

APPLICATION PROCESS

(FOR A RESIDENTIAL VEHICLE ACCESS CROSSING)

1. Read the '**Guidance Notes for a Residential Vehicle Access Crossing**'
2. Email the completed form to vacs@solihull.gov.uk.

Has the application been approved?

Please note: Final approval will be subject to the site survey



YES - Approved

3. Arrangements will be made for an inspector to visit your property to take measurements necessary to provide a quotation.
4. The quotation and formal agreement will be sent to you within **6 weeks of** receipt of the £111 administration fee and application. No updates will be provided prior to the quote being sent out. Your quotation will be valid for 6 months. The approval decisions and quotations are valid for a period of **six months** from the date of the decision letter.
5. The formal agreement should be signed and returned to the same address with the appropriate payment. If you are a tenant your landlord will be required to countersign the agreement.
6. Arrangements will be made for the crossing to be constructed within 8 weeks of receipt of payment and return of the VAC form although this will be subject to prior work commitments and other work priorities. No updates will be provided during this period and no construction dates can be provided due to a constantly changing programme



NO - Rejected

3. Main reasons for refusal are:
 - Crossing already at maximum permitted width
 - Healthy tree(s) in way of location of proposed crossing
 - Crossing is off a parking bay (even if some properties in the road have existing crossings off a parking bay)
 - Crossing would be additional to an existing crossing (e.g. in/out crossing)(even if some properties in the road already have more than one crossing)
 - Crossing would be wider than the permitted maximum width (even if other properties in the road have existing crossings wider than the maximum width)
 - Insufficient width and depth for a driveway (even if there are some properties in the road with existing driveways that do not have sufficient width and depth)
 - Refusal of Planning Permission
 - Safety issues (e.g. poor visibility)
 - Solihull Community Housing objections
 - Land ownership objections
 - Local parking implications
 - Other highway grounds

GUIDANCE NOTES

(FOR A RESIDENTIAL VEHICLE ACCESS CROSSING)

Unsuccessful applications

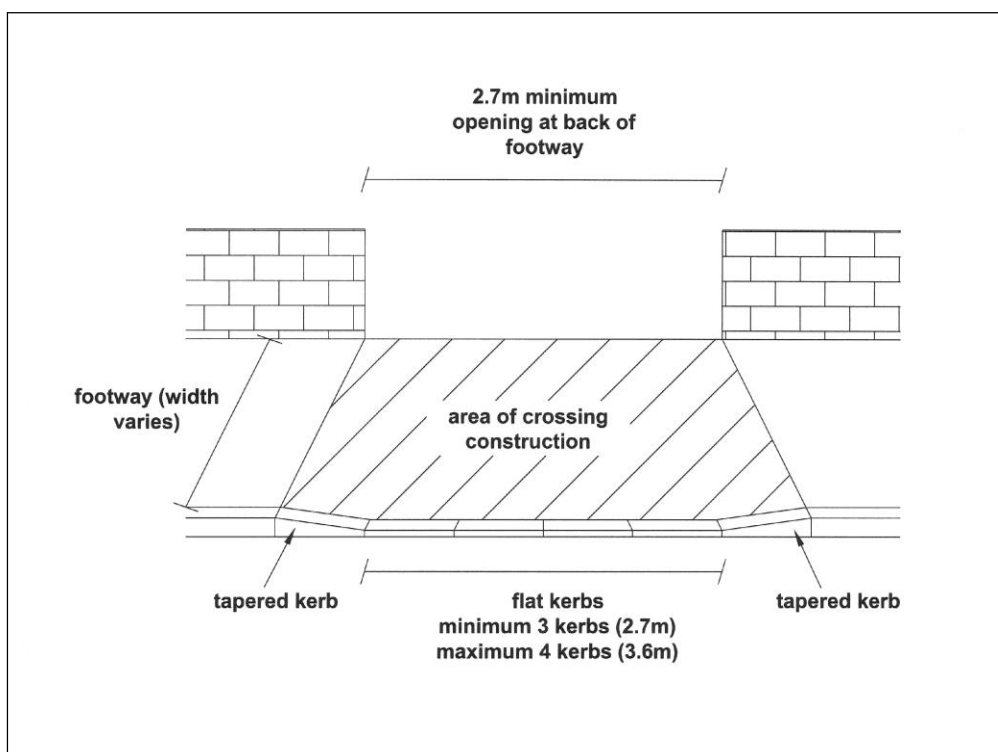
All applications are considered fairly, in line with these guidance notes and application process. If it is not possible for a crossing to be provided we will advise you in writing. Please refer to the sections within Page 1 on 'Restrictions' and the 'Application Process' for the main reasons applications are refused.

If you wish to challenge a refusal, the matter may be referred to the Head of Service at vacs@solihull.gov.uk.

Requests to review decisions must be in writing. When asking for a review you will need to clearly set out the reasons why you consider the criteria was not correctly applied. We will aim to respond within 4 weeks of having received your request.

Layout and Construction Details

Single Crossings	Shared Crossings
Would normally consist of either 3 or 4 flat kerbs with a tapered or transition kerb at either side.	Shared crossings can be constructed for two adjacent properties.
The <i>minimum</i> width permitted is 2.7m, the equivalent of 3 flat kerbs (not including the tapered kerbs).	The maximum width permitted is 9.0m, or the equivalent of 10 flat kerbs (not including the tapered kerbs or 10.8m including the tapered kerbs).
The <i>maximum</i> width permitted is 3.6m, or the equivalent of 4 flat kerbs (not including the tapered kerbs or 5.4m including the tapered kerbs).	Existing shared crossings can be extended to a width of 9.0m.
Existing single crossings can be extended to a width of 3.6m.	



