

**DISABLED PARKING REVIEW**

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder       | Michael Webb |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted      | Yes          |
| Relevant Head of Service        | Guy Revans   |
| Ward(s) Affected                | All          |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted    | No           |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision | Key Decision |
|                                 |              |

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 Currently disabled users of BDC car parks pay for their car parking but receive an additional hour free car parking.
  - 1.1.1 In pay and display car parks disabled users purchase a ticket from the ticket machine in the usual way and place this along with their blue badge on the dashboard. The Parking attendants then allow an additional hour.
  - 1.1.2 On the pay on foot car parks (Recreation Road South and Churchfields Multi Storey) customers who register with the Council for a disabled person's smartcard receive the first 90 minutes for 40p, and then the usual tariff applies after that.
- 1.2 Officers were asked to form a working group to compile a report to look at the issue of granting free parking to disabled users and this has resulted in three options emerging ( as set out below) with the fourth option being no change:
  - 1.2.1 Offer free car parking to disabled users in all BDC 'Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks.
  - 1.2.2 Offer an annual permit for a fee of that allows disabled users to park in BDC Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks. Whilst also retaining the existing extra one hours parking for those who do not wish to purchase a permit.
  - 1.2.3 Offer the first hour of parking free of charge for blue badge holders and then charge the normal rate after that one hour period.
- 1.3 Members should note that the working group consisted of the following people, Cllr Michael Webb, Cllr Luke Mallett, Guy Revans Kevin Hirons Fiona Scott, Rebecca Dunne, Heidi Windheuser, Tim Deakin and Christine Baxter. Additional support was given by Emily Humphries from the County Council. All of the group have commented on and accepted the survey questions, survey results and income estimation methods listed in appendix 1, 2 and 3.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Members decide which of the 4 options listed below they want to adopt.

2.1.1 Option 1: Offer free car parking to disabled users displaying their Blue Badge in all BDC 'Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks (except the car park at Bromsgrove train station)

2.1.2 Option 2: Approve the principal of introducing a permit scheme (at a cost of around £80 per annum) that allows disabled users to park in all BDC 'Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks. (except the train station). This fee would be subject to an annual increase in line with the rate of inflation. The existing arrangement of offering disabled drivers an additional hour free of charge would still apply for those who chose not to purchase a permit. The annual renewal of permits would be the drivers responsibility the council will not send reminders as this would increase administration costs further. Both of these would be actively promoted.

2.1.3 Option 3: Offer the first hour of parking free of charge for blue badge holders and then charge the normal rate after that one hour period. This new practice would be actively promoted

2.1.4 Option 4: No change to current arrangements. However the additional hours free parking would be actively promoted. In addition a further survey to be carried out in the future to assess if the needs of the community has changed. Precise timings and frequency to be agreed between the Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder.

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**3.1 Financial Implications**

3.1.1 Information regarding the number of Blue Badge holders using the 'Pay and Display' car parks is very limited. The absolute maximum revenue that could be generated from disabled bays if they were filled continuously during opening hours (assuming each user purchased the maximum ticket and 65% subsequently used the additional free hour) would be approximately £250,000. However, the actual revenue generated is likely to be less than this figure, since the spaces are not always filled.

3.1.2 Officers agreed that as there was not one single accurate method of calculating the actual income generated from disabled users of the car park that a number of different calculations would provide the best estimate of a range of possible incomes. For the purposes of this report officers have looked at four alternative methods of estimating the current income received from disabled users of the car parks. Please refer to Appendix 3 for the detail methodology and calculations.

3.1.3 The results of the four estimation methods suggest a range of between £23,000 and £46,000 for the revenue generated from disabled parking bays. However, since these are estimates we would recommend considering a higher figure when using this information for budgeting purposes. Therefore for this report officers have used an income figure of £50K which is considered to be acceptable by members of the Working Group.

**3.1.5 Option 1**

3.1.5.1 It is estimated that the loss of revenue by providing free disabled car parking in all BDC Pay and Display and also Pay on Foot car parks is believed to be in the region of £50K. In addition to this there would be the cost of changing the parking order, car park signage and publicity.

**3.1.6 Option 2**

3.1.6.1 The Council is currently undergoing a huge regeneration programme within the town centre that will potentially have wide reaching implications for parking generally both to our disabled and wider community members.

3.1.6.2 It is difficult to estimate the possible take up rate of a permit scheme as this will depend on a number of different factors. However by using the car park usage data from the survey and assuming a hour stay at 80p we can deduce the following costs shown in the table below

*Frequency of Bromsgrove Car Park Use (Base: 466 Respondents)*

| <b>Frequency of visit</b> | <b>Number of Responses</b> | <b>Based on a one hour visit over a year at 80p</b> | <b>Total per year for groups of respondents</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| Daily (5)                 | 15                         | £208  | £3120   |
| Several Times a Week (3)  | 227                        | £125  | £28375  |
| Once a Week               | 151                        | £42   | £6342   |
| Rarely (Once a month)     | 55                         | £10   | £550  |
| Never                     | 18                         | £0  | 0   |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>466</b>                 |   | <b>£38387</b>                                   |

3.1.6.3 By dividing the total figure £38387 by the total number of respondents 466 we get a possible average spend of £82 per year. It would therefore seem reasonable for the purposes of this report to base our figures on a permit cost of £80 per year

- 3.1.6.2 Issuing permits to Blue Badge holders if taken up by 300 disabled users paying £80 per annum would give the council an income of £24,000. The remainder say 500 regular users paying under the existing system with a weekly stay of 2 hours (inc 1 hour free) would generate perhaps £24,800.
- 3.1.6.5 There could potentially be a loss in revenue dependant on the number of people taking up the permit scheme and the duration of their stay per visit. Additional costs will also be incurred in processing payments, issuing permits changing the parking order, car park signage and publicity.
- 3.1.6.6 One permit and one smart card will be issued to the Blue Badge holder upon receipt of the fee. Replacement permits or smart cards will be charged at £5.

