

## ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Accessible dropped kerb crossing for pedestrians
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2021, the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update on the processes used to identify sites for the installation of accessible dropped kerb crossings for pedestrians.

A barrier-free pedestrian environment is fundamentally important for ensuring ease of movement and access for all. The need to create an inclusive environment is covered by a number of pieces of legislation, which gives disabled people a 'right of access' to goods, services and facilities, including in the pedestrian environment and in transport related infrastructure such as pedestrian crossings and bus stops.

This report sets out how Flintshire County Council deals with requests and the provision of accessible pedestrian dropped kerbs within the adopted highway.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and support the process for accepting and implementing requests for accessible drop kerb crossings for pedestrians.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND FOR THE REPORT</b>
1.01	In November 2021, the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update on the processes used to identify sites for the installation of accessible dropped kerb crossings for pedestrians.
1.02	<p>This report sets out how we deal with the provision of pedestrian dropped kerbs within the adopted highway in relation to uncontrolled crossing points i.e. where pedestrians usually do not have priority over vehicles and have to make a decision about whether it is safe to cross or where the volumes of pedestrian movement are not significant enough to merit stopping the flow of traffic. The report outlines the process for receiving requests, identifying sites, recognising the appropriate solution, applying available resources, and identifies possible funding mechanisms for accessible dropped kerbs for pedestrians.</p> <p>This does not include vehicle access crossovers or controlled crossings.</p>
1.03	<p><b><u>Accessible Dropped Kerb Crossings for Pedestrians</u></b></p> <p>A barrier-free pedestrian environment is fundamentally important for ensuring ease of movement and access for all. The need to create an inclusive environment is covered by a number of pieces of legislation, which gives disabled people a 'right of access' to goods, services and facilities, including in the pedestrian environment and in transport related infrastructure such as pedestrian crossings and bus stops.</p>
1.04	It is the responsibility of local authorities to install pedestrian dropped kerbs where practical, so that all people can benefit from having an accessible environment. Although the main purpose of the provision of accessible dropped kerbs is to provide good access for disabled people, they also meet the needs of many other people, such as people with pushchairs / buggies or someone who walks with a stick, frame or cane, as well as someone carrying heavy shopping or luggage.
1.05	An uncontrolled or informal crossing involves the provision of dropped or flush kerbs and tactile paving to enable people to cross to and from the carriageway. The ideal dropped kerb consists of a gentle slope from pavement level to a seamless join with the road, with tactile tiles to alert people with visual impairment to the presence of the drop. The sloping transition of a dropped kerb from the pavement to the road avoids the need for stepping off the kerb or negotiating full height kerbs. Where there are no dropped kerbs, people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters and pushchair users may find it impossible to cross the road or cross a junction, as they can have difficulties in negotiating changes in levels. Dropped kerbs can also encourage pedestrians to cross the road at a safer location in comparison to other parts of the road and reduces the chances of pedestrians tripping over the kerb.
1.06	Dropped kerbs have to be constructed to a standard that ensures that they can be used safely, particularly those with a sight impairment. They also need to be positioned so that they direct partially sighted pedestrians to the opposite dropped kerb and provide a warning to help pedestrians differentiate between

