

Report for:	Plymouth Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report Topic:	Improvements in Disabled Parking at Derriford Hospital
Report date:	For 22nd November 2012

1. Introduction

Parking their car is often the first experience patients and members of the public have of the hospital. It is therefore very important that the hospital's car parking facilities are appropriate and well managed to ensure visitors are not inconvenienced and are able to find a parking space which is appropriate for their particular needs. This is especially true for disabled drivers who represent a significant number of our car park user base.

The Trust implemented a new parking system in June 2012 which involved the installation of barrier controls, new payment options, the removal of staff from public spaces and improvements to the layout and condition of all car parks.

In planning the new parking arrangements the Trust consulted with two disabled forums; Plymouth Wheelchair Service User Group (PWSUG) and Plymouth Area Disability Action Network (PLYMDAN). The purpose of the consultation was to devise a solution that improved the parking experience for disabled drivers and increased the number of marked disabled bays. The forum recommended that an additional 42 disabled parking spaces be created in car park B behind the barrier control, as this part of the site was deemed to provide the most appropriate access to the Hospital.

However, whilst the hospital was committed to continuing to provide free parking for disabled drivers, it proved impossible to devise a simple means by which large numbers of cars could exit car park B without paying, whilst still being able to police the use of disabled spaces. As a result, the Trust had to revise its plan and installed the additional 42 disabled bays throughout all the non-barrier controlled areas of the site.

It is now clear that this solution does not meet the needs of disabled drivers, particularly those with limited mobility. It is leading to confusion as to which spaces are free and has led to numerous complaints.

2. Current Situation

The Trust has received a great deal of feedback from users of disabled parking facilities which can be summarised as:

- The signage is not good enough to differentiate between which spaces are free and not.
- There are not enough free disabled spaces for the public, causing them to use barrier controlled car parks where they have to pay.

- The new spaces in car park A are not usable by those with limited mobility or in wheelchairs
- Not all of the additional disabled parking bays are of adequate size.
- Members of staff who are disabled badge holders are using public spaces.
- Many of the new spaces are not near the main entrances to the Hospital, thus creating problems for people with limited mobility and those requiring use of a hospital wheelchair.

3. Changes to Improve Parking for Patients and the Public

Further work has been undertaken to identify solutions which better meet the goal of providing more free, full sized parking spaces for disabled badge holders which are near to the main entrance. The preferred solution, which is shown in Annex 1, is to:

- Build 42 new, full sized, level, disabled spaces on the bare land adjacent to car park F.
- Create a fully compliant path from the new spaces to join the existing pavement outside of the main outpatients department.
- Manage these new spaces as 'Patients Only' disabled spaces.
- Provide a wheelchair store in the new car park with 10 coin operated wheelchairs.
- Remove 16 disabled spaces currently in car park A and replace with 32 pay and display spaces.
- Maintain access to any parking space in a non barrier controlled car park by disabled badge holders for free.

4. Consultation

The Trust has sought the views of the 2 key stakeholder forums on this proposed solution and received very positive feedback to date. These comments are however based on drawings and a site visit is currently being organised which will allow group members to view the proposed site and experience the travel distances and gradients first hand. The visit should happen prior to the 22nd November and therefore further feedback can be provided at the meeting itself.

5. Planning Permission and Cost

The cost of this solution will be identified from capital funding sources in 2012/2013

The solution is subject to planning permission by Plymouth City Council, whose officers have offered their support in principle subject to a detailed planning submission.

Following the support of the OSC and receipt of appropriate planning permissions, the new facility will be completed by the end of March 2013.