Layout of a typical single vehicle access crossing

Cost

- A VAC is charged at £184 per square metre of tarmac that needs to be laid.
- There is a minimum charge of £546 which will be payable if only a small area requires work.
- When making an application you are required to pay a **non-refundable** £111 administration fee.
- A typical cost for a four dropped kerb crossing is approximately £1400 although this may vary depending on the width of the pavement or verge. Additional costs may be required to relocate street furniture. The minimum cost for moving a lamp column is £2000 and a street name plate £200.
- If existing service equipment (such as BT boxes etc.) are found in the vicinity of the proposed crossing, we will need to contact the relevant service provider for quotations for a service diversion. This will add significantly to the overall cost of a crossing and will increase the timescales for providing you with a quote.
- Payments can be paid online (via the link on the Dropped Kerb webpage) or by debit card.
- The costs of a crossing can be paid for in instalments (which you can request when returning the quotation acceptance form). This is usually paid over a 10 month period; however the Council will not carry-out any works until full payment for the crossing is received.

Planning Permission

- The applicant will also require planning permission for a vehicle access crossing if:
 - The property has the frontage directly onto a classified road
 - The property is a listed building
 - The property is other than a house for a single-family e.g. flat, maisonette, commercial or industrial premises or operation.
- Guidance on applying for planning permission can be found at the following webpage: www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Planning/planninghomeowners/applyforpermission
- Furthermore, from 1 October 2008, the permitted development rights that allow householders to pave their front garden with an impermeable surface have been removed. Planning permission is required that details the proposed drainage provisions prior to any works being undertaken to construct a driveway in impermeable material or for the Council to then construct a VAC. This will limit the contributory risk of flooding and pollution of watercourses. The hardstanding within the property must be built so that water does not drain from it across the footway. Suitable drainage must therefore be provided within the boundaries of the property. Permeable surfaces, which drain freely, will not require planning permission.
- 'Communities and Local Government' and the 'Environment Agency' have produced a document 'Guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens'. This provides advice on constructing a permeable surface and details the background to the change in planning requirements. This is a free document which can be downloaded from the website: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pavingfrontgardens

Restrictions

- The Council will **not ordinarily** support more than one crossing per property.
- VACs will **not** be permitted off parking bays.
- A VAC constructed off a turning head will be approved where there is a benefit in removing vehicles from the highway. It will be made clear to the applicants that the provision of the VAC is to keep the turning area clear of parked vehicles.
- Any work required relocating utilities and underground apparatus in the footway and/or the removal of any obstructions such as lamp columns, street nameplates and/or any other measures to ensure the safe passage of vehicles will be charged to the applicant. This cost will be detailed at the time of the quotation.
- The removal of any healthy trees in the footway or verge to accommodate a VAC will **not** be allowed.
- A road with speed limits of 30mph or higher will require greater clear visibility and will therefore need to be assessed prior to approval being given. These roads may also be part of the classified network and require planning permission as detailed above.
- Any application for the construction of a VAC may be refused or modified on the grounds of safety. In this case you will be contacted by an officer before the VAC is constructed.
- Gates fitted across the vehicle entrance to your property, will require planning consent, and may in no circumstances open outwards across the footpath or carriageway (Highways Act 1980 - Section 153). There must also be a minimum distance of 6 metres from the face of kerb to the gates.

Quotation for Works and Works Programme

- We aim to send out a quote **within 6 weeks** of receipt of payment for the £111 administration fee and application. Please note; further time will be required if service diversions are required, however you will be informed of revised timescales within the above period.
- Work to construct new VACs, will be undertaken **within 8 weeks** of receipt of full payment for construction of the works and return of the VAC agreement located at the bottom of the letter.
- Where works are delayed or require traffic management resulting in longer timescales, then the resident will be informed via email or telephone and a revised installation date offered.

Right of Access and Maintenance

- The construction of a VAC does not give the occupier of any adjoining land any rights of ownership of the VAC - only the right to drive across the footway to gain access to a property with a private/light goods vehicle.
- Under no circumstances are vehicles permitted to park on VACs as this would cause an obstruction for pedestrians.
- From the date of completion, the Council as Highway Authority will assume responsibility for its maintenance at no extra cost to the occupier.
- The rectification of any damage caused by inappropriate use such as heavy vehicles using the crossing to access the property would be chargeable to the occupier or offender.

Financial assistance for the Disabled

- For assistance with paying for a dropped crossing, please contact Occupational Therapy on 0121 704 8007.
- If the property is identified by the resident on the application form, as being under the control of Solihull Community Housing (SCH) then SCH will organise the crossing works in liaison with the Occupational Therapy service.

Additional Requirements

- The opening created at the back of the footway in walls or hedges should be a minimum of 2.7m in width to allow access to the property.
- A minimum depth of 5.5m is required within the property, from the boundary with the footway or verge to any permanent fixture or building to allow all vehicles to be parked clear of the footway and not overhang the footway or verge.
- A suitable permeable hardstanding/driveway must be constructed prior to any work to the VAC being undertaken by the Council. Hardstanding means surfaces such as porous tarmac/concrete, slab paving or block paving. Loose materials such as gravel or shale may be used as long as there is a 2 metre deep apron of hardstanding between the footpath and the start of the loose material to prevent the loose material spilling onto the public highway. The drive must be constructed to allow water to drain through to underlying sub layers. ***It is the owner or occupier's responsibility to ensure that loose material is swept off the highway and back onto the drive.***
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the hardstanding may not have been constructed at the time the Council provided a quotation, it must be constructed prior to the VAC's construction. Please note; the applicant is required to confirm the hardstanding is in place when paying for the crossing works.