

Greens lose Blue Badge row

A PLEA by disabled drivers for parking rights that would bring Camden into line with most of Europe would "open the flood-gates" on traffic chaos, the council's environment chief said on Monday.

A deputation led by Claire Glasman, of Camden-based Win-visible (Women with visible and invisible disabilities), told a packed full council that disabled people were cut off from shops in the commercial centre of the borough because of rules barring the use of disabled 'blue badges' south of the Euston Road.

Ms Glasman said: "People who live or work in Camden north of the Euston Road are

by PAUL KEILTHY

excluded. Transport is a constant headache. Our choices are limited to walking further than we can manage – and damaging our health; receiving a (parking) fine; or giving up going out.

"A lot of disabled people pay fines we can't afford."

Although the blue badge system grants holders certain rights, like parking on single yellow lines, it stops at the Euston Road and a 'green badge' system takes over.

The green badge is only available to disabled residents who work or live in the south of the borough.

Ms Glasman's deputation was followed by a motion put by Cllr Maya Da Souza – the first motion ever presented by Green Party councillors in Camden – which demanded borough-wide recognition of the blue badge system.

Her motion, which also called for higher fees for parking higher-emission vehicles, survived only in an amended form which she rejected.

Cllr Mike Greene, environment chief in the Lib Dem/Conservative alliance, said opening the whole borough up to blue badge holders would make parking in the south impossible for disabled drivers who lived and

worked there. He said: "I won't be supporting the motion because of what it is going to do to our most needy drivers. The people who would actually be hit would be disabled residents who genuinely need to park near their homes. Current green badge drivers would have to compete with potentially another 2.4m (blue badge holders nationally), close to their own homes."

Veteran councillor and disabled badge holder Roger Robinson protested at the amended motion, which dropped the blue badge demands. "The green badge system is grossly unfair. Access is not just physical access but car access," he said.

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