

---

**Meeting:** Traffic Management Committee

**Date:** 1 March 2011

**Subject:** Highway “H-Bar” Markings

**Report of:** Basil Jackson, Assistant Director of Highways and Transport

**Summary:** The report provides the Traffic Management Committee with details relating to the proposed policy for the provision of “H-Bar” markings on the highway. This policy is required as Central Bedfordshire Council currently has no policy controlling the application for and implementation of on-street “H-Bar” markings at vehicle crossovers. The policy is designed to give the council full control over the process and to provide guidance to those who wish to apply for such a marking.

---

**Contact Officer:** David Bowie, Head of Service, Traffic Management

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Highways and Transport

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

The Council priorities affected by this paper are:

- creating safer communities; and
- managing growth effectively.

##### **Financial:**

The policy proposes that there would be a fee to assess each application as well as a charge for the implementation of the marking. The application fee would cover Officer time whilst dealing with assessing the location and safety aspect of the application. The implementation charge would cover the materials and installation of the marking and would be charged at cost. The proposed pricing structure would make this a cost neutral service, thus adding no burden to the taxpayer.

It is proposed that:

a) There will be a non-refundable fee of £100 for each “H-Bar” application.

c) There will be a fee of £60 for the installation of the “H-Bar” marking if the application is approved.

##### **Legal:**

In April 2009, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) succeeded Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) as highway and traffic authority for the road network in Central Bedfordshire. As the Highway Authority for public roads in Central Bedfordshire, the council can provide road markings as it sees fit. It is a civil parking offence under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to park across dropped kerbs and is liable to a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) – currently £70. The installation of an “H-Bar” marking is not necessary for this to be enforced but it is used to remind drivers that it is an offence to do so.

**Risk Management:**

None as a result of this report.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

Parking restrictions are enforced by the council's contractors, Vinci Park and “H-Bars” will be enforced as part of nominal duties subject to receiving a request to enforce by the public.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

None as a result of this report.

**Community Development/Safety:**

The Road Traffic Act was introduced to protect all users of the Highway network and places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of motorists and pedestrians alike. It is with this in mind that a formal policy for the installation of “H-Bar” markings needs to be adopted to ensure the free and safe movement for all when wishing to enter and exit their own property. This allows for a safer community ensuring all road users respect the highway network which they use.

**Sustainability:**

The effective management of Central Bedfordshire’s highway network is a key part of accommodating Central Bedfordshire’s growth agenda and ensuring that the district is “open for business”.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the proposed “H-Bar” Marking Policy, application process and schedule of charges are approved.**

---

## Background and Information

### Policy context

- 1 Central Bedfordshire Council has no adopted Policy which covers “H-Bar” markings and, as a result, a problem with injudicious parking across driveways occurs on a regular basis, notably close to schools.
- 2 The policy has been written to establish a level of control over the provision of “H-Bar” road markings across driveways and other accesses. Requests for “H-Bar” markings have substantially increased in Central Bedfordshire over the last 12 months as problems with indiscriminate parking increase.
- 3 Providing “H-Bar” markings will contribute to the safe operation of the highway and reduce the potential for blockages of the highway to occur.

### Technical Background

- 4 An “H-Bar” marking is an elongated white ‘H’ which is placed across a vehicular crossing provided by dropped kerbs to permit access. It is normally a line 75mm wide and it extends along the extent of the dropped kerbs from where each side starts to drop down to the road surface.
- 5 The purpose of an “H-Bar” marking is to provide a reminder that parking across a dropped kerb driveway causes an obstruction to people wishing to access or leave a property by vehicle. Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 makes parking across dropped kerbs a civil parking offence. Accordingly, Central Bedfordshire Council can issue Fixed Penalty Notices in the sum of £70 to vehicles obstructing the access of other vehicles on or off the public highway. “H-Bars” additionally give a visible deterrent to drivers that an obstruction occurs where accesses are parked across, and that an FPN may be issued.
- 6 Owing to the increased number of cars on the roads and the subsequent pressure on available on-street parking, the Council are receiving an increasing number of requests for “H-Bar” markings to be installed to protect access to homes and other premises.

### Application process and costs

- 7 It is proposed that there would be two elements of the application process. An applicant would be required to fill in a form explaining the reasons for the request and there would be a charge made to assess the application. This application fee would cover Officer time to make an assessment of the location and the safety aspect of the proposed marking. If the application was approved then an implementation charge would cover the materials and installation of the marking and would be charged at cost. It is recommended that both fees would be payable by the customer ‘up front’, at each stage, similar to the process currently in place for the provision of vehicular crossings.

