

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

1ST OCTOBER 2008

CAR PARKING FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Community Safety
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Street Scene and Community
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report relates to a scrutiny request received from a member of the public regarding car parking for Blue Badge holders which was recently considered by the Scrutiny Steering Board.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Steering Board have requested that Cabinet considers re-evaluating the parking issues raised, especially in terms of:
- the removal of the parking concession for Blue Badge holders;
 - the funding of the Shopmobility scheme;
 - alternative methods of payment for car parking; and
 - the proposals for the regeneration of Bromsgrove Town Centre as a whole.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An email from Mr. Leslie Irving (Vice-Chairman of the Older People's Forum) was received on Monday 14th July 2008. It requested the Performance Management Board to consider free parking for Blue Badge holders and the exact wording was as follows:

“To Performance Management Board I would like the subject of free parking for Blue Badge holders to be put on the Performance Management Board agenda for consideration. Attached is my letter to the local paper about my difficulties which also affect may others. Leslie Irving.”

- 3.2 Mr. Irving's letter to the local paper referred to above is attached as Appendix 1.

3.3 As there is no mechanism in place for members of the public to refer items to the Performance Management Board, Mr. Irving was advised of his options which included contacting his Ward Councillor and/or requesting the Scrutiny Steering Board to consider this matter.

3.4 Mr. Irving then requested that the Scrutiny Steering Board considered this item and an extract from his second email is below:

“...Would you please put my request to the Scrutiny Steering Board for them to consider free parking on their car parks in Bromsgrove. I have not found one council similar to Bromsgrove that charges for Blue Badge Holders for parking and nationally the trend is the same. It would appear that Bromsgrove is the exception rather than the rule.... Leslie Irving.”

3.5 On the 29th July 2008, the Scrutiny Steering Board considered the scrutiny request and several questions were raised, particularly relating to the car parking scrutiny investigation which had been undertaken in 2007, the funding and use of shopmobility and consultation with disabled users.

3.6 With regard to the fairly recent scrutiny exercise, the Board was informed that as part of its work, the Car Parking Scrutiny Task Group had considered issues facing Blue Badge holders and there had been consultation with many representatives including the disabled and elderly. The scrutiny investigation was completed in March 2007 and there were two recommendations specifically relating to Blue Badge holders. In April 2007, the Cabinet decided not to approve the first recommendation and agreed to take no action with regard to removing car parking charges for the disabled. However, Cabinet did approve the second option put forward by Scrutiny which was to allow Blue Badge holders an additional hour of parking over and above the time for which they had paid. This was implemented in April 2008. Members of the Task Group reconvened for a Review Meeting with the Transport and Engineering Manager earlier this year in March 2008. The Task Group Chairman was Councillor G. N. Denaro who later became a Member of the Cabinet. (Please note: The scrutiny report can be found on the Council's website www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny on the "Scrutiny Investigations" page.)

3.11 Following a discussion on this matter at the Scrutiny Steering Board meeting in July, the Board decided that it required further information to enable it to agree the best way forward. Therefore, it was agreed that Councillor G. N. Denaro (as Portfolio Holder for Finance and as the Member who led the car parking scrutiny investigation in 2007), Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (as the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Community Safety) and the Transport Engineering Officer would be invited to attend the next Board Meeting held on 2nd September 2008. (However, due to Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths having a prior Council engagement, the Scrutiny Steering Board Chairman agreed that Councillor Mrs. M. A.

Sherrey would be invited to attend in her place as Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey was the relevant Portfolio Holder up until May 2008.)

3.12 To further assist the Board in making a decision, the Transport and Engineering Manager, Mr. S. Martin, compiled relevant background information which is attached as Appendices 2 to 6. Mr. S. Martin and Mr. M. Bell (as the relevant Head of Service) attended the Scrutiny Steering Board Meeting on 2nd September 2008.

3.13 The Scrutiny Steering Board considered the appendices and asked Mr. Martin several questions. During that meeting, it was explained that the cost of operating the Shopmobility scheme was covered by the income from charging Blue Badge holders for car parking. Mr. Martin stated that there were 314 registered users of the scheme and added that Shopmobility was used on a daily basis. It was also reported at that meeting that the funding for the Shopmobility scheme had been provided by the removal of the concession to allow free parking for Blue Badge holders.

3.14 Following consideration of the scrutiny request from Mr. Irving and information provided by Mr. Martin, the Scrutiny Steering Board agreed that, under paragraph 9.4 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive be requested to place an item for consideration on the next available Cabinet meeting agenda to re-evaluate the parking issues raised, hence this report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications directly relating to this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications directly relating to this report.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 This report does not directly link to Council Objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 There is no risk, either negative or positive, directly associated with this report.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no customer implications directly relating to this report. However, it should be pointed out that this issue has been raised by a local resident and customer of the Council and therefore Members should give careful consideration to this item.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no implications directly relating to this report for the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies. However, if this issue was considered further, Members would need to consider such implications.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no Value for Money implications directly relating to this report.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues – None
Personnel Implications – None
Governance/Performance Management – None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – None
Policy – None
Environmental – None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Letter to the local paper from Mr. Leslie Irving

Appendix 2 – Statement from Mr. S. Martin, Transport and Engineering Manager

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Report dated 12th May 2008 relating to the Shopmobility Facility

Appendix 4 – Bromsgrove District Council's Parking Policy

Appendix 5 – Civil Enforcement Officer Training Schedule

Appendix 6 – Parking Permit Application Form

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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