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QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Question From:	County Councillor Iain McIntosh
Subject:	Blue Badges
Question To:	County Councillor Jackie Charlton Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys

Question:

During today's full Council meeting (22nd February 2024) I expressed my concerns about the Liberal Democrat and Labour coalition's proposals to introduce parking charges for blue badge holders. I said;

It is important to consider what the Liberal Democrats have said in the past about charging blue badge holders to park as we consider their latest proposal. During the previous term of Council, Liberal Democrat and Labour councillors posted social media stories about the then Conservative and Independent administration running this council – of wanting to introduce charges for blue badge holders.

Of course, this never happened, it was never going to happen. It was another example of left wing scaremongering for political gain.

At the time, Cllr Pete Roberts said – “The Powys County Council Conservatives want to end free parking for War Pensioners, those with the highest level of disability and the blind. We think these groups should be protected not used as easy cash by the Cabinet.” He encouraged the public to “Tell them what you think of their plans.” and goes on to say “LibDems and Greens urge residents to oppose Tory **attacks on the disabled.**”

At the same time, the Liberal Democrat Senedd Member, Jane Dodds MS said “Powys County Council are changing the rules around blue badge holders to start charging them for parking in Council owned car parks. This **HORRIBLE** move will **HURT** people with disabilities and on low incomes. Please read and sign our petition to stop this.”

Before that, the previous Liberal Democrat Senedd Member, Kirsty Williams, said “Paralympic legend Rob Davies thinks the Powys Tory and Independent proposals to introduce parking charges for disabled blue badge holders are “**DISGUSTING**”.

As mentioned, it never happened. But now the Liberal Democrats and Labour are in power, they want to introduce the very charges they previously described as ‘attacks on the disabled’, ‘horrible’, ‘disgusting’, ‘hurting people with disabilities’ and encouraged the public to sign a petition against it!

1. Where is your petition now? Cllr Pete Roberts recommended I ask Jane Dodds about this, I have done that and await a response.
2. Have you asked the legendary Rob Davies what he thinks now?
3. Considering what you have said about this in the past, can you please explain how you **can possibly justify** introducing these charges now?

Could you respond to questions 2 and 3 above please?

Following on from this, given that charges for Blue Badge holders are now set to be introduced, could you please confirm the expense associated with modifying car park ticket machines across Powys to allow disabled access, along with any other initial costs? Furthermore, could you provide assurance that the expected revenue for the Council (£100,000) will exceed the costs involved in implementing this decision?