

MANAGEMENT OF DISABLED PARKING BAYS TASK GROUP

29 January 2013

Present: Councillor Martins (Chair)
Councillors Brandon, Collett and Greenslade

Also Present: Councillor Lynch
Councillor Mills (for minute numbers 8 - 10)

Officer: Head of Planning
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bell.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 9TH JANUARY 2013

The minutes were agreed and signed.

8. REPORTS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members of the Task Group had received considerable background information from officers. It was agreed that, consequently, the Task Group had a more thorough understanding of procedures and regulations for Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and Advisory Parking bays.

The Chair said the key decision for the meeting was how best to establish the extent of the problem for residents with disabled parking bays. He suggested that evidence should be gathered through a survey of those residents who were affected.

Councillors Brandon and Collett advised that they had both had little casework concerning advisory bays.

Councillor Greenslade, however, stated that she was personally affected and that she considered that the criteria by which residents were entitled to a bay were very stringent.

The Chair reiterated that there was a need to test the situation as, at that point, Members had only hearsay evidence and little casework to go on. He considered that it would be wise to ask all those who had a bay whether they had encountered problems.

Councillor Lynch detailed the experiences of a resident in her ward and explained that problems with parking had caused the resident additional stress. She said that parking arrangements should be such that they improved

residents' quality of life and suggested that each bay should be identified by the numbers of both the blue badge and CPZ permit.

The Chair agreed with Councillor Lynch but said that the issue for the Task Group at this point was to examine the situation with advisory disabled bays. The point made by Councillor Lynch, however, could be considered at a later date or when the group was considering ways to address problems identified through the survey.

Councillor Brandon suggested that one question on the survey could identify whether the types of problem Councillor Lynch had referred to were widespread. He agreed that a survey of residents would be wise.

The Head of Planning noted that there had been very little casework on the subject so far but agreed that a questionnaire could be sent out to ask those with advisory bays if they did have problems. She referred to Councillor Lynch's suggestion regarding displaying numbers of both the blue badge and the permit number and said that the Traffic Regulation Order for the CPZ could be amended to require both a resident's permit and blue badge to be displayed in marked disabled bays. Outside the CPZ, bays would have to be made statutory.

Councillor Mills expressed concern that blue badges would be stolen if left in cars over night.

Councillor Greenslade referred to the proposed loss of eleven parking bays at the Town Hall end of Watford and advised that motorists would then be inclined to use residents' bays.

The Head of Planning pointed out that the eleven spaces would be re-provided in Church car park and further noted the number of existing disabled bays as listed in the agenda.

Councillor Lynch advised that a permit for parking in the multi-storey car parks could be purchased for £10. She felt that a question for the survey could be whether, were residents to buy such a permit, they would use the multi storey car parks more frequently.

The Chair said that this and other related issues could be considered by the Task Group as a separate piece of work.

The Head of Planning advised that any new work would require a fresh proposal form.

9. SURVEY FOR RESIDENTS

The meeting agreed that they would conduct a survey and then discussed how this could best be achieved.

The Head of Planning considered that the list of questions as detailed in the agenda could be reduced and suggested that officers revise the list and forward on to the task group for their consideration.

The Chair agreed that the survey based on the questions proposed by members of the Task Group should be conducted by officers and the results considered at the following meeting of the group.

The Head of Planning offered to draft the survey and to circulate to the Task Group members prior to conducting the exercise.

In reply to a query from Councillor Brandon, the Head of Planning said that two people from her team could work on the survey. She pointed out that to receive a reasonable number of returned surveys it would be wise to wait until after the schools' half term break so that residents had sufficient time to consider their replies. The Head of Planning would advise of the timeframe for this exercise.

ACTION: Head of Planning

In view of the above, the committee noted that the original date of 9th March 2013 to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would now need to be revised.

AGREED –

1. That officers will conduct a survey, based on the questions proposed by the Task Group members, of the 170 households who currently have advisory disabled bays and prepare a report for the task group to consider.
2. That the next meeting of the Task Group would take place on 25th February 2013 starting at 6.00 p.m.

10. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

- Monday 25th February 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

Chair
Management of Disabled Parking Bays Task Group

The meeting started at 5.30 p.m.
and finished at 6.00 p.m.