



Department for Transport

Councillor Andy Martin
Cabinet Member for Customer, Communications &
Culture, BCP Council
Leader's Office, BCP Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Lilian Greenwood MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: lilian.greenwood@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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Dear Councillor Martin,

Thank you for your letter of 15 November to the Secretary of State about the Blue Badge scheme. I am responding as the Minister for the Future of Roads.

I acknowledge the concerns you raise, all feedback on the scheme is welcomed as it assists the Department to understand how the scheme is working in practice and where improvements can be made to ensure the scheme works in the best possible way for everyone that needs to use it.

It may also be helpful to understand that whilst the Department for Transport is responsible for legislation and governance of the scheme in England, day-to-day administration of the scheme remains the responsibility of the local authorities. The Department does provide non-statutory guidance to local authorities to assist them in administering the scheme but generally the procedures adopted are for local authorities to determine within the governing legislation.

In addition, the Department also delivers a nationwide Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS) with an online application facility for applicants and a badge management service for local authority administrators. The online application process is designed so that only the relevant sections need to be completed and the applicant is guided through the process dependent upon their responses to each question. The BBDS also provides local authorities with the option to mark cases as not needing an 'evidence review' where it is considered that a person's circumstances will not improve. This means that future applications can be assessed without the necessity for the applicant to provide evidence previously submitted ensuring an easier and less time-consuming process.

I can confirm however, that no timescales are set for administering applications other than a suggested guideline that issuing authorities should aim to complete end to end applications within 12 weeks. It is for each local authority to decide if they wish to send out a re-application reminder either by email or via their website.

The Department works closely with all local authorities that administer the scheme locally, including seeking information on the costs of delivering the scheme. One of the ways we do this is by asking local authorities to provide us with up-to-date costs on a quarterly basis through an online survey. We encourage all authorities to complete the quarterly survey to enable strategic decision making about how the Blue Badge scheme in England works for both citizen users and local authorities. There are no current plans to review the maximum fee that local authorities in England can charge for each Blue Badge issued.

Each local authority is responsible for administering the scheme locally and for its own service standards, including responding to any criticism of its service standards.

I hope I have helped clarify where responsibilities lie and the role of the local authority in processing applications using the Blue Badge Digital Service.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lilian', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

LILIAN GREENWOOD MP

MINISTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ROADS