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Meeting	Cabinet
Date	1 December 2003
Subject	**Review of Policy for Vehicle Crossovers**
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment
Summary	This report reviews the policy for vehicle crossovers and proposes a reduction in the minimum depth required for a hardstanding from 4.8m to 4.5m.

Officer Contributors	Head of Highways and Design
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A – Roads Requiring Planning Permission Appendix B – Roads not Requiring Planning Permission Appendix C- Policy Changes in Relation to Construction
For decision by	Cabinet
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

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1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the revised policy for vehicle crossovers contained within this report be approved, including the reduction in the minimum depth requirement for a hardstanding from 4.8 metres to 4.5 metres, with the provisos detailed in paragraph 7.4 and the revised list of roads requiring planning permission as detailed in paragraph 7.5.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

2.1 Environment Policy Department Committee 27 March 2001, decision 3 when it was resolved to surface vehicle crossovers with modular paving instead of blacktop.

2.2 Environment Policy Development Committee 1 February 1999 when it was noted that the Council has limited powers to restrict the right of vehicular access to frontages and agreed that in contentious cases the decision of the then Chief Highways Engineer is referred to the Ward Members for their comments and if required by the Members the application is referred to the appropriate Committee.

2.3 Public Works Committee, 9 April 1991, Decision 2, when the criteria and procedure dealing with applications for the construction of crossovers over public footways and verges was approved.

3 CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The Corporate Plan states that every resident has the right to expect the borough's roads and pavements to be safe to use and the need to reduce congestion. Allowing more vehicles to park off the public highway will help to reduce traffic congestion, increase visibility and achieve this objective.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 The main risk of reducing the depth from 4.8m to 4.5m is that of vehicles overhanging the footway. However, this risk is limited as very few vehicles are longer than 4.5m and vehicle crossover applicants will be made aware that vehicle overhanging is an offence under the Highways Act 1980.

4.3 Another area of risk is while the crossover is being constructed, when pedestrians may have to negotiate differences in levels and while signing and coning is required to guard the differences in levels. By reducing the construction time for each crossover this risk can be minimised. The proposal to construct verges/margins in block paving instead of blacktop will achieve this as the mason will be able to construct the whole crossover in one visit instead of waiting for a separate blacktop gang to lay the margin.

4.4 Reducing the number of vehicles parked onstreet increases the visibility of pedestrians, especially children and can lessen the risk of them being masked by parked vehicles when crossing the road.

5 FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Individual vehicle crossovers are constructed for residents on a rechargeable basis, whilst funding for their maintenance and reconstruction comes from a number of Revenue and Capital budgets.

6 COMMENTS, IF ANY, OF THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY OFFICERS (Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer)

6.1 None

7 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

DEPTH OF HARDSTANDING

7.1 A key part of our current criteria for approval of a vehicle crossing application is that there is space, at right angles to the highway, for a hardstanding of minimum depth 4.8m and minimum width 2.4m. This size complies with the standard parking bay recommended in Design Bulletin 32 (Residential Roads and Footpaths – Layout Considerations) published by the Department of Transport and was approved by the Public Works Committee in 1991.

7.2 The 4.8m minimum depth requirement is the main cause for rejecting vehicle crossover applications. It was introduced to allow vehicles to be parked safely on the hardstanding without protruding into the footway and thereby causing an obstruction. This depth also enables a vehicle to enter and leave the property safely and in one straight movement as required by the Highways Act 1980.

7.3 A survey of other London Boroughs' minimum requirement for the size of hardstanding has now been carried out. Of the 12 Boroughs which replied, 8 including Brent, Camden and Enfield had the same 4.8m x 2.4m requirement as ours; Hounslow require 4.3m x 2.0m; Ealing and Greenwich require 4.2m x 2.4m and Harrow require 4.0m x 2.7m. Enfield will also consider depths down to 3.8m but the house owner must enter into a legal agreement restricting the size of any vehicle that can be parked within the property. However, this would be difficult to enforce and could result in vehicles overhanging the footway.

7.4 In view of these survey results and in the interests of road safety, it is proposed to consider depths down to 4.5m provided that the movement into the hardstanding can be achieved in one manoeuvre from the road. This reduced depth will still accommodate the majority of today's cars and if vehicles do overhang the footway, this protrudance should be minimal. The

vehicle crossover application forms will be amended to highlight to applicants that they must park wholly within their property and that any vehicle overhanging the footway is committing an offence under the Highways Act 1980. This reduction in depth will help to reduce the acute parking problems in some of the borough's roads. In addition the hardstanding must be in a safe position within the property and not directly in front of the front door, if this is the only place where the minimum depth criteria is met, so as to ensure safe escape in any emergency eg. fire.

PLANNING PERMISSION

7.5 Planning permission to construct a hardstanding is required where the property is not a single family dwelling house, such as a flat; is a listed building; is in a conservation area or where the proposal affects a tree, including the roots, in a conservation area or which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

7.6 Planning permission is also required to construct or enlarge a vehicle crossover when the property is within a certain article 4 direction in a conservation area or is on a classified road. Historically the classifications have been Trunk Roads; Class I Roads (A Roads); Class II Roads (B Roads) and Class III Roads (Local feeder roads and "rat runs"). However, the Borough's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) now classifies roads in Tiers and it has been found that the new Tier 2 and Tier 3 roads do not correlate completely with the old Class II and Class III . In the interests of uniformity it is now proposed to adopt the Tier 2 and 3 classifications for vehicle crossovers requiring planning permission. Appendix A contains a list of new roads now requiring planning permission, included in Tier 2 and 3, and Appendix B lists the old Class II and III which will now not require planning permission.

7.7 Other changes to the policy for vehicle crossovers are recommended in order to give officers flexibility in dealing with construction related problems. Appendix C gives details of these, the most important of which are:

i) The use of 63 mm traditional paving slabs where residents request additional crossovers or widening their existing ones and in carrying out footway maintenance.

ii) The construction of footway margins in block paving rather than tarmac, in both crossover construction and in footway maintenance.

iii) The construction of crossovers in tarmac where there are shallow tree roots.

8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

MO: ASV
BT: PA