



## REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF HIGHWAY OWNED PUBLIC  
CAR PARKS**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Council's procedure for carrying out enforcement in the Council's off-street public car parks and to provide information relating to the numbers of Excess Charge Notices issued in the County Borough for offences committed overnight relating to non ticket issues.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In response to a request received from County Borough Councillor Dianne Price, officers have provided information on the operation and management of the Council's highway owned public car parks, including methods of enforcement, a list of current car park regulations and the total number of tickets issued in the Bargoed car parks from night time enforcement.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 To work towards the Council's corporate objective of improving peoples' living environment through targeted actions, regulation, information and advice.
- 3.2 Engineering Services Division objective: To provide safe and efficient transport and land drainage infrastructure through quality services delivered by means of cost effective management, maintenance and improvement of the networks.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Council's Engineering Services Division manages a total of 82 public off street car parks, of which 16 are subject to charges in the form of pay and display, 10 are designated for Park & Ride, 3 are designated for season tickets only and the remaining 53 (including 2 limited waiting car parks) are free. Officers based within the Traffic Management Section of the Engineering Division undertake the day to day to day to day management and enforcement of the car parks. A list of the managed off street car parks is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The 16 pay and display car parks are situated in the primary shopping centres of Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed and Ystrad Mynach where parking charges are necessary for town viability to discourage long-term parking by workers and ensure a turn-over of parking spaces and availability for shoppers and visitors.

- 4.3 The 53 free car parks (excluding the 2 limited waiting facilities) are generally located away from the main town centres and receive a lower level of usage than those facilities subject to parking charges.
- 4.4 All of the car parks (apart from the 10 Park & Ride facilities and the 2 new facilities at Gateway Car Park in Bargoed and Foundry Road in Pontymister) are subject to Off-Street Parking Places Orders that enable their use to be regulated and parking charges to be made.
- 4.5 Highland Terrace (10 spaces), Gordon Road (9 spaces) and part of Libanus Road (6 spaces) in Blackwood are designated for residents' only parking, for which a total of 15 residents parking permits were issued for use in these car parks in 2011.
- 4.6 Season tickets can be purchased for Crescent Road car park in Caerphilly, Libanus Road, Thorncombe 2, Thorncombe 3 and Cliff Road car parks in Blackwood, and Emporium car park in Bargoed.
- 4.7 A total of 30 ticket machines are installed in the 16 pay and display car parks, all of which were replaced in February 2011 with new machines that incorporate alphanumeric keypads. Customers are required to input their vehicle registration number when purchasing a ticket; this information is printed on the tickets in order to prevent the unauthorised transfer of tickets between customers. All of the ticket machines are solar powered and electronically linked to a computer terminal in the Traffic Management office. The technology includes fault reporting, monitoring of income and statistical analysis; this enables machine faults to be detected and rectified quickly and appeals against excess charge notices to be scrutinised more thoroughly
- 4.8 Regular enforcement of the public car parks is necessary to ensure that a high level of compliance of the parking regulations is maintained. Priority is given to enforcing the pay and display car parks in the main shopping centres as these facilities receive the highest level of usage. The free car parks are enforced less frequently, as and when required.
- 4.9 An operational policy has been developed for the management and operation of the Council's highway owned public car parks to ensure that a consistent approach is maintained when carrying out enforcement and dealing with appeals against excess charge notices.
- 4.10 The following methods of enforcement are used within the public car parks:

#### 4.10.1 Car Park Attendants

A total of 5 Attendants are employed by the Car Parks Section, of which 1 Attendant operates on a full-time basis and the other 4 work part-time only. The Attendants are split into two teams as defined below, which best reflect the enforcement needed to cover the car park facilities in each of the primary shopping centres.

- Blackwood town centre - 3 part-time attendants.
- Caerphilly, Ystrad Mynach & Bargoed town centres – 1 full-time attendant & 1 part-time attendant.

An additional part-time member of staff is employed to open/close the gates/barriers 8:00am-8:00pm Monday – Sunday at Wesley Road and Thorncombe Road 3 car parks in Blackwood (enforcement and the issuing of excess charge notices does not form part of this employees duties). The night time closures were introduced as a result of anti-social behaviour.

