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| REPORT TO: | ENVIRONMENTAL & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | AGENDA ITEM: 8 |
| DATE OF MEETING: | 6TH MARCH 2003 | CATEGORY: DELEGATED/ RECOMMENDED OPEN |
| REPORT FROM: | DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE | |
| MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT: | JOHN HANSED (5770) JEANETTE TSOI (5711) | DOC: s:\cent_serv\committee reports\environmental & development\6-march 03\civic offices-disabled persons parking.doc REF: JRH/SAC |
| SUBJECT: | CIVIC OFFICES CAR PARK ABUSE OF DISABLED PARKING BAYS | |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | SWADLINCOTE | TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS15 |

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Members approve the measures, proposed in the report, to deter parking in the disabled persons bays by drivers who do not display an appropriate badge in the windscreen of their car.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek Members approval to implementing controls on the use of the disabled persons parking bays in the Civic Offices car park.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 There are currently six disabled persons parking bays in the Main Civic Offices car park, three immediately outside the office entrance and three in the section marked for Leisure Centre usage. In addition there are two such bays in the reserved access car park at the side of the Civic Offices.
- 3.2 There is an amount of abuse of all these bays with them being used by people who do not have disabilities and this leads to disabled people being disadvantaged when they come to the offices or the Leisure Centre. Periodically complaints are received by reception staff and in addition the practice has led to Councillor Harrington being routinely left without access to one of the spaces.
- 3.3 Officers have discussed the matter with Councillor Harrington both in seeking a means to deter this abuse as well as ensuring any action considered is supportable from a legal point of view. These discussions included considering the practicality of wheel clamping vehicles but this idea has not been actively pursued yet in that there would be a need to amend the car parking bylaws and there could be significant financial implications.

Proposals

- 3.4 It is proposed initially that when complaints are received that a vehicle is parked in a disabled persons bay, without displaying an appropriate badge, less draconian measures are implemented as follows:

Works to the Car Park

- 3.5 A new permanent sign is mounted in front of the bays in question with the wording set out in Annexe A. This will make it clear to car park users that they should only park in these bays if they can display the appropriate badge (currently these are blue but some of the original orange badges are still in use).

Action Taken when a Complaint is Made

- 3.6 A member of staff will confirm the vehicle does not have an appropriate badge displayed. If not they will attach a letter to the vehicle with wording as shown in Annexe B. The letter will be attached to the vehicle's windscreen using a plastic envelope with a very sticky adhesive. This will ensure the letter is not dislodged and the residue left on the vehicle is likely to act as something of a deterrent to the driver in future.
- 3.7 The person reporting the parking violation will be asked to fill in a monitoring form as shown in Annexe C. These details will be kept on a database and monitored to identify any repeat violations with a view to the Technical Services Unit writing to the vehicle's owner to draw their attention to their use of a disabled bay when they were not authorised to do so. This is subject to being able to obtain addresses using the registration number as a lead. It would also enable the effectiveness of the system to be established and to inform any future consideration of more stringent approaches.

Publicity

- 3.8 In addition to ensuring all staff are aware of these new provisions it is proposed that the Council issues a press release to explain the reasons for this initiative and to seek support from those visiting the Council's premises.

Further Measures

- 3.9 As stated above the proposal is put forward as a measure which can be operated within the current legal orders and existing staffing and financial provision. It is proposed to run the new scheme for three months and submit another report to committee on the results. At that stage, depending on the success of the scheme, it can be decided if further measures are necessary.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 It will be necessary to erect three new signs in the car park and obtain a stock of letters, and adhesive plastic envelopes. The cost of these can be accommodated in existing revenue budgets.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no current powers or byelaws available for the Civic Offices Car Park. If the Council wished to employ measures such as removing or clamping vehicles then a comprehensive review of all its measures for Town Centre Car Parks would be necessary.

- 5.2 The use of less draconian measures such as permanent signage in front of the disabled parking bays, affixing letters in plastic envelopes onto windscreens of 'offending' vehicles and a database on the monitoring form are all methods of ensuring there is publicity for the issue of unauthorised parking in disabled bays.

