



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Cabinet Report

9

Report of: Laraine Manley, Executive Director, Resources

Date: 9th November 2011

Subject: Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme

Author of Report: Julie Bullen 273 6972

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to:

- update Cabinet on the changes to the Council's Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme Policy in response to new guidance issued from the Department for Transport;
- seek approval to increase the fees for a Blue Badge parking permit in response to: (a) changes in legislation; and (b) the implementation of increased charges to the Council for the issuing of blue badges from a new nationally operated Blue Badge Improvement Service.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The Government published a Reform Strategy in October 2008 that included a suite of commitments designed to ensure that the Blue Badge Scheme stays fit for purpose in the 21st Century, and to improve the lives of disabled people who rely on the access that the Scheme enables.

New guidance for local authorities was issued by the Department of Transport in June 2011 which included extending the scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans

Further reforms are due to come into force on the 1st January 2012 and from then Local Authorities will no longer be able to produce disabled parking badges themselves, but will authorise these to be issued from a new nationally operated Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS). The Council will be charged £4.60 for each badge requested from the BBIS.

Legislation has also been changed to allow the maximum fee for a badge to rise from £2 to £10. This change will come into effect on 1 January 2012. The cost to the customer of applying for a blue badge parking permit (valid for 3 years) has not increased for nearly 30 years, this is currently £2.00. However, it costs the Council on average £10.95 to process every application. Increasing the charge to £10 will enable us to more appropriately cover the cost of providing the service.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (a) the changes to the Council's Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme Policy to include the extension of the Scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans, and that this change would take immediate effect;
- (b) that, subject to the making of the necessary Statutory Instrument by Parliament, the fee for a (3 year) Blue Badge Parking Permit be increased from £2 to £10 to reflect the increase in national charges and to more appropriately cover the cost of providing this service, with effect from 1st January 2012;
- (c) that the Director of Legal Services considers the feedback from consultation and refers the matter back to Cabinet if in their professional opinion Cabinet should re consider the recommendation after taking into account feedback from consultation.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: Chris Nicholson
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Patrick Chisholm
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES Cleared by: Adele Robinson
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
City wide
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Councillor Bryan Lodge
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

BLUE BADGE DISABLED PARKING SCHEME

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Government published a Reform Strategy in October 2008 that included a suite of commitments designed to ensure that the Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme stays fit for purpose in the 21st Century, and to improve the lives of disabled people who rely on the access that the Scheme enables
- 1.2 This report sets out the detail of the changes and seeks approval to proceed with implementation in Sheffield.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 The Blue Badge Scheme currently enables severely disabled people to park without charge or time limit in the on-street parking environment, and for up to three hours on yellow lines, unless a loading ban is in place. The permit is valid for 3 years.
- 2.2 There will be no change in the way customers apply for a Blue Badge however the design of the Blue Badge will change to aid enforcement and make it harder to tamper with or forge.
- 2.3 The Scheme is also being extended to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans.
- 2.4 Customers who meet the automatic criteria are usually in receipt of a Disability Living Allowance. The mobility component of this allowance is paid to ensure that people can access support they need. Paying for a Blue Badge is one of the ways people can maximise their mobility and access the services they need.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The objectives of the Government's Reform Strategy are to address current problems, especially those relating to fraud and abuse. It supports freedom and fairness and is targeted at addressing the mobility needs of those disabled people who need the most help to travel.
- 3.1 The Blue Badge Scheme gives severely disabled people access to vital services and a better quality of life. Research undertaken by the Government identified that 75% of badge holders would go out less often without a badge and 64% would be more reliant on friends and family members. Also as part of the consultation process, the Department of Transport published a report 'Research with Blue Badge Holders' which showed that by using a blue badge, respondents saved more than £5 in parking fees each week, 59% of respondents also felt that between £3-£10 was a reasonable fee and 25% of those felt that a charge over £10 was reasonable.

