

# COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Directorate / Service Area		Officer undertaking the assessment
Customer Service and Transformation		Name: Joanne Tompkins .....
Service / Document / Function being assessed		Job Title: Customer Services Manager .....
The Blue Badge Parking Service		Contact details: 01480 373406 .....
Date completed: 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2015 .....		Date approved: .....
<b>Business Plan Proposal Number (if relevant)</b>	C/R 7.160	
Aims and Objectives of Service / Document / Function		

A Blue Badge is a parking permit that allows people who are registered severely sight impaired, or those with severe mobility issues easier access to public facilities by allowing them to park closer to where they need to go and gives access to reduced price car parking in some locations.

In order to qualify for a badge applicants must be permanently and substantially disabled and provide evidence of this. This application process is for both first time applications and customers who have an existing Blue Badge. There is currently a £9 charge when applying for a new Blue Badge and a £5 charge for replacement badges that have been lost, stolen or damaged. Where applications are unsuccessful, the charge is fully refunded. All applicants are required to provide supporting documentation dependent on their qualifying criteria.

The scheme contains a number of application criteria by which the applicant is automatically eligible for a badge and a number of discretionary criteria, which are listed below. A blue badge is usually issued for a period of three years, although some badges are issued for shorter periods in accordance with the duration of a state benefit, such as Disability Living Allowance.

#### Automatic Criteria:

- In receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of [Disability Living Allowance](#)
- are [severely sight impaired \(registered blind\)](#)
- In receipt of the [War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement](#)
- In receipt of a lump sum benefit from the [Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme](#) (within tariff levels 1-8). You must also have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.
- In receipt of 8 points or more under the 'moving around' descriptor for the mobility component of the [Personal Independence Payment \(PIP\)](#).

#### Discretionary criteria

- Have a permanent and substantial disability which means you cannot walk or which makes walking very difficult.
- Drive a motor vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms, and are unable to operate all or some types of parking meter (or would find it very difficult to operate them)
- Children under the age of 3 who have specific medical conditions which require them to be accompanied by bulky medical equipment or who need to be kept near a vehicle at all times, so that they can, if necessary, be treated in the vehicle, or quickly driven to a place where they can be treated, such as a hospital

The scheme does not currently cater for temporary disability or conditions, or individuals with mental health difficulties.

### What is changing?

The proposal is to increase the charge for a new or renewed Blue Badge from £9 to £10 and for a replacement badge, from £5 to £10. This is in line with the maximum charge permitted as stated within Section 2, paragraph 4 of The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2011.

This proposal will bring our charges in line with all neighboring authorities with the exception of Peterborough, who continue to charge £5 for a replacement badge.

No changes are being proposed in relation to full refunds where the application has been unsuccessful.

### Who is involved in this impact assessment?

e.g. Council officers, partners, service users and community representatives.

Council officers within the Customer Service and Transformation Directorate.

Service users and specific interest groups will be consulted so that their feedback can inform the updated version of this Impact Assessment.

This Impact Assessment also draws on information from the Department of Transport's national 2010 consultation on the Blue Badge scheme.

## What will the impact be?

Tick to indicate if the expected impact on each of the following protected characteristics is positive, neutral or negative.

Impact	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Age			X
Disability			X
Gender reassignment		x	
Marriage and civil partnership		x	
Pregnancy and maternity		x	
Race		x	

Impact	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Religion or belief		x	
Sex		x	
Sexual orientation		x	
The following additional characteristics can be significant in areas of Cambridgeshire.			
Rural isolation		x	
Deprivation			X

For each of the above characteristics where there is an expected positive, negative and / or neutral impact, please provide details, including evidence for this view. Consider whether the impact could be disproportionate on any particular protected characteristic. Describe the actions that will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts and how the actions are to be recorded and monitored. Describe any issues that may need to be addressed or opportunities that may arise.

### Positive Impact

The changes are not expected to have any positive impact on the protected characteristics.

### Negative Impact

The increase in charge from £9 to £10 per Blue Badge is expected to have a negative impact on Cambridgeshire residents who are eligible for a blue badge, i.e. people living with a disability who are also living on a low income. 31,992 badges were issued between April 2012 and March 2015, of which 10,664 were issued on average each year.

The increase in cost will be met by individual applicants, some of whom will be on disability benefits and low income. Research (Disability, Long Term Conditions and Poverty, JRF, 2014) shows that "*the headline poverty rate for disabled individuals is 23% - only just higher than the rate of non-disabled individuals of 21%. However, poverty is about whether someone's material resources are sufficient to meet their needs. Disabled people's needs are often greater – some estimates put this at £1500pw. This is due to both 'enhanced costs' (things everyone needs but which are more expensive for disabled people) and 'special costs' (things that only disabled people need)*". Ultimately the aim of the Blue Badge is to help disabled people with the costs of parking; it enables people to park nearer to facilities and enables them to stay for longer without incurring additional parking charges compared to an able bodied person.

Blue Badge parking offers a range of parking concessions nationally and across Europe. Local concessions vary but in Cambridge the main city Centre car parks offer free parking for the first three hours, compared with a charge of £7.90 per visit for this length of time for a non-Blue Badge holder.

We know from population needs assessment work <http://www.poppi.org.uk/> / <http://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/primary-prevention-ill-health-older-people2014> that the prevalence of both Ill-Health and Disability increases with age, therefore it is worth noting that this measure will have a disproportionate impact on older people compared to those in younger age groups.

With reference to the individual reasons for application, the breakdown of categories for this time period can be seen below:

- Armed and reserve forces scheme-0.05%
- Child under 3-0.04%
- Disability in both arms-0.04%
- Higher Rate Mobility Component of DLA-26.64%
- Moving around Personal Independence Payment-1.27%
- Severe Sight Impairment (blind)-2.22%
- Walking Disability-69.22%
- War Pensioners Mobility Supplement-0.33%

Taking the 2012-13 data as a sample, we know that 56.5% of applicants were female and 43.5% were male.

We are unable to generate age profiles of applicants/badge holders from the systems that are currently utilised to administer the service. Nor can we identify from the volume of badges issued, what percentage are new applications and which are replacement badges.

In order to better understand the anticipated negative impacts, we will be consulting with existing badge holders and special interest groups in relation to the proposed change to the charges for Blue Badges. The proposal to increase charges for blue badges has also been highlighted as one of the potential budget measures for the council within a press release dated 26/10/2015.

#### **Neutral Impact**

There will be a neutral impact on the majority of the protected characteristics, unless any of those individuals are also eligible for a blue badge due to a disability and therefore fall within more than one protected characteristic.

#### **Issues or Opportunities that may need to be addressed**

Consultation on this budget proposal will run from 24 November to 5 January. The consultation will be open to all, but specifically promoted to Blue Badge holders alongside representative organisations of the groups potentially affected. The consultation will be primarily online with assisted options made available to customers/ interested parties who are without online access. There will be further press releases to raise awareness amongst the public and internal communications to ensure key staff are made aware of this proposal particularly those working with children, families and adults for whom the Blue Badge scheme may be important.

#### **Community Cohesion**

If it is relevant to your area you should also consider the impact on community cohesion.

Not applicable

#### **Version Control**

Version no.	Date	Updates / amendments	Author(s)
1	03.11.2015		Jo Tompkins