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## RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERENCES FROM THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2002

### (a) Minute 14(3) – RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTE 188-DISABLED PARKING IN OFF-STREET CAR PARKS

The Proper Officer reports that, pursuant to Standing Order 18(6), a requisition has been received in the names of Councillors Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs M S Vince and Mrs M A Weir requiring that the above Minute be referred to Full Council for decision.

A copy of the appropriate Committee Minute is set out below. To assist Members, a copy of the Transportation Sub-Committee Minute and associated report is set out at Appendix 1.

#### **“Disabled Parking in Off-Street Car Parks**

In response to a Member query with respect to whether high street disabled parking bays could be designated for wheelchair users only, County Council Officers confirmed that they would investigate the issue and advise Members of the outcome in writing.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That there be new signage for the disabled parking bays in Boots Lagoon designating the bays for wheelchair users only.
- (2) That a letter be sent to the Disabled Person’s Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in support of extending the vehicle excise duty exemption disc to the over 65s, and copied to the Members of Parliament for Rayleigh and Rochford & Southend East constituencies.
- (3) That free parking in pay and display car parks be restricted to severely disabled persons displaying vehicle excise duty exemption discs only.
- (4) That the changes be advertised in the car parks and an initial period of grace is exercised by the issuing of warning notices to drivers. (HRHM)”

R J Honey

Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)

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**APPENDIX 1****TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTE 188 – DISABLED PARKING IN OFF-STREET CAR PARKS**

Sub-Committee Minute 188 reads as follows:-

**“DISABLED PARKING IN OFF-STREET CAR PARKS**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management asking Members to consider the redesignation of the type of persons who are eligible to park free in off-street disabled parking bays in view of the representation made by the Rochford District Access Committee for the Disabled.

The Council provides specially marked bays, with enhanced access, free of charge to disabled motorists. The charge concession was offered to avoid the need for the severely disabled to have to access a ticket machine rather than the implication that they could not afford to pay.

It was noted that additional information relating to the Access Committee for the Disabled was circulated to Members.

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Revenue & Housing Management confirmed that a survey of the other thirteen Authorities in Essex revealed that seven do not charge for disabled parking in pay and display car parks. Tendring and Colchester charge after 3 hours, Castle Point and Chelmsford have a variety of different tariffs, plus a few free car parks, Thurrock only charges in one of its car parks and Brentwood is debating the issue next week. In all cases this information related to pay and display operated car parks. Where barrier management systems existed, all motorists were liable to pay the standard fees as no distinction could be made between a disabled or ambulant motorist.

During debate, the following issues were noted:-

- In instances when a disabled person is driven by a carer or family member, the driver is able to get to a ticket machine.
- There might be cases where family members borrow a disabled person's blue badge for their own use.
- Blue badge holders who park in parking bays other than designated disabled parking bays prevent this Council from receiving income from the spaces they occupy.

- The disabled parking bays at Boots Lagoon are often occupied by drivers who are able to walk, thus depriving those in wheelchairs from utilising the bays.

On a motion moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs J M Giles it was:-

**RECOMMENDED**

That there be new signage for the disabled parking bays in Boots Lagoon designating the bays for wheelchair users only. (HRHM)

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Revenue & Housing Management advised that this Council is not obliged to provide disabled car parking bays. However, local authorities are sympathetic to the needs of the disabled. The national standard is that 3% of car parking spaces are designated for disabled parking. This Council meets the standard, and in some areas exceeds it.

The following issues were noted during debate:-

- There is no direct relationship between the number of blue badges issued and the actual number of severely disabled people in the country; 1 car in 14 carries a blue badge, but only 1 in 70 people are severely disabled.
- People who become severely disabled after their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday are disadvantaged in that they are not eligible for the Higher Rate Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. Only those in receipt of this are entitled to vehicle excise duty exemption discs.

On a motion moved by Cllr Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Cllr P D Stebbing it was:-

**RECOMMENDED**

That a letter be sent to the Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in support of extending the vehicle excise duty exemption disc to the over 65s, and copied to the Members of Parliament for Rayleigh and Rochford & Southend East constituencies. (HRHM)

It was further noted that:-

- The Rochford District Access Committee for the Disabled is a democratic, open group, which represents the views of the disabled within the District. An Officer represents the Council on this Committee.

- Any changes in free car parking for the disabled will need to be well communicated to residents in the District.

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That free parking in pay and display car parks be restricted to severely disabled persons displaying vehicle excise duty exemption discs only.
- (2) That the changes be advertised in the car parks and an initial period of grace is exercised by the issuing of warning notices to drivers. (HRHM)