

MANAGEMENT OF DISABLED PARKING BAYS TASK GROUP

7 MAY 2013

Present: Councillor R Martins (Chair)
Councillors I Brandon, K Collett and S Greenslade

Officers: Transport and infrastructure Section Head
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (RW)

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bell.

12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes were agreed and signed.

13 RESIDENTS RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Chair thanked the Members of the Task Group. He noted that this had been a much needed topic for scrutiny and had established the extent of the problems. He acknowledged that whilst misuse of disabled parking bays was not considerable, it did constitute an issue for some residents.

The Chair referred to the questionnaire and noted that most respondents had said that they had had a problem. He considered that this was significant and that these issues should be addressed.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head agreed that the survey had been useful and said that it had advised on problems which had not been realised beforehand. He noted that 99 responses had been received which demonstrated residents' interest in the subject.

The Task Group then discussed the findings in the Officer's report.

Councillor Brandon noted that parking generally was a problem in Callowland ward and said that it would be interesting to discover whether the overall parking issues in the borough were similar to those encountered by disabled drivers.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head advised that in the event of problems, residents were unsure what they could do. He explained that all holders of Blue Badges could park in those bays which were subject to a traffic order. Not all Blue Badge holders, however, could have a bay marked outside

their own homes. He advised that strict rules applied to those who were entitled to such bays.

He suggested that one Recommendation be that information should be sent to residents explaining the rules for the disabled Parking Bays. He added that within the Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), problems should be minimal since a resident's permit could be taken back were they to infringe the rules. He agreed that outside the CPZs a greater problem would exist.

He noted that one suggestion from residents had been to make the bays longer. He advised, however, that a balance needed to be kept between the needs of those with a disabled bay and those of other residents.

Councillor Brandon suggested that issues could be communicated to councillors in the wards where problems had been encountered. He said that not all problems would occur in all wards.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head suggested that a break-down of disabled parking bays in all wards could be sent to all councillors in order that they could be made aware of potential problems in their areas.

The Chair agreed that this list should be sent and noted the responsibility that ward councillors had for their residents.

Councillor Collett commented on the permit which could be obtained by disabled drivers for use in the Intu Watford (Harlequin Centre) managed car parks but not the Watford Borough Council car parks. This permit would allow holders to park all year round for a £10.00 fee.

The Chair added that an article could be written for the 'About Watford' periodical with information on the survey and what actions residents could take in the event of problems.

Councillor Collett suggested that a letter of thanks should be sent to the 99 residents who had responded to the questionnaire as this would demonstrate that their opinions were valued and would be acted upon.

Councillor Brandon suggested that a survey be conducted every three years in order to monitor whether problems followed similar trends from year to year.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head commented that there could be additional feedback in the CPZ survey.

In response to queries on road markings, the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head advised that the markings were yellow but that under the current ruling road markings for disabled Parking Bays should be white. He advised that as a result of a suggestion raised at the previous meeting, he had asked Herts County Council Highways department whether the house number could be marked within the bay. He had been informed that this was not possible.

Councillors agreed that it would be wise to keep track of all calls received in relation to disabled parking bay problems by entering these in a 'log'.

Councillors also agreed that information from the survey be forwarded to Disability Watford.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

AGREED –

1. That information be sent to residents explaining the rules which allowed for disabled parking bays to be established outside residents' homes.
2. That information be sent to residents explaining who could and who could not use the disabled parking bays.
3. That information be sent to all ward councillors detailing where Disabled Parking Bays had been established within their wards.
4. That an article be written in 'about Watford' informing residents that the survey had been conducted and advising on actions residents could take in the event of encountering problems.
5. That a letter of thanks be sent to all respondents to the survey.
6. That all Councillors keep a data log of information on all parking problems received from residents.
7. That information arising from the survey be forwarded to Disability Watford.
8. That information on the Disabled Driver Car Parking Scheme as used in the Intu Watford (Harlequin Centre) car parks be forwarded to members of the Task Group

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.00 pm
and finished at 6.20 pm