



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

SUBJECT: Blue Badge Disabled parking scheme

PURPOSE OF ATTACHED REPORT:

To report on difficulties being experienced in following the revised process for the approval of Blue badges following changes made by Welsh Government in January 2015

To recommend that pending the review by Welsh Government that officers make some changes to the process to allow for a further check on applications that are initially refused.

DELEGATED DECISION (Date):

1. That Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council continue to use the matrix as the tool to determine eligibility but that we build in a further check and balance where the application is initially turned down. This may include requesting further evidence from their GP or other professionals.
2. Where sufficient medical evidence is provided by the applicant those individuals are allocated points on the scoring matrix equivalent to those which already exist for the case of children's applications who provide supporting medical evidence.
3. That following the Welsh Government review, Rhondda Cynon Taf process is reviewed.
4. The Community and Children's group work with Customer Care and ICT, who manage this service, to implement a more rounded and fair process.

Chief Officer Signature

Print Name

CHRISTOPHER
LEE

Date

19/5/15

Chief Officer Signature

Print Name

G. ISINGRINI

Date

19/05/15

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

A. Morgan

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

18-5-2015

DATE

B. Jorrey

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

19/05/2015

DATE

[Signature]

OFFICER CONSULTEE SIGNATURE

21/5/2015

DATE

Directorate:	Community & Children's Services and Corporate & Frontline Services
Contact Name:	Bob Gatis 
Designation:	Service Director, Community Care
Tel.No.	01443 425527

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/15

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY DECISION OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES

Part 1 (Non-Confidential)

Blue Badge Disabled parking scheme

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the difficulties being experienced with the Blue Badge Scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf and make recommendations for improvements pending a review by Welsh Government.

It is recommended that:

- the difficulties being experienced by RCT and other Councils in implementing revised guidance is noted;
- agreement is given to the recommendations at paragraph 3.17 to make the scheme fairer for applicants in RCT

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since 2010 Welsh Government has been consulting and making changes to the Blue Badge Scheme.
- 2.2 During 2014 there were a number of changes to both the criteria, process, documentation and tools that Local Authorities should use. The purpose of this was to seek to ensure greater consistency and fairness in the application of the criteria across Wales and ensure that only those entitled to a badge receive one.
- 2.3 Whilst the intentions were laudable the execution has been very poor leading to widespread concerns and criticisms about the number of people now being refused a badge.
- 2.4 The situation and concerns raised back to Welsh Government are such that they have instigated a review of the scheme.

3.0 BLUE BADGE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 3.1 The current criteria for a Blue Badge are as follows:

you are on the Council's disability register. Rhondda Cynon Taf has not kept a disability register for a number of years and within the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act will not be required to keep one.

3.10 Between January and March this year 393 people have been refused a badge (this represents 22% of the average 1846 applications received per quarter). Many have previously had a badge for a number of years and cannot understand why they do not meet the criteria and why there is not a right of appeal.

3.11 This has led to a significant number of representations from Councillors, AM's and MP's who are equally at a loss to understand why someone has been refused.

3.12 Senior Officers have looked at these cases and it is apparent that

- Staff have applied Welsh Government process correctly
- That they relate to adults and not children
- That the Welsh Government Guidance is flawed

3.13 The reasons for refusal has been principally two components, firstly applicants have not provided sufficient information and evidence to support their application.

3.14 Secondly staff have not been able to allocate some points on the scoring matrix because we do not keep a disability register, however information is taken from the Social Services database to verify where possible other information in the application.

3.15 Whilst Welsh Government have commissioned a review of the scheme we do not know how long it will take to report.

3.16 In the meanwhile whilst the eligibility criteria cannot be altered because they are provided through statutory instrument, the process is guidance only and therefore open to some interpretation by Councils.

3.17 In order to overcome the difficulties being experienced by some applicants, the following proposals are recommended to Members.

- That we continue to use the matrix as the tool to determine eligibility but that we build in a further check and balance where the application is initially turned down. This may include requesting further evidence from their GP or other professionals.
- Where sufficient medical evidence is provided by the applicant those individuals are allocated points on the scoring matrix equivalent to those which already exist for the case of children's applications who provide supporting medical evidence.
- That following the Welsh Government review, Rhondda Cynon Taf process is reviewed.
- The Community and Children's Group work with Customer Care & ICT, who manage this service, to implement a more rounded and fair process.