



# Equality B&NES

## A Voice for Disabled People

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Chris Major  
Head of Parking Services  
B&NES Council

Dear Chris Major

### **Blue Badge Reform Programme**

Equality B&NES is pleased to have the opportunity to submit our views on the B&NES Council's plans to implement the Government's Blue Badge Reform Programme.

Equality B&NES has been established to give a voice to the many people who are disabled or live with long term health conditions in Bath & North East Somerset. We are developing a network of disabled people and their carers to consider and comment on issues affecting their lives and use this information to help public bodies develop services which are more responsive to their needs.

Because of the short notice for this consultation we were only able to circulate the report and EIA to our steering group of 10 experienced members. However we also briefly discussed the proposal at our Open Meeting on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January. We have also previously discussed Blue Badge issues at a meeting in early 2011.

We support the steps to improve the credibility and effectiveness of the Blue Badge Scheme in the Government's reform programme. Consequently we recognise that it is necessary for the Council to make a £10 charge for the Badge in order to meet the new costs involved in purchasing and issuing badges. While no increase in charges is welcome in the current climate we accept that £10 for a three year badge represents good value for money.

Our members also wished to raise the issue of enforcement of the Blue Badge. The new badge should eliminate problems with forgery and alteration of badges and make it easier to ensure that the holder of the badge is the person using it. We hope that the Council will now give greater priority to tackling the problem of people who misuse badges which have been correctly issued.

We are also aware that the decision some time ago to charge disabled people in the Council's car parks has put greater pressure on the on-street spaces which are reserved for blue badge holders which remain free of charge. We believe that it should be a priority to target those motorists who park in these spaces who do not display a badge. We also call on the Council to ensure that staff using vehicles which display its logo do not park in these bays, even when making a delivery. Such behaviour sets a very bad example and appears to endorse the behaviour of other motorists who abuse these spaces.

We hope you will find these comments helpful.

Will Bee  
Development Worker