4.0 MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

Background

- 4.1 The Blue Badge Scheme has been in place since the early 1970's and there have been very few changes since then. A review of the scheme by the Dept for Transport in 2007 highlighted several areas where improvements needed to be made to the administration of the Scheme, the eligibility criteria and to prevent abuse. After further consultation the govt published a Reform Strategy in October 2008 that included a suite of commitments designed to ensure that the Blue Badge Scheme stays fit for purpose in the 21st Century, and to improve the lives of disabled people who rely on the access that the Scheme enables.
- 4.2 The Reform Strategy included a commitment to deliver the promised changes within 5 years and includes:
- Providing local authorities with an on-the-spot power to recover badges that have been cancelled and misused;
 - Shared administration between authorities – including an online application facility – resulting in faster renewals, reduced abuse and operational efficiencies;
 - The replacement of handwritten badges with standard electronic ones which are harder to alter and forge;
 - Extending the scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans
- 4.3 New guidance for local authorities was issued by the Department of Transport in June 2011. Further reforms are due to come into force on the 1st January 2012 and from then Local Authorities will no longer be able to produce disabled parking badges themselves, but will authorise these to be issued from a new nationally operated Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS).
- 4.4 The BBIS will be available to all Local Authorities in England, Scotland and Wales and will provide:
- Secure printing, personalisation and distribution of the new Blue Badge permits
 - A central database of all Blue Badges on issue and key information on badge holders;
 - An on-line eligibility checker and an on-line application form that will be available via Directgov
- 4.5 It will still be the responsibility of each local authority to ensure that badges are only issued to residents who satisfy one or more of the eligibility criteria set out in the legislation that governs the scheme. The Council's Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme Policy has been updated to reflect these changes and to extend the scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans. A copy of the Policy is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.6 In Sheffield, the Blue Badge Scheme is administered by the Council's Customer Services team. The team deal with circa 10,000 applications per

annum for Blue Badges. We are seeing an increase in applications year on year and due to the changes that are being made around eligibility in the new Reform Strategy, these will increase further.

- 4.7 The cost to the customer of applying for a blue badge (£2 for a 3 year permit) has not increased for nearly 30 years, however, it costs the Council on average £10.95 to process every application.
- 4.8 From the 1st January 2012, Local Authorities will no longer be able to produce disabled parking badges themselves, but will authorise these to be issued from a new nationally operated Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS). The Council will be charged £4.60 for each badge requested from the BBIS.
- 4.9 In order to finance improvements to the Scheme and recover administration costs, legislation has been changed to allow the maximum fee for a badge to rise from £2 to £10 – the first increase since 1983. This change will come into effect on 1 January 2012.
- 4.10 Increasing the charge will enable us to more appropriately cover the cost of providing the service. A poll at recent briefings held by the Department for Transport in York and London showed the majority of local authorities would be seeking to increase the charge to the maximum fee of £10.

Legal Implications

- 4.11 There are no adverse legal implications for the proposals.
- 4.12 The Blue Badge Schemes were first introduced by the provisions contained in section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. Regulation 6 of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles)(England) Regulations 2000 currently sets the fee (if any) at which the Council may charge for the issue of a badge.
- 4.13 The proposed increase in fee is in line with the Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance (England) issued by the Department for Transport in June 2011, which confirms that the legislation will be amended to permit Local Authorities to charge fees up to a limit of £10. That Guidance also confirmed that the Government intended to extend the scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans. Those changes have now been made by The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 which came into force on 17th June 2011

Financial Implications

- 4.14 The administration of a Blue Badge Parking Permit costs the Council on average £10.95 per application. The charge has not been increased since 1983. Increasing the fee to £10 will enable the Council to more appropriately recover the costs of providing this service.

