

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>1 July 2002</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Parking for the Disabled</b>	
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Councillor Jon Harris, on behalf of the Cabinet</b>	
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Meads, Devonshire, Sovereign	
<b>Purpose:</b>	To review current parking arrangements for the disabled in the Council's Off-Street Car Parks	
<b>Contact:</b>	Councillor Jon Harris	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>That the Cabinet:</b>	
	a)	<b>approve the extension of the concession to the drivers of all disabled persons vehicles with effect from 1 January 2003.</b>
	b)	<b>authorise our Officers to advertise the proposed changes and in due course to amend the signage accordingly.</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Background and Current Position</u></b>	

1.1	The Council's Off-Street Car Parks are controlled by the Borough of Eastbourne (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2001. The Order came into force on 4 June 2001. A list of the Council's Car Parks to which these Orders apply is at Appendix A.	
1.2	The making of the Order followed due legal processes of public advertisement and consultation. The Council's Cabinet heard representations against specific items in the proposed Order on 7 March 2001. These included the request for the exemption of car parking charges for disabled drivers. The Cabinet resolved to agree the exemption of fees for those drivers of disabled persons vehicles that are in receipt of exemption from vehicle excise duty under the appropriate Government Department scheme, subject to displaying in the vehicle windscreen a "Blue" or "Orange" Badge with clock and relevant exemption certificate. Cabinet also agreed that drivers of vehicles displaying an exemption certificate would not be limited in terms of parking spaces specifically marked for the disabled. Council subsequently ratified this decision.	
1.3	N.B. Exemptions from vehicle excise duty may be granted for a vehicle used by or for the purposes of a disabled person, if they:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· receive disability living allowance; the higher rate of the mobility component; or</li> <li>· receive war pensioners mobility supplement; or</li> <li>· keep or use a vehicle not exceeding 10cwt unladen which is adapted for invalids.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	
2.1	This report is presented by the Cabinet Member with lead responsibility for Planning and the Environment. The reason for the report is that the current Administration has a different policy to its immediate predecessor body in respect of parking for the disabled.	

2.2	The purpose of the report is to address the differentiation, created by the introduction of the June 2001 Order, between the drivers of disabled persons vehicles who have a "Blue" or "Orange" badge and those who do not.	
<b>3.0</b>	<b><u>The Blue Badge Scheme (Parking concessions for disabled and blind people)</u></b>	
3.1	The Blue Badge Scheme provides a national arrangement for parking concessions for people with severe walking difficulties who travel either as drivers or passengers. The Scheme also applies to registered blind people, and people with severe upper limb disabilities who regularly drive a vehicle but cannot turn a steering wheel by hand. It allows badge holders to park close to their destination, but the national concessions apply only to on-street parking.	
3.2	Subject to displaying the necessary badge (and time clock), badge holders may park free of charge and without the time limit at parking meters on street and pay and display on street (unless a local traffic order specifying a time limit for holders, is in place). As there is no such Order in place in Eastbourne, in effect and subject to availability of space, this enables the disabled driver to park "on-street" at no charge in Hyde Gardens and Devonshire Place.	
3.3	Additionally, badge holders are permitted to park on single and double yellow lines for up to three hours and although there are rules which apply concerning parking on restricted waiting areas, causing hazard and/or obstruction, generally the Blue Badge holder is able to park in all such locations without charge.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b><u>Extension of the Concessions to all Drivers of Disabled Vehicles</u></b>	

4.1	The current Administration consider the present arrangements to be divisive in the way it treats different groups of drivers of disabled vehicles. It therefore proposes to standardise the Council's policy and apply the Parking Concession to the drivers of all disabled persons vehicles. It is therefore proposed that this concession be applied to all Off-Street and Display Car Parks within the Borough's control with the exception of Hyde Gardens. The reason for excluding this Off-Street Car Park is the high level of On-Street parking available within this area. The On-Street parking is available free of charge to drivers of disabled vehicles and is closer to shops and other amenities than the Hyde Gardens Off-Street facility.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Financial Implications</u></b>	
5.1	Cabinet have sought advice from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services regarding the financial impact should the Council agree to the proposed change.	
5.2	Whilst it is difficult to isolate the impact of the introduction of charging for disabled users from the other elements of the Off-Street Parking Order, her estimate for annual loss of income is £12,500. This figure excludes losses on penalty notices.	
5.3	In addition to the ongoing reduction in revenue there will be offset costs totalling £5,500 (£2,500 to amend signage plus £3,000 to advertise the proposed changes).	
<b>6.0</b>	<b><u>Environmental, Youth and Anti-Poverty Implications</u></b>	
6.1	There are no immediate environmental, youth and anti-poverty implications arising from this report.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b><u>Conclusions and Recommendations</u></b>	

7.1	In June 2001 the Council introduced revised Orders which ceased free parking for the drivers of disabled vehicles, other than those who are tax exempt under the appropriate Government scheme. The new Administration disagrees with this change at a policy level and I therefore recommend the Cabinet to:-	
	a)	approve the extension of the concession to the drivers of all disabled persons vehicles with effect from 1 January 2003.
	b)	to authorise our Officers to advertise the proposed changes and in due course to amend the signage accordingly.
<b>Councillor Jon Harris</b>		
<b>24 June 2002</b>		
<b>Background Papers:</b>		
The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:		
Report of Director of Tourism, Leisure and Amenities and Head of Legal and Property Services to Cabinet, 7 March 2001 (Item 13 Revised Car Parking Orders).		
(der\P:\cabinet\reports\02.07.01\disabled parking revised)		

## APPENDIX A

1.	Wartling Road Coach and Lorry Park
2.	Langney Point Car Parks

3.	Princes Park Car Park
4.	Redoubt Car Park
5.	The Wish Tower
6.	Devonshire Park Car Park
7.	The Congress Car Park
8.	Church Street Car Park
9.	Beachy Head Car Park
10.	Beachy Head Coach Park
11.	Hyde Gardens Car Park
12.	Fisherman's Green Car Parks
13.	Coach Station, Junction Road