

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Community Health and Care Partnership

Community Health and Care Partnership Committee: 16 November 2011

Subject: The Blue Badge Scheme in Scotland

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the CHCP Committee of the forthcoming reforms to the Blue Badge scheme in Scotland with the tender awarded to Northgate Information Solutions UK Limited from January 1st 2012.

To inform the Committee that this change in supplier will have a financial impact for West Dunbartonshire Council in terms of additional costs associated with the change.

- 1.1 Agree the financial charge of £ 10 to clients from 1st January 2012 through to 31st March 2013

2. Background

The Blue Badge scheme is currently administered by West Dunbartonshire Council. The Blue Badge allows people to use disability parking for a period of up to three years. Some people will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge if they have mobility allowance/higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance; War pensioners; Registered Blind; Government grant for your own vehicle; A vehicle supplied by the Government Department.

Some other people may also qualify for a Blue Badge under discretionary criteria, in such cases, a medical form is completed and this is assessed by an Occupational Therapist who makes a decision on whether a Blue Badge is granted or not

3. Main Issues

Between April 2010 and March 2011, West Dunbartonshire Council issued a total of 1940 Blue Badges. 1004 of these were automatic and 936 were issued using the discretionary criteria. Currently West Dunbartonshire charged recipients of Blue Badges £2.56. This generated an income over the above period of £4966.40.

The total cost of administering Blue Badges to the Council for the same period was £6444.77; this cost does not take account of the administration costs incurred by WDC. Therefore the Council made a net loss of £1678.37.

As of the 1st of January 2012, the Blue Badge scheme will be administered across all Local Authorities in Britain by Northgate and there will be a charge

of £4.60 per badge plus VAT. This includes an information leaflet; a parking Clock (which is necessary for parking in England and Wales), second class postage and access to other Blue Badge Improvement Services. If we apply this charge to the figures above, West Dunbartonshire Council would be paying £8924 for the above number of badges.

If West Dunbartonshire Council implements no change to its current charging policy, the approximate net loss to the Council over 12 month period would be around £5000. The maximum a council is entitled to charge is £20.00

For Comparison below is a list of other local authority's charges for Blue Badges

East Dunbartonshire	No Charge at Present
Inverclyde	Charge £2.00
Renfrew	Charge £20.00
Glasgow	Charge £20.00
West Dunbartonshire	Charge £2.56

Albeit that a charge of £10 will still not cover the full cost to the Council of assessing and administering applications for Blue Badges, it is felt that an initial charge of £10 per badge to be levied for the next 15 months would at least maintain the existing position.

During this period officers will continue to review the operation of the new arrangements and make any further recommendations on a revision to the charge for financial year 2013/14.

4. People Implications

There are no significant people implications.

5. Financial Implications

There is a financial risk of an additional £5000 to West Dunbartonshire Council if the current charge of £2.56 is continued

6. Risk Analysis

There is a financial risk of an additional £5000 to West Dunbartonshire Council if the current charge of £2.56 is continued. There may also be a risk that if charges were increased then some vulnerable people would chose not to take advantage of the Blue Badge scheme.

7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

There may also be a risk that if charges were increased then some vulnerable people would chose not to take advantage of the Blue Badge scheme.

8. Strategic Assessment

There are four main strategic priorities for 2011/12 with the recommendations for charging for Blue Badges coming under the heading of Fit for Purpose Services. All of the Councils within Scotland are moving to this new system and we will therefore be making the best use of funds available to the Council and we will be recovering costs incurred in the production of these cards for the patients and clients in West Dunbartonshire.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. If West Dunbartonshire Council implements no change to its current charging policy, the approximate net loss to the Council over 12 month period would be around £5000
2. We recommend that Clients should be charged £10.

Keith Redpath

Director

Date: 3 November 2011

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All