

How can I find out more?

If you are considering paving your front garden, detailed advice is available in the document "Guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens" which is produced jointly by the government department of Communities and Local Government and the Environment Agency. It is available to download from

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pavingfrontgardens

Design advice is also available from the Royal Horticultural Society website at

www.rhs.org.uk

**To obtain a copy of this
leaflet on tape or in large
print please telephone
(01296) 585679**

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**Planning
Applications**

**Hard
standings
in front
gardens**

Planning Division

Planning Applications

Hard standings in front gardens

This leaflet explains when planning permission is required for new or replacement hard standings

Why is planning permission needed?

The effects of climate change mean that heavy rainfall (and subsequent flooding) may occur more often in the future.

Drains in most areas were built many years ago and were not designed to cope with increased rainfall. Paving front gardens further adds to the problem.

Although paving one or two gardens may not seem to make a difference, the combined effect of lots of people doing this in a street or area can reduce the ability for water to soak into the ground naturally and increase the risk of flooding and pollution.

The harm is not limited to flooding. Hard surfaces such as concrete and asphalt collect pollution such as oil and fuel that is washed via the drains into streams or rivers. In areas where rainwater goes into foul water sewers, high levels of run off can cause untreated sewage to overflow into watercourses.

When is planning permission needed?

You need to apply for planning permission if you want to lay a new or replacement hard surface in front of your house that

- is over 5 square metres in area
- is constructed from materials such as concrete or non porous asphalt and
- is designed so that water does not run off to a permeable or porous area elsewhere in your garden

To apply for planning permission, you need to submit a completed application form and plans and pay a fee. It takes us up to 8 weeks to reach our decision which could be that permission is refused.

Please note that, regardless of the need for planning permission, if your driveway involves creating a new access to a public highway or across a public footpath, a licence is required from Bucks County Council. They may refuse to grant a licence if they judge that the proposed access will create a highway danger or cause damage to trees on the highway or footpath.

When is planning permission not required?

Planning permission is not required for hard surfaces

- that are less than 5 square metres in area
- in back gardens (regardless of size)
- constructed using surfaces such as permeable concrete block paving, porous asphalt or gravel, or if the water is otherwise able to soak into the ground within your garden.

How do I know if the surface is permeable?

A bucket of water poured onto a permeable surface will soak in straight away in a small area. The same amount of water will take longer to soak into an impermeable surface and will spread over a wider area.