

Worcestershire County Council

Cabinet approves changes to Blue Badge Scheme

Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet has approved the national changes by Government to the Blue Badge Scheme and the proposed increase in charge to £10 per badge valid for three years.

The changes will affect current Blue Badge Holders whose badge expires on or after 1st January 2012 and new applicants applying for a Blue Badge from 1st January 2012.

Along with an increase in charge for a Blue Badge, badges will not be handed out on the day of application anymore. Customers wishing to apply will need to allow up to two weeks, as badges are posted from a central national location to applicant's homes.

Earlier this year the Government announced its plans to modernise the Blue Badge Scheme, which aims to reduce fraud and misuse which currently costs the country an estimated £46m per year.

The decision to increase the charge for a Blue Badge is the first in almost 30 years. An increase is necessary to cover the additional costs to produce and administer the new style badge.

Blue Badges entitle residents with mobility issues to have easier access to shops, facilities and services and in some cases benefit from parking concessions. Blue Badge Holders can travel independently, either as a driver or a passenger. The badge is valid for three years.

Councillor Phillip Gretton, Cabinet Member Responsible for Adult Social Care, said: "These changes are necessary if we are to crack down on fraud and misuse and reduce the amount it costs the country, which is estimated at £46m per year.

"Cabinet agrees the proposal to increase the charge from **£2 to £10**, as this still gives the Blue Badge holder good value for money with regards to the savings they make in car parking costs.

"Current Blue Badge holders need to be aware that badges will not be handed out on the day of application anymore. So they will need to apply for renewals up to two weeks before the badge expires to ensure they are not left without a badge. This is because the production of the badges will be done in one national location for all authorities, which again reduces the risk of misuse."

Anyone wanting to find out more about the changes to the Blue Badge can visit:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/bluebadge