

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** Executive and Resources PDS Committee

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

**Contact Officer:** Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager  
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**Chief Officer:** Mark Bowen, Director of Resources

**Ward:** N/A

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 **Appendix 1** updates Members on matters arising from previous meetings which continue to be "live." Two issues are listed concerning Blue Badge Enforcement and Total Place Pilots.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **The Committee is invited to consider progress on matters arising from previous meetings.**

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Policy/Financial/Legal/Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	N/A

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy. The Committee receives an update on matters arising from previous meetings at each meeting.
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No cost
  2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Services
  4. Total current budget for this head: £344,054
  5. Source of funding: Existing 2011/12 budgets
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): There are 9 posts (8.22fte) in the Democratic Services Team.
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Monitoring the Committee's matters arising takes at most a few hours per meeting.
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
  2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable. The report does not involve an executive decision.
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): This report is intended primarily for the benefit of Committee Members.
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

<b><u>Minute Number/ Title</u></b>	<b><u>PDS Request</u></b>	<b><u>Update</u></b>	<b><u>Action By</u></b>	<b><u>Completion Date</u></b>
<b>88. &amp; 99. Blue Badge Enforcement</b> (14 November & 6 December 2011)	Members requested a further update.	See attached briefing note. This note was originally prepared for Audit Sub-Committee on 8 <sup>th</sup> March, although the figures in paragraph 1 have since been updated.	Director of Environmental Services	March 2012
<b>119. Matters Arising: Total Place Pilots</b> (25 <sup>th</sup> January 2012)	The Finance Director briefed the Committee that the Government had set up four Whole Place Community Budget Pilots and ten Neighbourhood led pilots before it was rolled out for 2013/14.	Members requested a briefing paper.	Finance Director	April 2012

## Minute 99: Blue Badge Fraud Project

1. The Department has advised that since the formal commencement of the Operation in September 2011 there have been two successful criminal prosecutions with a further 2 being investigated by Greenwich Fraud team (GFT) with the intention for prosecution. Also in excess of 20 badges have now been removed from circulation. Internal audit has liaised with the GFT and the Parking section to bring about these successful prosecutions.

2. Each case in its nature is different, and appropriate action depending on the circumstances is required. Given the very high level of initial activity regular weekly meetings took place to assess each case and recommend appropriate action. For the first couple of months resourcing the project was intensive. The activity has now lessened, and at current levels can be sustained from within existing resources. Key roles were;

- Head of Service to give authority for any proposed action and set overall guidance.
- Parking Inspector undertook the lead role in enforcement, visiting properties believed to be fraudulently using a blue badge, and arranging on street operations with wardens and Police, etc.
- Parking Operations Officer who was responsible for coordinating back office record keeping and evidence gathering and investigation, correspondence and staffing the hotline and online reports.
- Administrative support was also required to help establish patterns of use on street. This helped establish when and where regular misuse may have been taking place and advice with the timing of any action.

3. The success was achieved by wardens being given a list of individuals that did not match those of the DWP. Wardens are therefore able to issue Penalty Charge Notices knowing the Badge was not valid and/or report it to Parking Services to investigate further.

With this information to hand Parking Services in appropriate cases were able to;

- Observe the vehicle to establish a pattern, thereby gathering evidence that the abuse was regular and systematic.
- Obtain vehicle keeper details, including home address, so that visits could be made.
- Obtain the details of the Blue Badge user, (often a family member).
- Make further enquires of statutory bodies such as the DVLA.
- Issue a Penalty Charge Notice to the vehicle, which often resulted in the Penalty being paid and the Badge no longer used.
- Write to vehicle owner informing them that by displaying the Blue Badge in question a criminal offence was taking place.

4. The operation confirmed the main abuse of Blue Badge scheme by family members, either by using it when the badge holder is not present, or continuing to use it after they have died. Another main abuse was the photocopying of a badge or fraudulently changing the expiry date.

5. Parking Services will continue with this ongoing initiative and further refine our approach. From analysis of the data it is clear that the use of DWP data is the key to greater success in the future. The role of wardens questioning and inspecting Blue Badges on street and Parking Officers following leads from members of the public, via the hotline or web reporting, will provide a valuable means of identifying and tackling abuse, but less in terms of numbers.