

**RESIDENTIAL DROPPED KERBS – CRITERIA AMENDMENT**  
**Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve an amendment to the criteria for assessing dropped kerb applications within residential streets.

**2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **That the criteria for assessing the suitability of dropped kerbs for private off-street parking, as prescribed within the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), is amended as detailed within para. 5.11 of this report**

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 This proposed criteria change will update the Council's existing parking standards to better reflect local circumstances within residential streets experiencing parking pressures.

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Not to amend the criteria. This would result in continued difficulties for residents seeking approval to dropped kerbs for private off-street parking facilities.

**5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 5.1 The Parking Standards SPD provides guidance on parking issues relating to new and existing development and forms part of the Council's planning framework. It includes a parking strategy for tackling existing parking pressures within the borough as many of the existing neighbourhoods were built when car ownership levels were much lower than they are today.
- 5.2 Increases in car ownership over recent decades have resulted in many streets experiencing insufficient parking capacity for current needs. A lack of adequate parking has resulted in local tensions, neighbour disputes and unsatisfactory parking on verges and open spaces.
- 5.3 The Council already undertakes a broad programme of local measures to help resolve existing parking problems. One of these measures is the approval of individual dropped kerbs to enable access to suitable private off-street parking facilities, subject to meeting the Council's assessment criteria. Successful applicants are given the option for the associated highway work to be undertaken by the Council's contractor, at the residents' expense, or alternatively via an approved contractor appointed by the resident.

- 5.4 The Council approves dropped kerbs for residents who have sufficient property frontage to enable a driveway to be installed and where highway safety will not be adversely affected. There may be circumstances where it will not be acceptable to agree a dropped kerb, for example, within a conservation area, where on-plot parking may be harmful to the character of the area, or where the frontage available does not comply with the Council's parking space dimensions.
- 5.5 Private off-street parking can reduce parking congestion and improve highway safety in estate roads by removing vehicles otherwise parked on-street. It can, in some cases, also help by increasing overall parking capacity where the road alongside the dropped kerb can be parked on by the property occupiers or their visitors.
- 5.6 In 2016, the renewed Parking Standards SPD formalised the minimum required dimension for a property frontage to enable a driveway to be installed. This minimum dimension was set at 5.5 metres to reduce the likelihood that parked vehicles could overhang the highway given the variances in vehicle size, layout of property frontage and differing parking habits. This dimension has since been used as one of the key criteria for assessing applications for dropped kerbs, and supersedes the previously applied dimension of 5.0 metres.
- 5.7 Whilst the formal application of a 5.5m minimum dimension is based upon sound principles, its practical application has brought difficulties in many residential streets. Over the past 2 years over 30 applications for dropped kerbs have been refused due to property frontages failing to meet this minimum dimension and, although unquantifiable, there are likely to be others who have been deterred from applying due to this requirement. Frustration amongst unsuccessful applicants has been increased in situations where their adjacent neighbours already benefit from dropped kerbs acquired prior to the 2016 criteria change, and where no issue of highway obstruction is perceived.
- 5.8 On reflection, the effect of the 2016 criteria change to 5.5 metres seems counter-productive, with a growing number of residents being prevented from improving their own parking situation. As a result, Officers have reviewed the current criteria in order to identify a more balanced and practical approach.
- 5.9 In considering a criteria change, due regard has been given to the increasing number of light goods vehicles (typically vans) which are legally parked in residential streets. These are either owned by residents themselves, or left within their care by an employer. Consideration of the increased potential for such vehicles to overhang the footway, if parked on a property frontage, must therefore be given. The risk of footway obstruction by vans is location specific as footway widths vary significantly between streets. Car and van lengths also vary, with some large estate car models reaching 4.8 metres in length and the majority of vans ranging from 4.8 to 5.2 metres in length.
- 5.10 In conclusion, the criteria review suggests that the minimum required dimension for a property frontage should revert to a 5.0 metre baseline where adjacent footway widths are adequate, but there should be scope to apply an increase to this minimum dimension where adjacent footway widths are low and the risk of footway obstruction is therefore higher. In this regard, consideration has been given to the Department for Transport guidance 'Manual for Streets' which details useable footway widths.
- 5.11 The proposed amendment to the Parking Standards SPD (Residential Parking Standards, Table 7) is shown below:

Table 7 Category	Specification	
	Existing	Proposed
Depth from dwelling frontage to highway boundary to cater for parking space (associated with dropped kerb application)	5.5 metres	<p><b>5.0 metres</b> where adjacent footway/verge width =&gt; 1.5m</p> <p><b>5.1 metres</b> where adjacent footway/verge width &lt; 1.5m but &gt; 1.3m</p> <p><b>5.2 metres</b> where adjacent footway/verge width &lt; 1.3m</p>

*These dimension thresholds reduce the risk that footway overhang by a larger light goods vehicle will impact upon the use of the adjacent footway or verge.*

- 5.12 The remaining assessment criteria as outlined within para. 5.4 (above) would remain unchanged and be subject to the engineering judgement of the experienced Officer considering the dropped kerb application.

## 6 **ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 These proposed changes in respect of dropped kerbs are within the Council's powers to introduce.

### Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of dropped kerbs are met by the resident.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Not applicable

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 None

### Background Papers

None

### Contact for further information

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