#### 4.10.2 CCTV

CCTV cameras are installed in the majority of the pay and display car parks and their footage can be used for enforcing a number of the regulations that apply to the public car parks. Excess Charge Notices can also be issued through the post to any persons who are observed to contravene the car park regulations. CCTV is particularly useful for night time enforcement

when no Attendants operate. CCTV footage is also used when investigating appeals against Excess Charge Notices as and when required.

- 4.11 71 public car parks are currently subject to Off-Street Parking Place Orders that enable their use to be regulated and parking charges to be made. Contravention of any Regulation results in an Excess Charge Notice (ECN) being issued. Excess Charge Notices may be issued for the following reasons:
- Failing to display a valid parking ticket
  - Parking longer than the period paid for
  - Parking other than wholly within a marked bay
  - Parking in a bay reserved for the disabled
  - Parking longer than permitted
  - Returning sooner than permitted
  - Exceeding weight limit
  - Trading
  - Causing a noise to the annoyance of others
  - Driving for a purpose other than parking
  - Transferring the ticket from another vehicle
  - Driving recklessly
  - Speeding
  - Remaining in the car park after parking
  - Sleeping, camping, eating, drinking or cooking
  - Sounding horns or causing loud noises
  - Acting in a noisy disruptive or disorderly manner
  - Ignoring direction arrow
  - Storing goods within vehicle for vending purposes
  - Washing, repairing or servicing a vehicle in the car park
  - Littering
  - Parking a vehicle with an expired vehicle license
  - Parking in a prohibited area
  - Use of the car park other than for the purpose of parking
- 4.12 Any person who contravenes the provisions of any Order is liable to a penalty charge of £75, which is reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days (21 days for ECNs sent through the post) from the date of issue.
- 4.13 A set procedure has been established for issuing ECNs for each different type of contravention, as shown in Appendix 2. The car park attendants have received training on this process to ensure that their method of operation is fair, robust, consistent, customer focussed and defensible.
- 4.14 The attendants utilise hand held terminals in place of the old type of ECN books, which print ECNs and automatically download their data at a docking station in the office at the end of each working day.
- 4.15 Attendants are unable to cancel an ECN once they have started to issue the notice. The attendants have been advised that, in the event of a customer returning to their vehicle during or just after they have started issuing the ECN, they are to inform the customer that the ECN cannot be cancelled and that they must make their appeal in writing to the Car Parks Manager.
- 4.16 Any ECN appeals received are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. This has been developed and refined over years of operation/management to best meet the needs of the service area and customer service standards in order to maintain the Council's reputation.

#### 4.17 Night Time Enforcement in the County Borough

The table in Appendix 3 provides details of all ECNs Issued in the County Borough car parks during the last three years. Most of the ECNs listed were issued by attendants during the working day i.e. between 08:00am-6:00pm. Very few ECNs have been issued from night time enforcement for the last three years (especially for the last two years). Those that have were primarily for the Civic Centre car park at the Pontllanfraith Council offices, hence there is no evidence that antisocial behaviour has been targeted.

### 5. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied, however the management of the Council's public car parks, methods of enforcement, car park regulations, enforcement and CCTV contribute to and comply with the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives 1, 3 and 4.

### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None.

### 7. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None.

### 8. **CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 The comments received from the consultees have been incorporated in the report.

### 9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report.

### 10. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 For information purposes only.

### 11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

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Consultees: Cllr T Williams - Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation & Engineering  
Cllr D T Davies - Chair of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr E M Aldworth - Vice Chair of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Sandra Aspinall – Acting Chief Executive  
Terry Shaw – Head of Engineering Services  
Nicole Scammell – Acting Director of Corporate Services  
Dan Perkins – Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Clive Campbell – Transportation Engineering Manager  
David Thomas – Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)  
Sian Phillips – HR Manager  
Local Ward Members: Cllr D Carter, Cllr D T Davies & Cllr D Price

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – List of Managed Off Street Car Parks

Appendix 2 – Council Procedure for Issuing Excess Charge Notices

Appendix 3 – List of Night time Enforcement ECNs issued over the last 3 years