	where the footway ends and the carriageway begins. The colour and presence of the tactile paving alerts vehicle drivers to the existence of the crossing point.
1.07	Dropped kerbs can allow wheelchair and mobility scooter users to cross the road, including side street junctions and are best installed as part of a 'route' for these users. It is also an offence to obstruct (or park on) a pedestrian dropped kerb, and a penalty charge can be issued to the vehicle owner.
1.08	<p><b><u>Active Travel Act 2013</u></b></p> <p>Within the Active Travel Guidance, the term “walker” and also “pedestrian” embraces not only those who travel by foot (walking or running), but also users of wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Somebody using an electric wheelchair, mobility scooter, or similar vehicle would also be considered a walker (or pedestrian) rather than a motorised travel user. Walking and cycling share many similarities, including many of the barriers to uptake, such as concerns over safety and poor, or missing infrastructure.</p>
1.09	The Active Travel Act 2013 sets out a process for local authorities to follow to create networks of active travel routes. The term network in relation to active travel means routes which join up so that people can travel in a continuous and safe way between their origin and destination.
1.10	The Act requires highways authorities in Wales to make enhancements to routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road schemes and to have regard to the needs of active users in a range of other highway authority functions, such as maintenance.
1.11	<p>Active travel is a key priority in Llwybr Newydd – A New Wales Transport Strategy, which was published in 2021 and walking and cycling is identified at the top of the sustainable transport hierarchy that guides all our transport activities (See Figure 1 below).</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>The Sustainable Transport Hierarchy</b></p> <p>We will continue to make best use of existing transport infrastructure by maintaining and managing it well.</p> <p>We will also adapt it to a changing climate and upgrade it to support modal shift.</p> <p>Where we need new infrastructure, we will use the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.</p> <p>Walking and Cycling</p> <p>Public Transport</p> <p>Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicles</p> <p>Other Private Motor Vehicles</p> </div>
1.12	The construction of a comprehensive active travel network may take many years. Its completion reflects the Active Travel Guidance, which will be achieved through:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct investment in new and improved routes using funding specifically allocated to active travel;</li> <li>• the incremental integration of enhanced routes and facilities for walking and cycling in the design of highway improvements and new highway schemes as required by the Act;</li> <li>• any new or improved routes that are provided by new developments such as new housing, commercial, education and industrial sites (including any off-site highway improvement works within the development).</li> </ul>
1.13	<p>Over the years, the Council has improved the pedestrian environment in the majority of locations across the active travel network either through grant funding for active travel measures, integrated transport infrastructure improvements and road improvement schemes or through development sites, such as housing, employment, schools, hospitals or health facilities. Many locations now have accessible dropped kerbs at road junctions or crossing points. However, it should be noted that our existing built environment has developed over many years and previously has been designed to differing standards to those expected today. On some side roads or estate roads, not all footways have been upgraded and some residential roads or historical environments do not have dropped kerbs, which can present a physical barrier to disabled people.</p>
1.14	<p>Under the Active Travel Guidance, opportunities to enhance the provision for active travel must be taken whenever works associated with the highway are carried out, including new construction, maintenance or any improvements. It is therefore proposed that where reasonably practical, pedestrian dropped crossings will be considered.</p>
1.15	<p><b><u>Request Procedure</u></b></p> <p>Residents, visitors, members of the public and elected members can request dropped kerbs at locations where wheelchair users and pedestrians with mobility difficulties are having problems. These requests can either be submitted directly to the portfolio or through any relevant ongoing consultation exercises or through Town and Community Councils. These requests will need to be supported by the elected members. When requests are received they will be assessed and scored against predetermined criteria.</p>
1.16	<p>Requests for dropped kerbs can be submitted by providing details of the request using the email address: <a href="mailto:StreetsceneAdmin@flintshire.gov.uk">StreetsceneAdmin@flintshire.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Alternatively, further information on the installation of accessible dropped kerbs for pedestrians can be obtained by calling the Streetscene Contact Centre on 01352 701234 and requesting a call back from the Transport Strategy team.</p>
1.17	<p>The following are examples of factors that will need to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a dropped kerb located on only one side of the road?</li> <li>• Are there issues associated with illegal parking?</li> <li>• Are there issues with the speed of traffic, congestion, reduced sight lines?</li> <li>• Is the location urban, rural, town or village, purely residential or near to a bus stop?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it located on the main pedestrian routes within towns and other settlements with larger centres of populations to support the local community and visitors?</li> <li>• Is the site located within areas where increased number of potential users may require access to specific services or likely to be used by a greater number of people using mobility aids, including hospitals, health centres, day care centres, sheltered accommodation, residential care homes, nursery and other education provision, transport hubs – rail stations, bus stations, public service buildings etc.?</li> </ul>
1.18	<p>Other factors associated with dropped kerbs that need to be considered include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drainage issues, depending on the location of the suggested dropped kerb or existing drainage infrastructure</li> <li>• alterations or diversion of utility companies' equipment (pipes and cables etc. that may be buried underground).</li> <li>• footway widths and other street furniture such as bus stops or street lights</li> <li>• for the pedestrian to cross safely on higher speed roads, they must have good judgement of motor vehicle speeds and gaps in vehicle traffic</li> <li>• some motorists may continue to obstruct dropped kerbs, despite it being an offence to do so</li> </ul>
1.19	<p><b><u>Funding and Prioritisation</u></b></p> <p>There is no funding available within existing revenue budgets for the provision of pedestrian dropped kerbs; consequently, we are reliant on external grant funding or other funding streams, which invariably requires a competitive bidding process for schemes to be delivered in the following financial year.</p>
1.20	<p>Prioritisation is seen as an essential element in the delivery of the Active Travel Act. The Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs) are intended to show how the network will develop over a fifteen year period. Clearly not all routes can be developed at the same time. Similarly, not all routes will have the same impact on increasing the number of active travellers or achieving other local or national goals that can be facilitated by improving active travel infrastructure. It is therefore important that, as a local authority, we have a clear plan for the prioritisation of routes to help determine the order in which routes should be developed or constructed and to demonstrate to the public and stakeholders the long term nature of the development of the network during the engagement and consultation process.</p>
1.21	<p>A scoring matrix has been developed from the approach used by Bridgend County Borough Council during the prioritisation of its previous active travel proposals. It was originally adapted from a matrix developed by Local Transport Projects Limited and has been used in Cardiff and across the wider south-east Wales region. The matrix contains 26 separate scoring elements, related to the benefits and accessibility improvements which it is anticipated that schemes will deliver. The matrix is intended to provide a mechanism to assist local authorities to identify which schemes are likely to have the greatest impact, and therefore should be prioritised for development and delivery (see <b>Appendix 1</b>).</p>
1.22	<p>All requests will be reviewed on their merit and there is no guarantee that we will be able to install the pedestrian dropped kerbs as requested. This has meant</p>

