

PE1616/B

Guide Dogs Scotland Letter of 1 November 2016

We at Guide Dogs Scotland provide dogs and other mobility aids to blind and partially sighted people. Providing the means for mobility is only part of achieving independent travel. The other enablers are inclusive design and well maintained and managed streets, this includes considerate parking.

Parking on pavements and at dropped kerbs are major barriers to free movement. This is why ourselves and Living Streets Scotland have over a number of years supported three MSPs in their endeavour to bring in Scottish Legislation that makes provision for regulating parking on pavements and at dropped kerbs.

In recent times Sandra White MSP brought forward a Member's Bill, the Footway Parking and Double Parking Bill. The progress of the Bill was slow due to debates over legislative competency of the Scottish Parliament to make parking offences. We were pleased to see these necessary legislative powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament via the Scotland Act 2016. Unfortunately, there was not enough Parliamentary time to forward Sandra White's Bill beyond stage one and it fell at dissolution earlier this year. During stage one the then Transport Minister, Derek MacKay MSP, committed that if returned, the Government would bring forward parking legislation.

We are under the impression that by the end of the year there will be a consultation on a Transport Bill. That this Bill will include restricting parking on pavements, over dropped kerbs and double parking.

The Petition specifically discusses dropped kerbs, we expect this Bill, although stating 'dropped kerbs', will also include a wider definition which will incorporate other essential crossing areas. This could be, for example, an area where the carriageway has been raised to meet the footway for the purpose of making a level crossing area, this design is often seen now at road junctions.

We note during the recent Committee meeting there was discussion around current local authority powers. They do currently have powers via the use of a Traffic Regulation Order, and after a successful passage of that order, would need to sign and line the dropped kerb. The use of Traffic Regulation Orders is thought to be cumbersome, long, and costly. However, if a particular area is prone to misuse and is a consistent access problem for pedestrians, such as the petitioner, we suggest that the local authority could proceed with this, instead of waiting for the passing and implementation of this new law.

Hope this information is useful to the Public Petition Committee. If further information is required, you can contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Jane

Jane Horsburgh

Policy Manager

Guide Dogs Scotland