

THE EXECUTIVE

20 DECEMBER 2005

REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

FOOTWAY CROSSING PROVISION AND CHARGING POLICY	FOR DECISION
<p>Summary:</p> <p>Crossing the footway to gain access for off street parking without a properly constructed vehicle crossing is a huge problem in the Borough. It has been suggested that this could be alleviated if crossing prices were reduced. Current prices are base on rates in the Highway Reactive Maintenance Term Contract and a 25% administration fee.</p> <p>This report proposes introducing a flat rate administration fee of £75 per crossing and adopting the contractor reduced rates so that a standard crossing will cost £395 and larger crossings will attract a 15% reduction in construction costs. This, in conjunction with the lower administration fee, will result in considerable reductions in the cost of crossings for residents.</p> <p>It is also proposed to allow residents a longer time to pay for the crossing. Payment must be received before the crossing is constructed but the price will remain as quoted for up to 12 months.</p> <p>Wards Affected: All Wards</p>	
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Social Inclusion and Diversity: The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a requirement on local authorities to make an assessment of the impact of new and revised policies in terms of race equality. Existing policies have already been subjected to impact assessments. This Authority has adopted an approach of extending the impact to cover gender, disability, sexuality, faith, age and community cohesion.</p> <p>A Policy Proofing process has been introduced to assess such impacts and the outcome so far is that there are no specific adverse impacts as a result of the revisions to the Footway Provision and Charging policy detailed in this report.</p> <p>Crime and Disorder: There are no specific implications in this report.</p> <p>Risk Management: If the changes are not approved the following risks have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low take up of footway crossings• Increased need of enforcement• Increased damage to footways. <p>Action required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased enforcement action• Co-ordinated programme led by a dedicated Enforcement Officer (new post)	

<p>Financial: There are no financial implications as long as the number of crossings constructed is maintained at the current level. Confidence is high that these levels will be maintained and continual monitoring of income and the levels of crossing construction will be carried out to ensure all the Council's costs are met.</p>		
<p>Legal: No implications.</p>		
<p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>The Executive is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the revised charging policy in respect of the installation of footway crossings. 2. Approve the Front Garden Parking Criteria. 		
<p>Reason(s)</p> <p>Reduced cost of footway crossings will encourage more applications which will impact on the environment addressing the community priority of making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer and will reduce the need to take enforcement action.</p>		
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1. Background

- 1.1 Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 enables the Council to require a properly constructed dropped crossing to allow vehicular access for off street parking. Failure to have such a crossing is widespread throughout the Borough; it is estimated that there are in excess of 5000 instances where there is no properly constructed vehicle crossing. It is felt that more residents would apply for a crossing if the costs were reduced

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Costs are calculated using the Schedule of Rates in the Highway Reactive Maintenance Term Contract plus a 25% administration fee. The cost of a standard crossing for residents is £388 plus the 25% administration fee. Total cost for a standard crossing therefore, is £485. Crossings on wide footpaths are more expensive and attract a greater administration fee. Residents must pay in advance and are told that the price will only be guaranteed for three months and they will need to re-apply after this date.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 An administration charge based on a percentage of the cost of the crossing is considered unfair and should be changed to a flat rate for each crossing. Discussions between Highway and Finance Officers have identified this at £75.00.

This is dependent on the number of crossings constructed remaining constant and should be reviewed continually in case of a change in the demand for crossings. Footway crossing construction has remained constant for several years and demand is anticipated to rise over the next two years in association with this Council's expansion of the footway reconstruction programme

3.2 Three options were considered;

- a) Letting a contract specifically for construction of footway crossings. Originally felt to be a good option, it was rejected because there was no guarantee that we would get lower prices and the time needed to produce and let a tender would be too long.
- b) Producing a select list of contractors, issuing a specification to a resident and allowing the resident to choose a contractor from the list. This was rejected because of increased costs in inspection fees and probable costs incurred in ensuring good quality works. There would also be co-ordination problems that would have a serious effect on our abilities to meet the legal requirements imposed on us by the upcoming implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- c) Negotiating new rates with existing contractors and applying a fairer administration charge. This was felt to be the best option because of guaranteed reduction in costs and the short lead in time to implementation of this policy.

3.3 Negotiations with the Term Contractors have resulted in a flat rate fee for a standard crossing of £320 and a 15% reduction for all other crossings. These rates will operate from the 9 January 2006 and will be maintained until the current Term Contract expires

3.4 The cost of a standard crossing to residents will now be £395. Reductions for other crossings will be substantial. For example, a crossing on a wide footpath that would cost £1000 plus 25% administration will now cost the resident £925 rather than £1250.

3.5 A footway crossing is a significant outlay for residents and a longer time should be allowed for payment; up to 12 months with no increase in cost. The crossing will still not be constructed until payment is received but the extra time will reduce pressure on residents and alleviate the need to introduce payment by instalments facilities.

3.6 Footway Crossings will only be allowed when the Front Garden Parking Criteria are met - the criteria is attached at Appendix A.

4. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as long as the number of crossings constructed is maintained at the current level. Confidence is high that these levels will be maintained and continual monitoring of income and the levels of crossing construction will be carried out to ensure all the Council's costs are met.

5. Consultees

5.1 The following Lead Members have been advised of the proposals in this report.

Portfolio Holder
Environment and Sustainability; Councillor McKenzie.

5.2 The following officers have been consulted on this report:

Corporate Strategy

Robin Hanton, Corporate Legal Manager

Department of Regeneration & Environment

Alex Anderson, Head of Finance,
Philip Horner, Senior Accountant,
Gary Ellison, Acting Head of Civil Engineering
Peter Blanchard, Group Manager – Streetcare
Dick Ellsom, Streetworks Manager
Dave Dare, Engineering Manager – Planned Highway Maintenance

Housing & Health

John Evans, Community Housing Manager
Bill Jennings, Community Housing Manager
Joanne Prior, Service Manager – Housing Estates.

Background Papers

- Executive report and Minute 354, 22 March 2005 re: Review of Charges for the Collection of Trade and Other Waste, Emptying of Cesspools, Vehicle Crossings and MOT's.