Equalities Implications

- 4.15 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as **Appendix 2**. There has been detailed consultation with blue badge holders

and their families by the Department of Transport. We will undertake local consultation by clearly communicating the changes to customers and key stakeholders e.g. Expert Elders, Transport for All groups, local hospitals, etc using a variety of channels and will canvass feedback on the changes to the Scheme. All feedback will be carefully considered by the Director of Legal Services who will refer the matter back to Cabinet if in their professional opinion the consultation raises issues which merit a reconsideration of the charging rate. A Communication Plan has been developed and will be implemented following approval of this report.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To leave the fees unchanged. The Government is imposing a increase in charges to the Council for issuing a blue badge to £4.60 which will increase the cost of providing the service further. The extension to the Scheme and the expected increase in demand as the older population increases is likely to require extra resources in the future increasing the need to more appropriately recover costs.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Government published a Reform Strategy in October 2008 that included a suite of commitments designed to ensure that the Blue Badge Scheme stays fit for purpose in the 21st Century, and to improve the lives of disabled people who rely on the access that the Scheme enables.
- 6.2 New guidance for local authorities was issued by the Department of Transport in June 2011 which included extending the scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans
- 6.3 Further reforms are due to come into force on the 1st January 2012 and from then Local Authorities will no longer be able to produce disabled parking badges themselves, but will authorise these to be issued from a new nationally operated Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS). The Council will be charged £4.60 for each badge requested from the BBIS.
- 6.4 Legislation has also been changed to allow the maximum fee for a badge to rise from £2 to £10. This change will come into effect on 1 January 2012. The cost to the customer of applying for a blue badge parking permit (valid for 3 years) has not increased for nearly 30 years, this is currently £2.00. However, it costs the Council on average £10.95 to process every application. Increasing the charge to £10 will enable us to more appropriately cover the cost of providing the service.
- 6.5 This will also help us to better maintain the current high level of service received by this most vulnerable client group and to be more effective around fraudulent claims and misuse.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (a) the changes to the Council's Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme Policy to include the extension of the Scheme to more disabled children under 3 years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans, and that this change would take immediate effect;
 - (b) that, subject to the making of the necessary Statutory Instrument by Parliament, the fee for a (3 year) Blue Badge Parking Permit be increased from £2 to £10 to reflect the increase in national charges and to more appropriately cover the cost of providing this service, with effect from 1st January 2012;
 - (c) that the Director of Legal Services considers the feedback from consultation and refers the matter back to Cabinet if in their professional opinion Cabinet should re consider the recommendation after taking into account feedback from consultation.
-



Sheffield City Council Blue Badge Policy

BLUE BADGE DISABLED PARKING SCHEME POLICY

1 OUR COMMITMENT

- 1.1 The blue badge scheme plays a key role in promoting the mobility of severely disabled people by providing a range of parking concessions.
- 1.2 Sheffield City Council is responsible for administering the scheme and is committed to making the process as clear and straightforward as possible to encourage potentially eligible people to apply.
- 1.3 Sheffield City Council seeks to ensure that this policy, qualifying criteria and terminology are applied consistently to all applications.
- 1.4 Sheffield City Council will determine in each case whether a person falls within the prescribed descriptions of disabled persons to whom a Local Authority may issue a badge.
- 1.5 The Council will take a holistic approach in assessing whether an applicant meets the prescribed criteria and therefore the majority of applications will not be assessed solely on the basis of a person's medical condition(s).
- 1.6 In line with guidance from the Department for Transport, Sheffield City Council works with Physiotherapists to assess those applicants who may be eligible subject to further assessment.
- 1.7 Sheffield City Council will work with Sheffield Primary Care Services (Commissioned Provider Services) to ensure that a consistent approach is delivered throughout the process using guidance from the Department for Transport.
- 1.8 Sheffield City Council strives to reduce abuse of the blue badge scheme by seeking to ensure that blue badges are only issued to those who are eligible.
- 1.9 Sheffield City Council is committed to progressive ways of working and the use of new technology where appropriate.
- 1.10 The issuing of a blue badge is seen as part of a holistic process and applicants will be signposted to other relevant services where appropriate.