	<p>that some locations requested for active travel improvements will on occasion not score highly enough on the matrix to warrant being put forward for prioritisation and funding bids.</p> <p>Due to financial constraints, priority will be given to those sites which give the greatest benefit, and the appropriate funding and available resources to deliver an appropriate solution at the location will need to be considered.</p>
1.23	<p>Where requested, schemes are assessed, scored and ranked in accordance with Flintshire County Council's risk-based matrix, and subsequently prioritised in order of a hierarchical score with the highest scoring schemes considered for implementation subject to available funding. Those schemes that have been identified will be considered for implementation alongside scheduled highway improvement works, the annual road resurfacing programme, or Welsh Government grant funding. Where possible, priority junction improvements should be included within other programmes and schemes such as Safer Routes in the Community (SRIC) or high street regeneration improvements.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>There is no allocated revenue budget to fund accessible dropped kerb crossings for pedestrians and, in most cases, implementation will be funded by Welsh Government grant funding.</p>
2.02	<p>The cost of installing each crossing will vary according to the width of the crossing and/or the width of the footway, the junction typologies and proposed interventions. Indicative costs range from £3,000 to £30,000 per crossing point subject to location and design of the junction.</p>
2.03	<p>A recent report identified eight settlement areas for 2,625 priority junctions with a total improvement cost of £20,156,850. In addition, four-mini roundabouts and 38 non-signalised crossroads were identified with a total improvement cost of £2,020,000. Therefore, the total estimated cost of improving all of the identified junctions is £22,176,850. Given the cost identified, it is likely that improvements will need to be phased over a number of years. It is therefore recommended that the next step is to identify priorities for improvement. This could involve prioritising one or more of the designated settlements or prioritising one or more of the priority junction typologies.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>Barriers to transport and the wider built environment can restrict choice for disabled people when considering travel options. Active travel contributes to a more equal Wales by providing an affordable alternative to motorised travel and removing barriers that stop disabled people from fulfilling their potential and achieving their ambitions. Increased levels of walking and cycling lead to a greater level of social interaction creating greater cohesion in our communities.</p>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Cabinet Member for Streetscene.
<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Appendix M Active Travel Guidance
<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Llwybr Newydd – A New Wales Transport Strategy - <a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/llwybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021-full-strategy_0.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/llwybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021-full-strategy_0.pdf</a>
<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Katie Wilby, Chief Officer, Streetscene &amp; Transportation  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704530  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:katie.wilby@flintshire.gov.uk">katie.wilby@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Barry Wilkinson, Highway Network Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704656  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:barry.wilkinson@flintshire.gov.uk">barry.wilkinson@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Footway</b> - the pedestrian part of the highway adjacent, or close, to the carriageway.</p> <p><b>Footpath</b> - a pedestrian route not adjacent, or close, to the highway.</p> <p><b>Active Travel Act 2013</b> - Active travel is a term used to describe walking and cycling for purposeful journeys to a destination or in combination with public transport. The definition of an active travel journey includes travel to work, travel to school and other educational facilities, travel to the shops, travel to leisure facilities, travel to public transport interchanges and so on.</p> <p><b>Disability</b> - Legislation defines a person as having a disability, if he/she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p>