

Local Highway Panels Members' Guide

3 Pedestrian Footways and Dropped Kerbs



1. Introduction

Footways

Engineers use the word footway to describe the side of the carriageway that has been constructed for people to walk on. Residents may use other terms including footpath and pavement.

Footways are provided as standard in most urban areas. That is not always the case in rural or semi-rural areas.



Requests for new footways in rural areas can be contentious as they can be seen by others as urbanisation.

It will be necessary to consult with the community to confirm that there is sufficient demand for the footway and to check that the majority of residents are in favour of the proposal.

Widening an existing footway or creating a new one can be very expensive to install.

- Even in rural locations, there can be a lot of utility equipment under the existing verge and carriageway, such as water, gas, electricity, telecommunications etc.
- It may be necessary to purchase or dedicate land as highway because:
 - The existing highway verge may not be wide enough to accommodate a new footway.
 - The total highway land (carriageway and verge) might not be wide enough to allow a footway to be built within its overall width and still provide sufficient space for vehicles.
 - Additional paved/tarmacked areas increase the surface water run-off and may impact on the highway drainage system.



New footways are designed to be at least 1.5m wide to accommodate wheelchairs and parents with children etc. In circumstances where there is minimal usage this can be reduced to an absolute minimum width of 1.2m.

2. Typical Problems

'We need a footway'

'The footway isn't wide enough'

'We need dropped kerbs for the wheelchair'

'It's not safe to walk to the park/shops'

3. Things to Consider

Having confirmed that there is a need for a new footpath then the next thing to consider is land. Until the land needed for the footway is within the county's control then it will not be possible to progress a scheme.

The next major factor will be if there are any utility services within the highway, as the cost of their relocation can be expensive.

The list below could assist in prioritising the scheme, it is not exhaustive but gives an indication of the things you may need to consider.

New or improved footways and pedestrian links can act as important parts of Travel Plans for all types of land use – employers, schools and tertiary education, hospitals and residential developments. For more information on the opportunities available, contact the [Travel Plan Team](#).

New Footways

- Usage - How many people will be using the new route?
- Destinations - Where are they going to and from? School, playing fields, church, post office, bus stops?
- Accidents - Is there a history of pedestrian collisions on the road?
- Land - Is there sufficient highway width or will it be necessary to acquire or dedicate land?
- Options - What alternatives are there?
- Signage may be a more immediate solution

3. Things to Consider continued

- Crossings - Are there any properties that have driveways that will cross the new footway? Will there be a need to include informal crossing facilities such as dropped kerbs and/or a pedestrian refuge or a formal crossing such as a zebra crossing or puffin crossing?

Widening footways

- Extent of highway - Is there sufficient highway land to accommodate both a widened footway and the carriageway?
- Parking - If the carriageway width is reduced, will this reduce the available kerb side parking?
 - If it will, then it may be very contentious!
 - Or it may result in complaints about parking on the footways.
- Utility apparatus - What equipment is under the highway that might need to be relocated?

Dropped Kerbs

Pedestrians who use footways will have to stop to cross at road junctions etc. so requests for footway improvements generally include the need for dropped crossing points. These can often come from older or mobility impaired residents or those pushing children in prams/pushchairs.

Dropped kerbs may also be requested to improve the route to or around a town or village, the doctors or library etc. They can also come from purely residential areas or sheltered housing complexes, where the growth in electric buggy use has increased the need for dropped kerbs to create a continuous accessible route.

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.

Not everyone likes the tactile paving at a dropped kerb as they find it uncomfortable to walk on but the purpose is to assist visually impaired people to locate the dropped crossing point. It also provides a warning to help pedestrians differentiate between where the footway ends and the carriageway begins.



4. Typical Measures

Dropped Kerbs



New Footways



5. Scheme Investigation

New/widened footways - the following will need to be considered:

- Length and width of footway proposed.
- Level of design and supervision required.
- Drainage, existing street furniture, vehicular accesses and dropped crossings.
- Any alterations/diversion of utility companies' equipment (pipes and cables etc. buried underground).
- Land acquisition being required.
- Work to mitigate any impact on adjoining properties.
- Any objections received during a consultation period.

Dropped kerbs - the following will need to be considered:

- The location of kerbs on both sides of the road.
- The carriageway levels and whether water ponding may need to be resolved.
- Any alterations/diversion of utility companies' equipment (pipes and cables etc. buried underground).

6. Costs and Timescales

The Essex County Council contract with Ringway Jacobs is a target cost contract and not a fixed price contract. This type of contract was chosen as the best type of contract to deliver savings and efficiencies and also to promote partnering between ECC and Ringway Jacobs.

An explanation of the process can be found in Appendix 1.

The costs and timescales for typical schemes can be found on the following hyperlink.
[1.3. New Pedestrian Footways]

7. Glossary of Terms

AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location (similar to RTPI)
CMA	Cabinet Member Action
CMB	Cabinet Member Briefing
EA	Environment Agency
ECC	Essex County Council
EH	Essex Highways
LHP	Local Highways Panel
NEPP	North Essex Parking Partnership
PP	Parking Partnership
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
S106	Section 106 (Money provided by a Developer to County Council to implement infrastructure as an obligation of the planning permission)
S278	Section 278 (Infrastructure required to be implemented by the Developer as an obligation of the planning permission)
SERP	Safer Essex Roads Partnership
SID	Speed Indicating Device
SEPP	South Essex Parking Partnership
SLO	Speed Limit Order
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
TSRGD	Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions
VAS	Vehicle Activated Sign