

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor :	Subject
Councillor Scott Roche		
CQ009-22	Simon Brew	Blue Badge Application

Councillor S. Roche

CQ009-22 asked by Councillor Simon Brew:

A Purley resident applied recently for a Blue Badge, and he and I are both very disappointed to find out that it apparently takes 20 weeks to process an application. I find that both Bromley & Sutton normally take six to eight weeks, and here are the links to their websites:

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/help-transport/blue-badge-scheme>

https://www.sutton.gov.uk/w/disabled-parking-blue-badge-scheme-parking-with-a-disabled-parking-blue-badge?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dblue%2Bbadge

Could you please

1) advise why it takes so long to process applications in Croydon by comparison with other boroughs

2) take steps to speed up Croydon's process so that it is at least the equal of its neighbours, if not better.

Response

Croydon currently has 12,760 blue badges in use. Being a larger borough in population it is likely that we have more blue badges than neighbouring boroughs.

From April to October this year the team have received 3822 applications. In 2020, the team received 2,769 applications for the same period. The team size has not changed.

In May 2022 the team had 1051 outstanding blue badge applications with a wait time of over 25 weeks. This was not acceptable, and a plan was put in place, including employing temporary staff and changing some internal processes. As of 25 November, there are 586 applications outstanding.

Applicants apply for blue badges under several criterion, some being more straight forward than others e.g. automatic qualification for some benefits, registered blind and so on. There are no delays in these areas. Provided applicants provide all of the information required, a badge is issued within 4 weeks (sometimes quicker).

The team also prioritise elderly applicants, children under 3 and terminally ill residents. There are no delays in these areas with applicants receiving their badge within 4 weeks (if not before).

If an applicant calls or emails us regarding an application that is over 6 weeks old, we prioritise these.

The delays are in relation to applicants who apply under ability to walk and hidden disabilities. The process for assessing these claims are more involved and time consuming. We have an expert assessor on the team who meets customers face to face to assess their mobility. We also require medical evidence in many situations.

We acknowledge that there is a delay in assessing some blue badges and we are working hard to reduce this. Our improvement plan is working, and we have significantly reduced applications outstanding. The aim is to get to a 6-week turnaround by March in all criteria.