- 8 Currently the area teams fund such works directly from their overall discretionary budget allocation. Due to the significant cuts in funding from Central Government, Central Bedfordshire's highways budgets are being increasingly stretched just to provide essential road repairs. This has the effect of placing an inordinate strain on the customer reactive works that Bedfordshire Highways can undertake. It is therefore sensible that any opportunity, however small, is taken to relieve the strain on this budget.
- 9 Currently Bedfordshire Highways provide "H-Bar" markings at no cost to the applicant. This is subsequent to a site survey, also at no cost to the applicant. Currently there are in excess of 100 applications for "H-Bars" being received per annum, with about 20% of these resulting in an "H-Bar" marking being supplied. Of the remaining 80% of requests, where no installation was undertaken, a technician still had to inspect each site and communicate the outcome to the customer. Often these resulted in further communications with the customer. Unfortunately, when set against other essential highway repairs, "H-Bar" markings are a very low priority and the council can no longer continue to support free provision of these markings.
- 10 Charging for an "H-Bar" application/approval process will inevitably reduce the number of actual applications, thus relieving, to a small extent, the pressure on the area team resource and also the effect that the provision of a multitude of "H-Bar" markings has on the overall streetscene.
- 11 An internet search reveals the following information from a sample of 12 authorities.

Authority	Policy on web site Y/N	Charge £	Note
Shropshire County Council	No	No	
East Riding of Yorkshire	No	No	
Vale of Glamorgan	No	158.00	Free for disabled
Wirral	No	52.00	Charge £104 for double
Luton	No	70.00	
Sandwell	No	No	
Wigan	No	40.00	
Dudley	Yes	75.00	Free for disabled and emergency services
Blackburn and Darwen	No	66.00	Site approval and provision
Southend on Sea	Yes	100.00	Only provided for disabled
Powys	Yes	No	
Northants	Yes	125.00	
	<b>Average charge where made</b>	<b>83.88</b>	

- 12 8 of the 12 authorities (including Luton) indicate on their websites that they charge applicants for the provision of "H-Bars". The range of fees vary from £40 to £158 with an average charge of £83.88 for the markings only.

- 
- 13 Given that a technician would undertake an “H-bar” application/approval process in approximately 1 hour (including travelling time), setting a charge of £100 will recover costs in this respect.
- 14 Our supply chain partner Linkline, installs road markings. Linkline are very reluctant to install “H-Bar” markings at sites in isolation and will generally wait until they have other works to undertake in the locality. This has a negative effect on customer perception in that the customer sometimes has to wait a length of time for the “H-Bar” to be in place. The ability to negotiate a standard charge with Linkline for a 28 day response, and thus a standard charge to the customer, will improve customer perception. It is recommended that setting an installation charge of £60 will recover our costs in this respect.
- 15 There are rare occurrences where a double “H-Bar” marking is required – i.e across two accesses where the distance between them is insufficient to allow a vehicle to park without blocking one or both of the accesses. Although there have been no recent instances, a £90 charge per installation is recommended which will recover costs for such rare instances where a double width marking is necessary.
- 16 A process where the customer pays a one off non-refundable combined charge covering both the application process and the installation charge has been considered. Although reducing, in part, Bedfordshire Highway’s administration costs, this option has been rejected owing to the fact that it is not as equitable or transparent to the customer as the proposal and would inevitably result in customer complaints if their application is not approved.

## **Conclusion and Way Forward**

- 17 Charging for “H-Bars” is sensible in that it will relieve to an extent the pressure on the area team discretionary routine maintenance budget, and will inevitably reduce the number of applications and subsequent installations and the effect these have on the overall streetscene.
- 18 “H-Bars” offer a visible deterrent to drivers that an obstruction occurs if they are parked across a dropped kerb. Central Bedfordshire Council can issue an FPN in the sum of £70 if such an offence is committed.
- 19 Central Bedfordshire Council, as soon as possible, should publicise on their website the policy and application process as at Appendix A.
- 20 Bedfordshire Highways should begin to charge customers a non-refundable fee of £100 per “H-Bar” application and approval process.
- 21 Bedfordshire Highways should begin charge customers a fee of £60 per “H-Bar” installation, if the application is approved.
- 22 Bedfordshire Highways should manage the entire “H-Bar” process, with Amey retaining the fees in this respect.

