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## FREE THREE HOUR PARKING FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Pursuant to Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15c, Cllrs J E Newport, J R F Mason and A H Eves have requested that the decision made by the Portfolio Holder for Environment in respect of free three hour parking for Blue Badge Holders on 28 February 2023 be called in for scrutiny:-

### 1.2 Free Three Hour Parking for Blue Badge Holders

That Rochford District Council offers three hours of free parking for Blue Badge holders within Council owned car parks.

1.3 The above Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee have called-in the decision so that the due diligence of the proposed scheme, together with any budgetary implications, can be scrutinised.

1.4 To assist Members, a copy of the original Portfolio Holder decision and report is appended.



Andrew Hunkin

Interim Director of People & Governance

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### Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Sonia Worthington, Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer, on:-

Phone: 01702 318141

Email: [Sonia.worthington@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:Sonia.worthington@rochford.gov.uk)

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

**EXECUTIVE DECISION BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

**SUBJECT: FREE THREE HOUR PARKING FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS**

**1 DECISION MADE**

- 1.1 That Rochford District Council offers three hours of free parking for Blue Badge holders within Council owned car parks.

**2 NAME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

- 2.1 Cllr D J Sperring

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 None.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options considered are as set out in the Lead Officer's report (see below). The decision does not depart from Council policy and appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.



Portfolio Holder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Decision: 28/02/2023

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**REPORT TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

**REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF ASSETS & INVESTMENT**

**SUBJECT: FREE THREE HOUR PARKING FOR BLUE BADGE  
HOLDERS**

**1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That Rochford District Council offers three hours of free parking for Blue Badge holders within Council owned car parks.

**2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To ensure parity with other Essex Authorities regarding offering free parking for Blue Badge holders in disabled bays in Council owned car parks.

**3 SALIENT INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Blue Badge scheme does not apply in off street car parks although most authorities (including Rochford) will provide dedicated Blue Badge holder bays.
- 3.2 The introduction of the Blue Badge scheme back in the 1970's was intended to allow the severely disabled to park as close as possible to their destination (i.e. on street).
- 3.3 In the past parking operators have offered free parking to Blue Badge holders as some drivers were unable to access the ticket machines. Now as technology advances there are DDA compliant machines and the option to pay for parking by phone.
- 3.4 For this reason, paying to park in local authority car parks is becoming more common, particularly as there is no correlation between qualifying for a Blue Badge and being on a low income. However, granting Blue Badge holders a concession beyond the expiry time printed on their ticket or mobile phone session is accepted by most disabled motoring organisations as a fair policy.
- 3.5 Currently, Blue Badge users may park in any bay within Rochford District Council car parks and providing the Blue Badge is clearly displayed on the dashboard, Blue Badge users are allowed an extra hour on the expiry of their

Pay & Display ticket or Pay by Phone parking session giving those who need additional time to get to and from their car a reasonable amount.

- 3.6 Officers have conducted a benchmarking exercise of Blue Badge parking in off street car parks, the results are tabled below:-

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Charge</b>
Basildon	3 hours free with Blue Badge and Clock
Braintree	Normal Tariff Apply
Brentwood	3 hours free with Blue Badge and Clock
Chelmsford	3 hours free with Blue Badge and Clock
Colchester	3 hours free with Blue Badge and Clock
Epping Forest	Free All day parking with Blue Badge
Harlow	Free All day parking with Blue Badge
Maldon	Free All day parking with Blue Badge
Rochford	Normal Tariff Apply
Southend	Free All day parking with Blue Badge
Tendring	3 hours free with Blue Badge and Clock
Thurrock	Free All day parking with Blue Badge
Uttlesford	Free All day parking with Blue Badge

- 3.7 Out of the 13 authorities information has been collected on, only 2 authorities apply normal parking tariffs to Blue Badge holders, one of which is Rochford District Council. Five authorities offer 3 hours of free parking with the remainder offering free all day parking.

- 3.8 It is recommended that Rochford District Council offers three free hours parking. Based on the Council's car park locations 3 hours of free parking is enough time to ensure fair opportunity for all with Blue Badges.

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 To continue with the current charging of normal tariff and continue offering an additional hour on the paid charge.

**5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There could be a reputational risk to the Council for continuing to charge when the majority of other Essex authorities offer free parking.

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There will be some loss of car parking income as a result of this proposal, but the loss involved will not be significant.

**7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

**8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.



LT Lead Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 28/02/2023

**Background Papers:-**

None.

For further information please contact phoebe Barnes (Director Assets & Investments) on:-

Phone: 01277 312839

Email: [Phoebe.barnes@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk](mailto:Phoebe.barnes@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk)

**Note:** Please ensure that Member Services are provided with the original of the decision on the day it is taken (or by 10 am the following morning at the latest) to enable publication.