2 ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY

2.2 There are two differing types of eligibility criteria:

- **Eligible without further assessment:** a customer is automatically eligible for a blue badge without need for a further assessment if it is proved that they are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits or meet certain statutory criteria.
- **Eligible subject to further assessment:** a customer with a disability may be eligible for a blue badge subject to the discretion of Sheffield City Council.

2.3 Eligibility will be carefully assessed to maximise the fairness and consistency of badge issue. Sheffield City Council will keep a record of the procedures used and the outcome of the assessment process.

2.4 Eligible without further assessment

2.4.1 People who may be issued with a badge without further assessment are those who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptions:

- Receives the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance¹ or
- Is registered blind (severely sight impaired) or
- Receives a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement or
- Has been both awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking

2.4.2 Provided that the applicant can demonstrate that they satisfy one of the criteria listed above, and can satisfy identity and residency checks, a badge will be issued.

2.4.3 The identity and proof of entitlement checks are carried as set out by the Department for Transport in The Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance (England) June 2011.

2.5 Eligible subject to further assessment

2.5.1 People who may be issued with a badge after further assessment are those who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptions:

- Drives a vehicle regularly, has a severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate, or
- Has considerable difficulty in operating, all or some types of parking meter or
- Has a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

¹ The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) will be replacing DLA with a Personal Independence Payment (PIP), for people of working age, from 2013/14

- 2.5.2 In addition, children under the age of three may be eligible for a badge if they fall within either or both of the following descriptions:
- A child who, on account of a condition, must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty;
 - A child who, on account of a condition, must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that, if necessary, treatment for that condition can be given in the vehicle or the child can be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where such treatment can be given.

2.6 Organisational Eligibility Criteria

- 2.6.1 An organisational badge may be issued to an organisation when the vehicle or vehicles are to be used to carry disabled people who would themselves be eligible for a badge as specified in Section 4(2) of the 2000 Regulations. An 'organisation' is defined in the 2000 Regulations as meaning an organisation concerned with the care of disabled persons to which a disabled person's badge may be issued in accordance with section 21(4) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

3. SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL'S ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- 3.1 Sheffield City Council has developed a desk-based assessment tool to determine the eligibility of Blue Badge applications. The assessment tool has been developed by Independent Physiotherapist who are familiar with Blue Badge eligibility assessments.
- When it is not fully clear whether or not an applicant is eligible an independent mobility assessments is offered to the customer. There is no cost to the customer for this assessment.

4. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Where Sheffield City Council receives an application for a badge and refuses to issue one, it will let the applicant know in writing why their application was refused. Every applicant who is refused a badge will be given an explanation of the grounds for refusal.

5. DATA STORAGE AND SHARING

- 5.1 Sheffield City Council maintains a register showing the holders of badges issued by the authority
- 5.2 In order to make the application process as streamlined as possible, Sheffield City Council will, where appropriate and with the applicant's consent access other council systems to make verification of eligibility easier.

- 5.3 Information held on systems external to Sheffield City Council such as benefit information held by Department for Work and Pensions may also be accessed, with the applicant's consent, to make verification of eligibility easier.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, applicants will be signposted to other services and benefits that they may find useful.
- 5.5 The period of issue on DLA evidence will be recorded as part of the application process. The intention is to be able to improve the renewal process for applicants granted Higher Rate Mobility DLA.
- 5.6 Some of the information gathered about blue badge holders at time of application may be used to produce renewal documentation which will be issued to the blue badge holder.
- 5.7 Sheffield City Council co-operates with a national fraud initiative conducted by the Audit Commission and may supply basic data about blue badge holders when requested to do so. Blue badge holders will be informed of this and any similar initiatives.
- 5.8 Sheffield City Council may, where appropriate and with the applicant's consent contact other agencies to make verification of eligibility easier.

6. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 There is no statutory right to an appeal against refusal to grant a badge when it has been refused because an individual has failed to satisfy the Council that s/he falls within the prescribed criteria.
- 6.2 Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Primary Care Services (Commissioned Provider Services) are committed to following a complaints and appeals process
- 6.3 If a negative decision is made by Sheffield City Council on the basis of the desk based assessment alone, an applicant can appeal the decision within 21 days of the date of the letter notifying the applicant of the decision. If an appeal is received outside of 21 days discretion will be exercised as to whether to agree to process the appeal. Applicants who have been refused a badge on the basis of the desk based assessment alone and who subsequently appeal will be referred to a Physiotherapist for further assessment.
- 6.4 If an applicant receives a negative decision following a Physiotherapy assessment, the applicant can make a complaint. This will be treated as a complaint rather than an appeal because the Council will not question the merits of a medical assessment made by the Physiotherapist.
- 6.5 Where a complaint from an applicant concerns the merits of medical assessment made by the Physiotherapist, the onus will be on the complainant to provide alternative compelling medical evidence. Such evidence should include a declaration showing how the applicant meets the mobility criteria from an appropriate medical practitioner such as a Consultant (see Appendix 3 for

declaration form). Sheffield City Council will not accept evidence from the person's GP (in line with the national approach of not accepting GP assessment). Sheffield City Council will deal with these complaints and decide the complaint having regard to all the evidence

- 6.6 A complaint not received in writing will be accepted, but a written transcript of the complaint will need to be produced and sent to the complainant to confirm the details of the complaint.
- 6.7 In accordance with Sheffield City Council's corporate response timescales the council will aim to deal with all 'blue badge' complaints and provide a full answer within 28 days. A small number of more complex complaints may take longer than 28 days to fully investigate. If this happens Sheffield City Council will tell the customer why we need longer and propose a timetable for completing the investigation into the complaint.
- 6.8 Complaints may be able to be managed and responded to in full by Customer Services but some will also require input from Sheffield Primary Care Services and / or the Communities Portfolio. The table below lists responsibility for input to the complaints process. In all cases Customer Services will be responsible for coordinating the response to the complaint and will analyse complaints (e.g. trends) to improve service delivery.

Type of Complaint	Respondent(s)
Problems caused by something we have done or not done (that has influenced the decision)	Customer Services Sheffield Primary Care Services
Dissatisfaction with the way customer has been treated – e.g. attitude of SCC employee or NHS Physiotherapist	Customer Services Sheffield Primary Care Services
Dissatisfaction with the quality or quantity of service being provided	Customer Services
Dissatisfaction with the cost of services or charging mechanisms	Customer Services
Dissatisfaction with council policy	Customer Services
Dissatisfaction with the merits of the physiotherapist assessment or belief that a physiotherapist is not an appropriately qualified practitioner to assess their condition	Customer Services (who will request compelling medical evidence to support this claim)

7. ENFORCEMENT

- 7.1 Sheffield City Council is committed to preventing abuse and misuse of the Blue Badge scheme. Sheffield City Council will
- Use independent mobility assessments where eligibility is unclear
 - Make checks on the applicant's identity and address to confirm that they are who they say they are and that they are resident in the local authority area.
 - Seek a signed declaration of these facts from the applicant
 - Obtain a declaration that the badge holder will not allow someone else to use their badge

