

CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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REFERENCE: R-001-11

R-001-11 - REFORM OF BLUE BADGE SCHEME

Purpose of Report

To:

- I. Request approval to charge a fee of £10.00 for the provision of a Blue (disabled) Parking Badge.

Consultation

The reform programme has been developed by the government in consultation with disabled people, local authorities and other stakeholders, and on the basis of research and economic analysis.

Checks have been made with surrounding authorities on the charges they intend to make. The findings are below:-

Authority	Current charge for	Proposed charge for Badge Jan 1st	Status of council approval to charge new rate
BANES	No charge	No information	Decision will be made at the end of January 2012
Cornwall	£2.00	£10.00	Awaiting formal approval
Devon	No charge	Awaiting decision from members	None
Dorset	£2.00	£10.00	Approved
Gloucestershire	£2.00	£10.00	Awaiting formal approval

Hampshire	£2.00	£10.00	Approved
Somerset	£2.00	Consultation with members – deadline 15 th January	None
Swindon	£2.00	£10.00	Awaiting formal approval
Surrey	£2.00	£10.00	Approved

Options Considered

To:

- I. Evaluation of the government's database and application form has demonstrated that this can be used by Wiltshire to satisfy the current excellent service we provide. In addition it offers the opportunity for us to gain from the fraud and other centralised checking services. Historic information will need to be retained on the existing database until the expiration of the badges in three years. After that time the Council will not need to maintain a database and the associated licence and running costs.
- II. Councillor John Thomson, The Cabinet Member Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing has lobbied the government about these changes and the increased charge. Whilst his points have been listened to, the government is continuing to roll out the new badges and process for the production of the badges which means that Wiltshire will be required to comply and consequently increase its costs.
- III. The Council are not able to refuse to comply with the new government arrangements for the provision of badges since these are mandatory and the new badges can only be issued through the government's supplier Northgate.
- IV. The Council could continue with its policy of not charging for a Blue Badge however, in the current financial climate it is not possible to absorb the additional mandatory charge by government to the Council of £4.60 per badge and the additional processing times.

Reason for Decision

It is necessary for the Council to make a decision on whether to charge for the Blue Badges. The information on this change to the service arrived after the budget setting process was completed and will be in place before the completion of the next budget round. A formal decision to charge is, therefore, necessary.

INTENTION TO MAKE DECISION

Following consultation with officers I give notice that I intend to make the decision set out in the attached report. If you would like to make any representations to me on this issue please do so by 29th December 2011.

The following supporting documents are attached:

- R-001-11 - Reform of Blue Badge Scheme - Report
- R-001-11 - Reform of Blue Badge Scheme - Appendix 1
- R-001-11 - Reform of Blue Badge Scheme - Appendix 2
- R-001-11 - Reform of Blue Badge Scheme - Appendix 3
- R-001-11 - Reform of Blue Badge Scheme - Appendix 4
- R-001-11 - Reform of Blue Badge Scheme - Appendix 5

Date:19th December 2011.....

Cllr John Noeken
Cabinet Member for Resources