



## Cabinet 23 November 2011

### Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Review of Blue Badge Holder Parking (Dec11/11)

1. Following the Committee's decision to review the Council's policy of providing free car parking for blue badge holders, a Task and Finish Group was established to deliver this review. The Group's report was considered by the Committee on 16 November 2011, and included results of consultation and experiences learnt from other Councils.
2. At the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group, options had been considered, and a consultation plan established. Consultation had taken place with 37 disability groups, one national organisation, and the St Edmundsbury Tourist Information Manager. Additionally, a question on this issue was included as part of the Council's budget consultation, and the same question asked at 12 focus groups of residents, parish councils and residents' associations.
3. The results of the consultation were set out in detail in the Group's report to the Committee, together with concerns raised under this consultation. Additionally, Members had made comparisons with nearby publicly-owned car parking authorities, and private car parks, and a visit had been made to Waveney District Council where charging had recently been introduced, in order to benefit from the lessons learnt from implementation there.
4. From the general consultation, the majority (70%) supported charging, and those who were blue badge holders demonstrated some support (36%). The concerns raised by consultees were set out, together with actions which could be taken to mitigate these.
5. The Committee discussed the report and the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group in detail, asking questions on a number of issues including cashless payment options, the cost of implementing the changes, estimated levels of income and benchmarking against other authorities.
6. The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that:-
  - (a) **charging for blue badge holders to park in the Council's off-street car parks be introduced throughout the Borough, with effect from Monday 2 April 2012;**
  - (b) **charges be on the basis of one free hour for every hour purchased;**
  - (c) **alterations be made to positioning and heights of ticket machines, together with surrounding areas, to comply with BS 8300: 2009,**

**these works to be funded from the Car Parks Renewals and New Provisions Reserve;**

- (d) alternative methods of payment be examined and introduced if appropriate; and**
- (e) a communications plan be developed to ensure clear publicity and signage to those people who are affected.**

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