

Before anybody digs

A checklist for driveways in Aylesbury and the Vale

1. Planning permission

- ☐ **Is the new surface more than 5m²?**
Front gardens only. Under 5m² you are fine either way.
- ☐ **Is it permeable, or does it drain to a border, lawn or soakaway inside your boundary?**
If yes, no planning application is needed. If water runs onto the public highway, you need permission.
- ☐ **Are you in a conservation area or is the house listed?**
Wendover, Haddenham, Waddesdon, Quainton, Wing and Aylesbury old town all have conservation areas. Ask the council before ordering materials.

2. The kerb crossing

- ☐ **Do you already have a dropped kerb wide enough for the new drive?**
- ☐ **If not, have you applied to Buckinghamshire Council for a vehicle crossover licence?**
The application fee at the time of writing is £520.38. Apply before the drive is built, not after — the council can refuse it.
- ☐ **Is there a lamp post, telegraph pole, tree, gully or utility box in the way?**
Moving any of these is a separate cost and a separate lead time, usually the longest one in the job.
- ☐ **Is the road classified, or is there a grass verge owned by the council?**

3. Where the water goes

- ☐ **Where does surface water end up today, and where will it go afterwards?**
- ☐ **Is the ground clay or chalk?**
Most of the vale floor is Gault Clay, which does not soak away. The scarp around Wendover is chalk, which usually does. Clay generally means a channel drain or a permeable build-up rather than a soakaway.
- ☐ **Is there a threshold, garage door or front door lower than the new surface?**
That is where a linear channel drain goes. Levels are set to fall away from the house, never towards it.
- ☐ **Are any manhole covers inside the area?**
They can be recessed and infilled with the same surface so they disappear.

4. Before you accept any quote

- ☐ **Is the sub-base depth written down in the quote?**
150mm of compacted MOT Type 1 for a driveway, laid and compacted in layers. If a quote does not say a depth, ask why.
- ☐ **Are the edges restrained and haunched in concrete?**
- ☐ **Is excavation, cart-away and the waste transfer note included?**
- ☐ **Is the price fixed, and what triggers a variation?**
- ☐ **Is there a written workmanship guarantee, and does it cover settlement of the base?**