- 7.2 Sheffield City Council will consider the following enforcement action against a badge holder who uses an expired badge, an illegible badge, a badge that was lost or stolen and for which a replacement has been issued, or a badge which they are no longer entitled to use:
- they could be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction under section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970;
 - they could be prosecuted and receive a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction under section 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984;
 - they could be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice for the parking contravention in those areas where local authorities have taken civil parking enforcement powers. In other areas, Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued;
 - the Police can seize the badge under Section 19 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984; and
- 7.3 Sheffield City Council has the right to withdraw a badge if the holder has had at least three relevant convictions for misuse.
- 7.4 Information on blue badge holders will be shared between Parking Services and Customer Fulfilment Team to identify and confirm misuse of blue badges.
- 7.5 Civil Enforcement Officers (formerly known as Parking Attendants) may issue Penalty Charge Notices for any parking offence that has occurred, this may include if there are grounds to suspect a displayed badge is misused. They will ensure:
- There is sufficient visible evidence to believe the badge is invalid, e.g. it may look like a photocopy, appear to have been tampered with or be more than two weeks out of date
 - They will have contacted the Customer Fulfilment Team to clarify if the blue badge holder is a valid holder or that the badge is still valid.
- If in any doubt, they will contact the Council's Parking Services Manager
- 7.6 Civil Enforcement Officers will be instructed to issue Penalty Charge Notices for any parking offence that has occurred, this may include to vehicles parked in blue badge parking areas that are incorrectly displaying a blue badge.
- 7.7 Examples of when this could happen are:
- Badge displayed incorrectly where the officer cannot establish the validity of the badge, the expiry date and/or there is no time clock
 - Where the badge is out of date beyond the statutory two week allowance for expired badges
 - When the driver does not make a reasonable effort to show there is a blue badge holder present
- 7.8 Penalty Charge Notices will be issued where a blue badge holder has parked in an area where there is a ban on parking by blue badge holders (e.g. where there are loading restrictions in place, Clearways, or Loading Bays).

8 WHAT SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL WILL DO

- 8.1 Sheffield City Council want everyone to be clear about how and where they should use their blue badge. The Council have information available on the blue badge scheme, parking restrictions, how to appeal and all available parking areas.
- 8.2 The DfT have produced a guidance leaflet 'The Blue Badge scheme; rights and responsibilities in England' which provides further guidance on this subject. Sheffield City Council can also be contacted to provide further information to blue badge holders
- 8.3 Blue badges will be issued via post to the applicant's address
- 8.4 All blue badges will be valid for 3 years with the exception of cases where: the Higher Rate Mobility Component of DLA or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement is for a shorter period, or a child under 3 years where it will be issued for a period ending on the day immediately following the child's third birthday.
- 8.5 When a blue badge expires, the applicant will be expected to return the Blue Badge to Sheffield City Council prior to the issue of a further or replacement badge.
- 8.6 If an application is refused then the applicant will be informed of the reasons why the refusal decision was made.
- 8.7 Applicants will be made aware of the appeals and or complaints processes if they are dissatisfied with the decision or the assessment process.
- 8.8 Sheffield City Council will advise blue badge holders of their responsibilities under the scheme and the potential consequences of misusing their badge.
- 8.9 Sheffield City Council will ensure that badge holders are informed that they must display their badges correctly, because if they fail to they may receive a Penalty Charge Notice.
- 8.10 This policy will be re-assessed in line with relevant changes in law or Government guidance

Policy Updated in response to The Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance (England) June 2011.

Policy agreed: November 2011



Equality Impact Analysis

For further guidance click here

<http://intranet/managers/equalitydiversity/equality-impact-assessments>

PART 1

Name of policy/project Reform of the Blue Badge Scheme

Status New or /Existing New

Portfolio Resources

Completed by Linda Lawson

Service Customer Services

Date 6th October 2011

What are the brief aims, purpose and outcomes of the policy or project?

New guidance for local authorities was issued in June 2011 by the Department for Transport. SCC is working to that new guidance to address current problems relating to fraud and abuse and to improve operational efficiency, reduce public sector costs and improve customer service.

Are there any potential staffing implications for the Council?

No – current staffing levels can manage current application numbers but the extensions to eligibility and the expected increase in demand as the older population increases will mean that extra resources will be needed in the future.

Give details of anyone involved in preparing this analysis.

