain from it across the footway. Suitable drainage must be provided within the boundaries of the property in order to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, surface water from the premises flowing on to, or over, the footway of the highway. Offenders are guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 1 on the standard scale (Highways Act 1980 - Section 163).

The Council would encourage the use of permeable surfaces for the hardstanding parking area or any other hardstanding, e.g. using gravel, porous asphalt, permeable block paving or porous concrete; and should also drain water from any surface into a border rain garden or soakaway.

Constructing a hardstanding parking area or driveway on a property may also require planning permission, for example for flats. For houses, an applicant who wishes to construct a hardstanding parking area in their front garden greater than 5 square metres in area must either use a permeable form of construction or obtain planning permission from the Council. This requirement was introduced to reduce the risk of highway flooding by allowing more water to soak away into people's gardens.

Criteria 8

The applicant must ensure that surface water does not flow from their property onto the highway.

4.8 CONSTRUCTION OF THE DRIVEWAY

Where a driveway is constructed using gravel or a similar loose material as a hardstanding, the applicant should ensure that the material cannot be transferred from the property to the public highway. If any material is carried onto the highway, it will be the responsibility of the occupier to remove it immediately by sweeping etc. If the Highway Authority is required to perform any cleansing, the cost of the cleansing may be charged to the occupier.

Criteria 9

If using an unbound material such as gravel the applicant must ensure that the material does not get carried onto the highway.

4.9 USE OF THE VEHICLE CROSSING

No part of a vehicle parked within a property may project on to or over the footway or carriageway. The vehicular crossing area may not be used as a parking area and no part of it is exempted for the purpose of footway parking. Offenders are guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (Highways Act 1980 - Section 137). Applicant must sign a declaration of proper crossing use prior to authorisation.

A domestic vehicular crossing may only be used by a private light goods or similar vehicle. It may not be used by heavy goods vehicles or mechanical equipment. If a delivery, such as a skip, is made into the property, and in doing so the delivery damages the crossing, any repair costs will be the responsibility of those causing the damage.

Applicants wishing to fit gates across the vehicle entrance of their property must ensure that they in no circumstances open outwards across the footway or carriageway. Offenders are guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 1 on the standard scale (Highways Act 1980 - Section 153).

Criteria 10

The applicant must agree to use the vehicle crossing only for access to their driveway for domestic or private light goods vehicles and should not cause obstruction by parking on or overhanging the vehicle crossing or by having gates opening out onto the crossing.

4.10 PAYMENT FOR THE VEHICLE CROSSING

The footway is not designed to take vehicles so when a vehicle crossing is introduced the whole of the area of the vehicle crossing needs to be constructed to a suitable standard to take vehicles, it is not sufficient to just low the kerbs and adjacent footway. The cost for this varies depending on location but if the applicant accepts the quote and asks the Council to undertake the work they must pay the full sum in advance of the works. The quote will include for all of the works including a fee for the Council to arrange and supervise the works. To give an indication of costs a dropped crossing similar to the one shown in diagram 2 might be £1200-1500. If the crossing is across a wide verge the cost will increase along with the area of construction required.

Criteria 11

If the applicant accepts the quote for the installation of a vehicle crossing they must agree to pay all costs in advance.

4.11 NON-STANDARD APPLICATIONS

If you wish to apply for a wider crossing or multiple crossings you may do so but should be aware that these are unlikely to be approved unless the local conditions mean that the loss of on-road parking is not an issue.

Where the occupiers of two adjoining properties share a driveway and wish to build a double width crossing to serve the two sites, one occupier should ideally act on behalf of both parties. Any such proposals will be considered on their merits and approval should not be assumed.

These will be considered by the senior responsible officer for this service and approved on a discretionary basis.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

5.0 COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The applicant should complete the checklist first to determine if they want to proceed to the application as a non-refundable fee is charged. If they want to proceed they should complete the application form and attach requested information and submit along with the non-refundable fee.

5.1 THE QUOTE

Upon receipt of the completed application form, requested information and application fee the Council will acknowledge receipt of your request and assess it. This will include a site visit and establishing the quote for the construction of the crossing and any associated works for relocation of apparatus. Where additional quotes are required from third parties this will take longer. The Council will then send you your quote which will include all costs for the works on the highway and a legal agreement to sign should you accept the quote.

5.2 ACCEPTING THE QUOTE

The quote is valid for a period of 28 days inclusive of weekends and bank holiday periods. If you decide to accept it, you should sign the legal agreement and return it with the fee within this time period. Failure to accept the quotation within the 28-day acceptance period, vehicle crossing applications will be cancelled and any acceptance of quotation received thereafter will be rejected. Should an applicant wish to proceed with an installation at a later date, this will be processed as a new application and will be subject to further upfront quotation fees and inflation costs in place at that time. The works will normally be completed within three months although this could be longer if third parties are involved for the relocation of apparatus.

Criteria 12

If the applicant fails to accept the quotation within 28-days, requests for vehicle crossing installations will be cancelled and will be subject to further up-front fee payments and inflation costs, should installation be requested in the future.

6. SPECIFICATION

6.0 WHAT IS INCLUDED

The standard finish to vehicular crossings will match the existing construction in the area, this is typically either bitmac or paving flags. The cost estimate provided will be based on the full area being reconstruction as per the area highlighted in red in diagram 2 above. It will be reconstructed to accommodate domestic or private light goods vehicles.

If there are any items to be relocated the costs associated with these will be included, similarly any costs associated with removal and replacement of trees.

Where an access point to a property is moved to an alternative location and a vehicular crossing already exists, on application for a vehicular crossing in the new position the applicant must also pay costs for the redundant crossing to be reinstated by the Highway Authority. Similarly, where the owner or occupier of a property removes an existing off street parking facility due to change of use e.g. A garage conversion, and the minimum depths of frontage can no longer be maintained, the existing vehicle crossing must be reinstated at the occupier's expense.

The quote will include a fee for the administration and management of the works. The quote will be for an all-inclusive price for the works on the highway and must be paid in advance.

7. CONSTRUCTION

7.1 HOW IT WILL BE CONSTRUCTED

Vehicular crossing installations are non-contestable works and as such the Highway Authority has an approved Contractor appointed via competitive tender to undertake this activity. Upon acceptance of the quote and receipt of payment the Council will instruct the Contractor to undertake the works that have been quoted for. The Council will administer and supervise the works.

The Contractor will be responsible for:

- Contract compliance.
- Notification to applicant of crossing installation works.
- Undertaking the works.

8. LEGAL SITUATION

There are vehicle crossings which have been installed prior to this policy that do not comply with the requirements of this policy. They should not be deemed to form precedent.

An owner of a property has no automatic right to have a vehicular crossing installed to their premises. A crossing may be provided at the discretion of the Highway Authority. As there is no right to have a vehicular crossing provided, there is, technically, no right of appeal should the Highway Authority refuse to authorise a crossing facility.

Applicants may be required to enter into a legal agreement to carry out works required on the highway as a result of planning permission being granted and should contact the Highways team to confirm the most appropriate method of application.

The Highway Authority reserves the right to alter the layout of the vehicle crossing at any time, due to required modifications to the public highway.

9. SAFETY

Any application for the construction of a domestic crossing may be refused or modified on the grounds of safety.

CHANGE LOG

Version	Changes made	Changed by	Date of Changes
1.0	Original Policy Distributed		09-Nov-2012
2.0	Updated Policy	Graham Lymbery	December 2020
3.0	Updated Policy	David Franey	April 2024