

Report to: Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 22 November 2017

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Provision of Dropped Kerbs – update

Purpose: To provide an update to the Committee on the delivery of the recommendations arising from the 2008 Dropped Kerbs Scrutiny review.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Committee is asked to consider the issues in relation to the provision of a policy for dropped kerbs in East Sussex, and any associated funding.

1 Background Information

1.1. The Scrutiny Committee for Transport and Environment on 13 June 2008 considered the outcomes of a scrutiny review and recommendations in relation to the provision of dropped kerbs in the County. In summary, the Review put forward recommendations in relation to the following:

- That base budget provision be established for installing and upgrading dropped kerbs.
- The design of all new dropped kerbs should be in accordance with Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines especially with regard to upstand, the use of tactile paving, gradient and avoidance of any drops on the radius section of kerbs.
- Dropped kerbs should be protected from parked cars either by double yellow or white lines wherever practicable.
- Highways development control commentary should be provided to district and borough councils for all development applications where there is a highways impact, including developments of five properties or fewer.
- When a planning application is received for comment by the highways development control team should consult to check whether there are any outstanding requests for dropped kerbs that could potentially be funded from development contributions or conditions.
- Consultants from the National Register of Access Consultants be used to ensure the best possible outcomes of access audits for larger developments.
- That a policy on dropped kerbs be developed in association with relevant stakeholders to identify priorities for installing new dropped kerbs and upgrading existing sites based on a range of priorities identified by this review.

1.2 A full copy of the June 2008 Scrutiny Review of Dropped Kerbs report is attached at Appendix 1. A copy of the department's response to the recommendations of the Review is attached at Appendix 2 (8 July 2008 Cabinet report).

2 Supporting Information

2.1 The 2008 Scrutiny Review identifies a number of key issues in relation to funding, policy and provision of dropped kerbs in the County which are discussed further below.

Funding for Dropped Kerbs and provision through development

2.2 Prior to 2010, and in response to the Scrutiny Review recommendation, the area highway teams did have limited funding available for progressing some dropped kerbs requests from local communities. However, with the financial savings that needed to be made following the financial pressures since 2010, no further funding was made available specifically for dropped kerbs.

2.3 As a consequence, requests for dropped kerbs have since been considered along with other requests for schemes through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) scheme prioritisation process for funding and inclusion in the capital programme for local transport improvements. However, because of the localised impact that a request for a dropped kerb in itself has in relation to supporting the delivery of the LTP objectives, such requests are often not of high enough priority for local transport funding, unless it is integrated into a wider transport improvement scheme that has been prioritised for inclusion in the programme.

2.4 Alternative funding sources to deliver dropped kerbs include development contributions. Whilst development contributions have been secured towards wider local transport improvements or towards specific schemes, historically there are local examples in Eastbourne where funding has specifically been secured by Eastbourne Borough Council from small development sites in the town for dropped kerb provision in the vicinity of the respective developments. However, with the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in all of our Districts and Boroughs, with the exception of Hastings, the likelihood of securing CIL monies specifically for dropped kerbs is very low and therefore the only means of securing dropped kerbs through development, which is already being done, will be where it is required to enable local access into the site.

2.5 Since the County Council's Community Match initiative came into effect in 2014, there is the opportunity for local communities to part fund requests for dropped kerbs to support local accessibility. If parish councils or local community groups identify locations where the provision of dropped kerbs is a priority in its local area, then they can make an application and submit a business case for match funding from the £250,000 allocated to the Community Match programme towards the design and delivery of the scheme. However, any dropped kerb scheme (which costs on average about £2,000), that is put forward to the Community Match initiative must be prioritised relative to other schemes for which applications and business cases have been submitted

2.6 An option that could be considered is the specific allocation of the Community Match funding to provide a match pot for dropped kerbs. This would be allocated on a first come first served basis where parishes or community groups are able to contribute half the funding.

Dropped Kerb Policy

2.7 At present, and since there has been no specific funding for dropped kerb provision since 2010, there is no policy on prioritising requests for the introduction of dropped kerbs in the County. Therefore, as highlighted above any requests received would be considered either through the assessment process used to inform the development of the capital programme of local transport improvements, or as part of a wider transport improvement scheme which comes forward or in association with new development.

2.8 The Government published its National Cycling and Walking Investment Plan in April 2017. This encourages local authorities to develop their own plans to deliver future cycling and walking infrastructure.

2.9 In response, the County Council commissioned Sustrans earlier this year to help develop a local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for East Sussex. This is being undertaken in two stages, the first of which is to carry out an audit of existing cycling and walking infrastructure and identify future provision on an area by area basis. The second stage is the development of the strategy which will integrate the outcomes of the audit with the identification of cycling and

walking policies which will support infrastructure delivery and opportunities to secure future funding.

2.10 As part of the strategy development, one of the policy areas that will be looked at is improving accessibility through dropped kerb provision and developing an approach for responding to requests, if a funding source is available. Throughout the process, we are engaging with stakeholders through the East Sussex Cycling and Walking Forum to ensure that their views are incorporated into the strategy and its policies. As part of this work the first working group meeting has been held, which is comprised of representatives from a number of stakeholders including the Eastbourne Access Group. It is proposed to publish our Cycling and Walking Investment Plan for public consultation during Spring/Summer 2018.

Other Scrutiny recommendations

2.11 The majority of dropped kerbs are protected by double yellow lines, however there are still inconsistencies across the network where sometimes there is no protection or they are protected on one side of the road but not the other. In addition, there are issues where whilst the dropped kerb is protected, visibility is restricted by the proximity of parked vehicles. Therefore, we will seek to review issues raised with us on a case by case basis but any changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders required to introduce or amend double yellow lines would need to be fed into area parking reviews or where we were making changes as part of a local transport scheme rather than being dealt with on an ad-hoc basis.

2.12 In terms of design, the County Council's standard details for dropped kerb provision accords with DfT guidance in relation to the upstand, the use of tactile paving and gradient albeit there will be instances where allowances have to be made for on-site conditions

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 A number of recommendations were made following a Scrutiny review in June 2008 in relation to funding, policy and provision of dropped kerbs in the County. Whilst progress has been made on some of the recommendations, there are still some where further consideration is required.

3.2 At present there is no specific County Council funding source for dropped kerbs. In themselves, requests for dropped kerbs are unlikely to be funded through the capital programme for local transport improvements and therefore any requests for their provision will be delivered either as part of a wider local transport scheme, where they are sought and provided in association with new development or if a parish council or community group makes a request through the Community Match initiative.

3.2 In addition, there is no policy on prioritising requests for dropped kerbs and these are assessed along with other local transport schemes through the Local Transport Plan assessment process. As part of the development of the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan Strategy, a policy will be developed in relation to accessibility provision including dropped kerbs which will seek to resolve this.

3.3 The Committee are therefore asked to consider the issues in relation to dropped kerbs specifically around policy and funding highlighted in section 2 of the report.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

National Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, April 2017