Fayzeh Mohamed, Customer Services Manager
Linda Lawson, Business Services Manager

As a Council under the Equality Act 2010, we have a Duty to pay due regard to

- Eliminate Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation
- Advance Equality of Opportunity
- Foster Good Relations

Further information available here - hyperlink- <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/policy--performance/how-we-will-deliver/other-strategies-plans-and-policies/equality-and-diversity>

Areas of possible impact

Level of impact
H,M,L,

Explanation & Evidence, (this can be data, reports, feedback or consultations)

Risk
Red
amber
green

√	Age	Medium positive impact	Carers with children between the ages of 2-3 with specific medical conditions would benefit from the eligibility extension.	
		Medium positive impact	Around two-thirds of badge holders are over the age of 65 and they would benefit from the customer service improvements and be able to park in spaces made available by improved enforcement measures.	
√	Disability	High	The Blue Badge scheme gives severely disabled people access to vital services and a better quality of life by improving access to parking. The improvements in enforcement measures will ensure that accessibility is improved for those who need this.	
	Transgender/ Gender	Medium	People who live in a different gender, may, for a number of reasons, find it difficult to provide the appropriate documentation, so local authorities will need to be more flexible in assessing the proof of identity of transgender people. Respect for the individual and privacy of gender history are of paramount importance. Since 15 October 2007, the Blue Badge has included a gender marker (Male/Female). It is important that SCC deal with applications made by transsexual and transgender people sensitively, and issue badges under the requested gender.	
√	Race	Low	There is very little take-up of applications or requests for information in other languages so this would be an opportunity to promote this service to specific communities.	
Social impact- Implications on financial inclusion, child poverty, social justice or cohesion.			The increase in the fee from £2 to £10 for a 3 year period will have a minimum impact on customers who need a blue badge to be able to access services. The blue badge allows free national and European parking for those eligible and currently it costs the Authority £10.95 to produce each badge.	
Implications on the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.			An organisational badge may be issued to an organisation for use in a motor vehicle when that vehicle is being used to carry disabled people	

		who would themselves be eligible for a badge.	
Other. Please specify		The new scheme provides continuous automatic entitlement to seriously disabled service personnel and veterans.	
Expected benefits		The reduction in misuse and abuse will also free up the limited disabled parking spaces for customers who need them most increasing accessibility to services for those customers.	
Overall summary: Social benefits from improvements to enforcement and the new badge design, badge holders will benefit from free parking and increased mobility due to proposed eligibility extensions and measures to tackle misuse and abuse. The higher fee will benefit local authorities as it contributes more to the actual cost. There has been detailed consultation with blue badge holders and their families by the DfT. We will undertake local consultation by clearly communicating the changes to customers and key stakeholders e.g. Expert Elders, Transport for All groups, local hospitals, etc using a variety of channels and will canvass feedback on the changes to the Scheme.			
If you have identified differential outcomes or high negative outcomes, you are REQUIRED to proceed to PART 2, a Full Impact Analysis.			
Date that the Impact Analysis will be reviewed: October 2012		Impact Assessment Code:	
Entered on Q Tier N			
I will not be proceeding to a full Impact Analysis		Signed (Person completing the form):	
		Date:	
		Signed (Responsible Officer for Portfolio) :	
		Date:	

Action Plan and impact Analysis

Area of impact	Action and mitigation (Response to impact in analysis)	Lead & Timescale	How monitored, reviewed and outcomes
1	Targeted marketing in planned to those affected e.g. Children, veterans, disability and expert elder groups.	Linda Lawson End November 2011	Customer feedback
2	All those customers whose current blue badge is due to expire in January, February and March 2012 will be contacted individually to inform them of the change.	Linda Lawson Mid November 2012	Customer Feedback
3	Arrange for information to reach voluntary and community sector groups as well as relevant professionals to inform of changes to the scheme and how SCC intends to meet those new requirements.	Linda Lawson November 2011	Customer Feedback
4	Ensure all staff are aware of sensitivities around proof of identity for those applicants	Linda Lawson November 2011	Staff and Customer feedback
5	Monitor the Scheme to identify take up of those affected eg. Children, veterans, disability and expert elder groups	Linda Lawson Ongoing	Customer Monitoring Forms & Analysis

A full Impact Analysis has been completed.	Signed (Person completing the form: Date:
	Signed Responsible Officer for Portfolio) : Date: