



CABINET – 13TH OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: CAR PARKING AT THE TWYN, CAERPHILLY AND REAR OF HIGH STREET, BLACKWOOD

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update in relation to the use of car parks at the Twyn, Caerphilly and rear of High Street, Blackwood and to outline the process required to implement any changes to the ticketing/charging arrangements in place at these locations.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 During the period June 2020 – September 2021, Cabinet has considered a number of reports relating to car parks and the provision of free parking to aid the covid economic recovery in our town centres.

- 2.2 The latest report was considered by Cabinet on 1st September 2021. At this meeting it was resolved that for the reasons contained in the report:

- The extension of the period of free car parking in town centres for a further 12 months until 30th September 2022 be agreed.
- The projected income shortfall of £660k be funded from the previously approved Covid-19 earmarked reserve.
- The Joint Scrutiny Committee Cross Party Task and Finish Group to undertake a further review of town centre car parking charges in light of the effects of the pandemic on the economy of our town centres.
- Residents' season ticket only use of the three car parks in Blackwood (Gordon Road, Libanus and Highland Terrace) be removed for the duration of the free parking.
- Officers bring back a report that sets out proposals to manage the interface between business and customer parking at the Twyn Car Park, Caerphilly and Blackwood High Street Car Park having considered the 12 month period of this decision.

- 2.3 This report therefore seeks to address the final bullet point and sets out options for managing the interface between business and customer parking at the Twyn, Caerphilly and High Street, Blackwood Car Parks.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the temporary free parking agreed on 1st September 2021 prevails and any changes to parking tariffs or ticketing at the Twyn, Caerphilly and High Street, Blackwood are considered as part of the cross-party Scrutiny task and finish work on the future of car parking charges.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To support the Authority's local town centre economy in the current, challenging economic climate and to support local residents in "staying local" for shopping.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 During the Cabinet meeting held on the 1st September 2021, representations were made by one of the St. Martins (Caerphilly) members relating to disbursement of cars within the Twyn car park, use of the parking bays by employees within the town, resultant lack of availability for shoppers and the consequential impact on town centre regeneration.

- 5.2 A similar situation is currently being experienced in the car park at rear of High Street, Blackwood where many spaces are filled on a daily basis by employees denying opportunities for customer parking and shoppers "churn" which assists with town centre economic recovery.

- 5.3 It should however be noted that this issue is less prominent in the Blackwood High Street car park as it is considerably larger than the car park at the Twyn, Caerphilly although a number of complaints have been received concerning both locations.

- 5.4 In terms of differentiating between employees using the car parks all day and shoppers needing short-stay spaces, there are limited options that can be implemented.

- 5.5 There are 3 options set-out below and each has varying advantages and disadvantages as follows:-

- 5.6 **Option 1 – Status Quo (free car parking until 30th September 2022) remains at the Twyn, Caerphilly & Blackwood, High Street**

5.6.1 Advantages

- Already implemented
- Generally assists with town centre recovery from the economic impacts of Covid.
- Provides town centre employees with free parking all-day.
- Allows the matter to be reviewed by the cross party Scrutiny task and finish group review of car parking charges agreed by Cabinet on 1st September 2021.
- All car parks treated equitably.

5.6.2 Disadvantages

- Continued loss of car parking income of circa £55k per month.
- Does not stimulate “churn” in short-term town centre visitor parking.
- Does not address “conflict” between short-term and long-term parking as there is no mechanism in place to control long-term parking issues.
- Complaints likely to continue.

5.7 **Option 2 – Re-introduction of Charges at The Twyn, Caerphilly &/or Blackwood, High Street**

5.7.1 Advantages

- Reduces loss of income.
- Could be implemented without any traffic regulation order amendment.
- Increases “churn” and avoids valuable shopper spaces being taken by employees parking all day.
- Should avoid future complaints regarding loss of short-term spaces to longer-term users.
- Free parking would still be available in other CCBC car parks in Caerphilly and Blackwood.

5.7.2 Disadvantages

- Potentially at odds with assisting town centre businesses to recover from the economic impact of Covid.
- Would result in the Twyn and Blackwood High Street being treated differently to other CCBC car parks.

5.8 **Option 3 – Introduce a Fixed 2 hour Free Parking Limit at the Twyn, Caerphilly & High Street, Blackwood with Charges Applying Thereafter**

5.8.1 Advantages

- Increases “churn” and avoids future complaints regarding loss of short-term spaces to longer-term users.
- Some income would be recovered.
- Should avoid further complaints regarding loss of short-term spaces to long-term users.
- Free parking would still be available in other CCBC car parks in Caerphilly and Blackwood.

5.8.2 Disadvantages

- Implementation would require an amendment to the current traffic regulation order (TRO) which will take circa 6 months as a result of the legal/consultation process.
- Amendments to the TRO would need resourcing and could be at the expense of other TRO work across the Highway network.
- Potentially at odds with assisting town centre businesses to recover from the economic impact of covid.
- Would result in the Twyn, Caerphilly and High Street, Blackwood being treated

differently to other CCBC car parks.

5.9 Conclusion

- 5.9.1 As can be seen from this report, there are a number of advantages and disadvantages attached to tackling the use of short-term v -long-term car parking spaces at the Twyn, Caerphilly and High Street, Blackwood. The options available for immediate implementation are limited to the status quo (free parking) or re-instatement of the charging regime already set-out in the Council's Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).
- 5.9.2 Deviating from either of these options will require TRO amendment which is a lengthy (6 month) and resource intensive process. Additionally, given the timescale involved it could potentially be at odds with any preferred options arising from the cross party, Scrutiny task and finish group which will be in-train by the time any TRO process concludes.
- 5.9.3 Consequently, the recommendation of officers is that the status quo (free parking) prevails at the Twyn and Blackwood High Street in accordance with the Cabinet decision taken on 1st September 2021 and that the matter is then subject to further consideration by the Scrutiny task and finish group

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The report has assumed that the challenging economic climate for businesses and residents may last beyond September 2021 but this will need to be kept under review.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESMENT

- 7.1 The report links to a number of corporate well-being objectives, namely.
- Objective 2 – Enabling employment.
 - Objective 4 – Promote a modern integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment.
 - Objective 5 – Creating a County Borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable development principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
 - Objective 5 – Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being.
- 7.2 Economic Recovery contributes to the Well-being objectives as set out above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act and it is aimed at improving the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being and recovery of the area.
- 7.3 As such it aligns with the following well-being goals:
- A Prosperous Wales – Providing more jobs and housing in the area will create

- more wealth for the local population.
- A Resilient Wales – Providing additional and more diverse employment will make the area more resilient to external economic factors.
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities – providing local employment and more diverse will help to stabilise and develop local communities and prevent outmigration.

7.4 The report's recommendations are consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act. The five ways of working of the sustainable development principle, listed in the Act are:

- Long Term – The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their long-term needs;
- Prevention - How acting to prevent problems getting worse, may help public bodies meet their objectives;
- Integration – Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies;
- Collaboration – Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives;
- Involvement – The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

7.5 No Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed. On 17th June 2020 the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Members and Acting Section 151 Officer took a delegated powers decision to temporarily suspend car parking charges until 31st December 2020 as part of the Covid economic recovery plan. On 9th December 2020 Cabinet took a further decision to extend the suspension of car parking charges until 31st March 2021 (links to the reports are as follows). On 24th March 2021 and 1st September 2021 Cabinet reviewed the position again and took further decisions to continue the suspension of car parking charges until 30th September 2022.

[Link to Cabinet report 9th December 2020](#)

[Link to Cabinet report 24th March 2021](#)

[Link to Cabinet report 1st September 2021](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The recently approved extension of free parking in town centres for the period 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022 results in an estimated loss of income of circa £660k, which will be funded from the Covid-19 Earmarked Reserve.

8.2 There will be no further immediate financial implications arising from the recommendation of officers that any changes to parking tariffs or ticketing at the Twyn, Caerphilly and High Street, Blackwood are considered as part of the cross-party Scrutiny task and finish work on the future of car parking charges.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 An offer of a meeting was made to the Blackwood and St martins ward members and 2 of the Blackwood members responded positively to this request and a meeting was held to discuss the report.

10.2 One comment on the report was received from a St Martins ward member who favoured the introduction of 2 hours free parking. However, as stated in option 3, above this would require a TRO process to be implemented.

10.3 The report reflects any views expressed by the other listed consultees.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Welsh Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment

Consultees: Councillor James Pritchard, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property
Councillor Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Performance, Economy & Enterprise
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Dean Smith, Principle Engineer, Traffic Management
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Councillor Tudor Davies, Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny
Councillor Adrian Hussey, Vice Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny
Councillor John Ridgewell, Chair of Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny
Councillor Mike Adams, Vice Chair of Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny
Councillor Kevin Etheridge, County Councillor (Blackwood Ward)
Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs, County Councillor (Blackwood Ward)
Councillor Nigel Dix, County Councillor (Blackwood Ward)
Councillor Colin Elsbury, County Councillor (St Martins Ward)
Councillor James Fussell, County Councillor (St Martins Ward)
Councillor Stephen Kent, County Councillor (St Martins Ward)

Background Papers:

Council 6th October 2020 – Report on “Decisions taken by the Chief Executive During the Pandemic”.

Cabinet 9th December 2020 – Car Parking Charges

Cabinet 24th March 2021 – Car Parking Charges

Cabinet 1st September 2021 – Car Parking Charges