**3.1.7 Option 3**

- 3.1.7.1 Data from the parking system indicates that around 63% of all car park users park for one hour or less it is therefore reasonable to assume that by offering the first hour free would result in a reduction of income around £30K. In addition to this there would be the cost of changing the parking order, car park signage and publicity.
- 3.1.7.2 Please note that this option would be extremely difficult to administer and enforce as it would require the recording of all blue badge holder vehicle registration numbers and time of arrival on every visit to the car park by our Parking Attendants.

**3.1.8 Option 4**

- 3.1.8.1 There are no additional financial implications with this option
- 3.1.9 Please note that any shortfall in budget will have to be found from either; balances, increased parking charges or other sources
- 3.1.10 Cost of changes to the Parking Order officers estimate would be in the region of £2000

**3.2 Legal Implications**

- 3.2.1 Bromsgrove District Council operates a system of providing off street parking for residents under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This legislation allows the Council to designate off street car parks (section 32) and regulate their operation, including the levying of charges, through a local car parking order (section 35). The current parking order in force is the District Council of Bromsgrove (Off-Street Car Parks) Order 2011.
- 3.2.2 Were Members minded to agree to either Option 1, Option 2 or Option 3 the current parking order would need to be updated to reflect the changes. The process for updating the order is prescribed by the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and requires the Council to give notice of proposed changes in the car parks affected and by issuing a notice in the press. There is a 21 day consultation period following which the final order can be granted. Different rules apply in the event that any objections to the proposals are received. Provided there are no objections the normal length of time needed to amend the car parking order is approximately 6 to 8 weeks.

**3.3 Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.3.1 In accordance with national guidelines the Council provides a number of disabled parking bays for holders of a blue badge. At the moment this is 6% of the total number of off street parking spaces per car park.

The table below sets out the numbers of spaces per car park and the percentage of disabled spaces available within Bromsgrove.

Off-Street Spaces

|                       | Standard | Disabled | Total | Disabled spaces (%) |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|-------|---------------------|
| Churchfields          | 272      | 18       | 303   | 6.6                 |
| Hanover Street        | 136      | 9        | 135   | 6.6                 |
| Hanover Street Temp.  | 65       | 4        | 69    | 6.2                 |
| New Road              | 52       | 4        | 59    | 7.7                 |
| Parkside              | 88       | 6        | 94    | 6.8                 |
| Recreation Road North | 31       | 3        | 35    | 9.7                 |
| Recreation Road South | 268      | 19       | 295   | 7.1                 |
| School Drive          | 114      | 9        | 127   | 7.9                 |
| Stourbridge Road      | 74       | 5        | 79    | 6.8                 |
| Windsor Street        | 61       | 4        | 65    | 6.6                 |
| Bromsgrove Station    | 84       | 5        | 89    | 6.0                 |

- 3.3.2 In addition to off street parking, under the blue badge scheme disabled drivers may park on restricted roads (such as double yellow lines) and within on street disabled bays at no cost for up to three hours when displaying a valid disabled badge and time card. The time restriction is currently enforced by the police authority traffic warden.
- 3.3.3 For the two "Pay on Foot car parks the Council operates a system of issuing smart cards to disabled users. Currently 1287 disabled users are registered with the 'Pay on Foot' car parks and have smart cards, but records show that only 793 of them actually use the cards.
- 3.3.4 Information regarding the number of Blue Badge holders using the 'Pay and Display' car parks is very limited. For this reason the figures reported and used to calculate financial implications are based on data from the pay on foot car parks and limited survey work by the car parking staff during January/February 2012 and Data gathered by the Labour Group in January 2012

**3.4 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.4.1 Meetings have already taken place with invited community members and their comments have been considered when writing this report.
- 3.4.2 The above meetings however represented the views of only a limited number of people and therefore it was considered appropriate to carry out a more detailed consultation. Officers have distributed a questionnaire to over 1200 blue badge holders to get their views (Appendix 1). The results and analysis of this survey can be found in Appendix 2
- 3.4.3 Members should note that officers were not able to access the Blue Badge holder database due to data protection issues. Therefore the group agreed to use the shopmobility (564) and smart card (444) databases together with a number of known organisations (200) to whom the survey could be sent.
- 3.4.4 In addition to the above the survey was advertised on the Council's website and within the local papers. A drop in session was also arranged at the Council House for residents to find out more information about the survey.
- 3.4.5 As a result of the restricted database options available to officers it must be noted that it is possible that a large proportion of the recipients of the survey may well be existing car park users.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 There is a risk of negative publicity regarding this report if either option 2, option 3 or option 4 is agreed
- 4.2 There will be a negative financial implication to the revenue income if either option 1 or option 3 is agreed. This could anywhere between £23 and £74K.
- 4.2 There may be a negative financial implication to the revenue income if option 2 is agreed. This will depend on the number of times disabled customers use the car parks and the duration of their stay. The parking data is not available to undertake an accurate prediction.
- 4.3 It will be extremely difficult to monitor and enforce Blue Badge holder parking if option 3 is agreed.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Blue badge car park survey questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Survey Results

Appendix 3 – Income calculation methods

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Bromsgrove District Council ( Off-Street Car Parks) Order 2011

**7. KEY**

N/A

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**APPENDIX 1**

Survey Questionnaire



**APPENDIX 2**

Survey Results

**APPENDIX 3**

Income calculation methodology