

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD



Report subject	Informal Working Group Report - Blue Badge Service
Meeting date	9 October 2023
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The attached report contains the findings of an informal Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) working group on the Blue Badge Service. The purpose of the member-led working group was to establish background information on the service in order to determine if further in depth scrutiny was warranted.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. notes the report of the informal working group recommending that no formal, in-depth scrutiny review is required;2. agrees to supply the following recommendations to Officers for consideration:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Officers continue to explore methods and the costs of providing Blue Badge renewal applicants with a renewal reminder and make appropriate recommendations to the responsible cabinet portfolio holder;b) Officers consider the addition of a carers tick box to the application form to indicate the Blue Badge holder receives services from Adult Social Care which may allow verification of the application via data already held by the Council;c) Officers consult with LGA members on the appropriateness of the Blue Badge fee to determine if an approach to government to increase the fee is desirable and/or warranted;d) Officers consider producing a Blue Badge service flow chart;e) Officers consider adding a note on the Council website to explain why an application may take up to 12 weeks to process;

	3. schedules an update to O&S on the matter in one year.
Reason for recommendations	<p>O&S work should be undertaken only where it is clear that value can be added by O&S engagement. The informal working group has established that no further value can be added by in depth O&S engagement in this issue. Some recommendations have been provided for Officer consideration which may assist with operational practices.</p> <p>A future update on matters scrutinised is good practice and will enable O&S to assess the impact of its work.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Martin, Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communications and Culture
Corporate Director	Jess Gibbons, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	<p>Councillor Stephen Bartlett – Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Board</p> <p>Lindsay Marshall – Overview and Scrutiny Specialist</p>
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The constitution allows Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees to commission work to be undertaken outside of Committee meetings.
2. The Corporate and Community O&S Committee commissioned an informal working group on the Blue Badge Service at its meeting on 12 June 2023. This was in response to councillor insight of community concerns around waiting times for blue badges. The commissioned working group met the following O&S principle, as set out in the constitution, which states that:

O&S shall enable the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process.

3. The group was established as an informal working group as it was entirely councillor led, with the intention of undertaking initial research around service provision for the Blue Badge Service and establishing whether a more in depth, officer supported scrutiny of the service was required by the Committee.
4. The membership, scope and methodology of the working group is set out in the attached Appendix, which was written by the working group members.

5. It should be noted that the Council agreed changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Structure during September 2023. This has changed the name of the Corporate & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Overview and Scrutiny Board, and accounts for differences in terminology throughout the working group report.

Options Appraisal

6. Findings have been set out by the informal working group. The Board may choose to agree, amend or reject these findings.

Summary of financial implications

7. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Summary of legal implications

8. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Summary of human resources implications

9. There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

10. There are no sustainability impact implications associated with this report.

Summary of public health implications

11. There are no public health implications associated with this report.

Summary of equality implications

12. There are no equality implications associated with this report and no EIA was required as it provides background information gathered by an informal working group. The report seeks to benefit Blue Badge holders by evaluating the application process with a view to establishing whether steps could be taken to reduce waiting times for applicants.

Summary of risk assessment

13. There are no risks associated with this report.

Background papers

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - BCP Corporate and Community Overview and Scrutiny Informal Working Group Report on the Blue Badge Service