## APPENDIX A

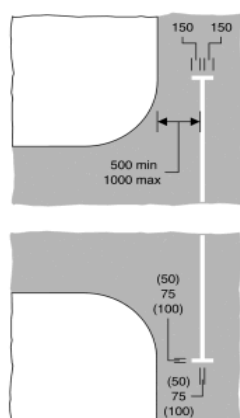


### Policy and Application Process for Road Markings to protect Vehicular Crossings ("H-Bar" Markings)

#### What is an "H-Bar" Road Marking?

An "H-Bar" marking is an elongated white 'H' which is painted across a vehicular crossing of the verge or footpath where a dropped kerb already exists.

The line is white and normally 75mm wide and extends across the dropped kerbs from where each starts to drop down to the road surface. See diagram below for further dimensions.



#### Can they be legally enforced?

The purpose of an "H-Bar" marking is to provide a reminder that parking across a dropped kerb driveway causes an obstruction to people wishing to access or leave a property by vehicle and that this is an offence under the Traffic Management Act as a result of which Central Bedfordshire Council's Civil Enforcement Contractor can issue fixed penalty notices.

#### Can I park across an "H-Bar" marking provided outside of my own driveway?

The marking is provided to highlight the presence of your driveway to others who are looking to park on the street. If you park on the "H-Bar" marking across your driveway, then it devalues the meaning

---

of the marking. It may also show to other drivers that you do not need access to your driveway. You could of course also be issued with a fixed penalty notice by Central Bedfordshire Council's Civil Enforcement Contractor.

### **What we will do**

We will consider all requests for an "H-Bar" marking in the context of the specific location and the problems which are encountered by those wishing to access the premises in question. Any request for an "H-Bar" marking must be made on the attached form and be accompanied by the fee in operation at the time (see below) and any additional evidence which the applicant is able to provide (see below).

If an application is approved, a further fee will be required from the applicant (see below) to enable us to instruct our contractor partners to install the marking.

### **What we will not do**

- We will not approve an application if the access opens on to double yellow lining or white zigzag markings.
- We will not site the marking on the opposite side of the road to the access to make turning movements easier.
- We will not install an "H-Bar" marking where there is not a properly constructed access onto the road with a dropped kerb. This means a tarmacadam construction across the verge and / or footpath, together with proper dropper or quadrant kerbs either side of the access and dropped kerbs across the entrance. If you do not have such an access, then we can provide one for you at an additional charge. Please follow this link for more information <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/highways/Roads-access/default.aspx>

### **What you need to do to apply for an "H-Bar" marking?**

You will need to apply for an "H-Bar" marking using the attached application form, and you will need to pay in advance a sum of **£100** which will cover our costs of inspecting the location and agreeing or otherwise the application with you. If your application is not subsequently agreed then you will not be reimbursed this charge, so you must seriously consider whether an "H-Bar" marking is really necessary and also that you have fully considered the information above.

To assist us in considering your application it will be helpful (but not compulsory) if you can provide:

- Photographic evidence of vehicles obstructing your access
- Photographic evidence of any visibility problems for vehicles exiting the property.
- Evidence of long term blockages – for example by commuters parking all day.

Where a gap between two driveways is not sufficient to allow on-street parking without causing an obstruction to one or both of the driveways, then the marking will need to be installed across both driveways. If this is the case you must get the agreement of your neighbour in question.

Please note that we will give special consideration to registered Blue Badge holders.

### **What happens when your application is approved?**

If your application is approved then you will then be required to pay in advance a sum of **£60** which will cover the cost of installation.

We will install the "H-Bar" marking as soon as possible after your application is approved and your payment has been received.

---

To utilise resources and make best use of lining budgets new “H-Bar” markings may only be installed when other road marking works are planned to take place in the same locality and hence a short delay may occur between the acceptance of your application and the “H-Bar” being installed.

Please note that during the winter months, October to April, there may be delays in installation as the daytime temperature may be too low for painting white lines.

When the “H-Bar” marking is in place, it will be maintained by Bedfordshire Highways and will be repainted at the same time as other road markings in your road.





**APPLICATION FOR AN “H-BAR” MARKING**

**Name of applicant (capital letters)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details**

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the property used as a private residence or as a business? Please describe**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**If the entrance for vehicles is off a different street from the main address please describe location**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please describe the access difficulties encountered (continue on a separate sheet if required and attach any photographic evidence that you have available)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I enclose a cheque in the sum of £100 made payable to ‘Amey LG’, being payment for the application and approval process. I understand that if the application is refused then the cheque is non-refundable.**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

If this form is being submitted for a double driveway, your neighbour must sign this application with you.