



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND PARKING CHARGES FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS IN COUNCIL PUBLIC CAR PARKS

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of a review carried out on the operation and current parking charges for blue badge holders in the Council's off-street public car parks.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following a review of the operation and current parking charges for blue badge holders in the Council's off-street public car parks the following actions/improvements are recommended:

- Additional disabled parking bays to be provided in 12 pay and display car parks.
- A number of existing disabled parking bays are to be increased in size in 9 pay and display car parks.
- Concession of 1hr extra free parking for blue badge holders to be introduced in all pay and display car parks.
- On-street parking exemptions for blue badge holders to be better publicised/promoted.

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 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.
- 3.3 The report links to the Safer and Prosperous themes of "Caerphilly Delivers", the Local Services Board (LSB) Single Integrated plan.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 In order to assist the Council in understanding the full range of needs for the users of its off-street public car parks the Council has recently undertaken a consultation exercise on the charging and operation of these facilities. The consultation was published on the Council's website and also sent to a number of organisations that represent disabled and older members of the community. Information has also been gathered from the other 21 Local Authorities in Wales in order to enable comparisons to be made.

- 4.2 The Council's Engineering Services Division manages a total of 82 off street public 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 team of the Engineering Services Division undertake the day to day management and enforcement of the car parks. A list of the managed off street public car parks is provided in Appendix 1. Plans showing individual car park locations are shown in Appendices 2 – 5.
- 4.3 The car park charging system is a key element of managing the town centre environment and economic viability. This is achieved by balancing short stay and long stay parking demand and associated issues such as residential parking and on-street parking generally. Tariffs are set after considering many factors, with supply and demand being important considerations. Details of the current parking tariffs, which came into effect in 2010 are provided in Appendix 6.
- 4.4 The parking charges in the pay and display facilities currently apply between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday (including Bank Holidays). Charges are also made in the Twyn car park in Caerphilly on Sundays between 8am and 6pm, which are necessary to discourage long term parking by visitors/workers in the town and ensure a turnover of spaces for shoppers and tourists.
- 4.5 Disabled parking bays are provided in the majority of pay and display car parks in order to assist customers with mobility problems. The disabled parking bays are larger than a standard parking bay and are generally positioned as close as possible to the main pedestrian access in each car park. Users are required to display their blue badge at all times when parked in a disabled parking bay. Currently no concessions are offered to blue badge holders in terms of the parking charges that apply. Details of the parking bay provisions (including sizes and numbers of bays) in the Council's pay and display car parks are provided in Appendix 7 along with recommended improvements.
- 4.6 The table in Appendix 8 provides details of the pay and display car parks and concessions offered to blue badge holders by all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. From this information it is evident that 20 Councils operate pay and display car parks, of which 7 Council's charge blue badge holders to use their facilities. Of the 7 Councils that charge blue badge holders, 1 Council (Pembrokeshire) offers a concession in the form of additional 1hr hour parking free of charge, and 1 Council (Swansea) offers concessionary charges for blue badge holders in their short stay car parks. 13 Councils offer free parking/other concessions to blue badge holders, of which 6 Councils only allow the concessions to apply when blue badge holders are parked within a marked disabled bay.
- 4.7 In order to assist the Council in understanding the full range of needs for the users of its highway owned off-street public car parks officers have recently undertaken a consultation exercise on the charging and operation of these facilities. As the consultation exercise was primarily aimed at disabled users, groups who represent disabled and older members of the community were specifically targeted. A summary of the feedback was also sent to all Town and Community Councils and Community Partnerships within Caerphilly County Borough and they were asked for their comments.
- 4.8 A total of 24 questionnaires were completed and returned. Separate responses were also received from Disability Can Do and Disabled Motoring UK, as well as Gelligaer Community Council and Penrheol Energlyn and Trecenydd Community Council. Summaries of the responses received (along with officers' comments and recommendations) are provided in Appendix 9 and Appendix 10.
- 4.9 From the responses received it is apparent that a number of common areas of concern have been identified and these include lack of disabled spaces and request for some form of consideration of concession for blue badge holders. A list of these concerns along with recommended actions is provided in Appendix 11.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report specifically affects registered disabled people who are blue badge holders and is therefore very targeted in terms of who is covered by its contents. An impact assessment has been carried out and is attached for information as Appendix 12.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In order to implement the actions recommended in Appendix 6 the following costs would need to be met from future Engineering Services Division budgets over a phased period of time, which is dependent upon funding streams being available. The future Medium Term Financial Plan and other priorities as yet unknown can affect how monies can be programmed for this.

Action	Cost Estimate / £
Provision of 27 no. additional disabled parking bays in 12 pay and display car parks.	13,000
Enlargement of 34 no. existing disabled parking bays (including adjustment of neighbouring standard parking bays) in 9 pay and display car parks.	30,000
Advertisement/processing of traffic regulation order	3,000
Software modification for ticket machines	2,500
Erection of 30 no. new signs/tariff boards	22,500
Annual income loss from additional 1 hr free parking	20,000
TOTAL	91,000

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The consultation was published on the Council's website between 8th August and 14 September 2013.

The following groups were consulted between 21 September 2012 and 22 October 2012.

- Caerphilly C B Access Group
- Caerphilly C B Disability Forum
- Gavo
- 50+ Forum
- Disabled Motoring UK

A copy of the consultation and responses received were sent to all Town and Community Council Partnerships for comment on 5 June 2013 with a response deadline of 21 July 2013

A summary of all responses received is included in Appendices 5 & 6.

- 8.2 The comments received from the list of consultees have been incorporated in this report and Appendices attached.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee is asked for its views on the following recommendations before they are submitted to Cabinet for approval.

- Additional disabled parking bays to be provided in 12 pay and display car parks.
- A number of existing disabled parking bays are to be increased in size in 9 pay and display car parks.
- Concession of 1hr extra free parking for blue badge holders to be introduced in all pay and display car parks.
- On-street parking exemptions for blue badge holders to be better publicised/promoted.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To improve accessibility to the Council owned public off-street car parks for blue badge holders.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

Author: Dean Smith – Principal Engineer, Traffic Management
 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
 Stuart Rosser – Interim Chief Executive
 Sandra Aspinall – Acting Deputy Chief Executive
 Terry Shaw – Head of Engineering Services
 Clive Campbell – Transportation Engineering Manager
 David A Thomas – Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
 Sean O'Brien – Team Manager (Occupational Therapy)
 John Rogers – Principal Solicitor
 Gail Williams – Interim Monitoring Officer

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – List of highway owned off-Street public car parks
- Appendix 2 – Plan of Pay and Display Car Parks – Bargoed
- Appendix 3 – Plan of Pay and Display Car Parks – Blackwood
- Appendix 4 – Plan of Pay and Display Car Parks – Caerphilly
- Appendix 5 – Plan of Pay and Display Car Parks – Ystrad Mynach
- Appendix 6 – Existing car park charges
- Appendix 7 – Existing parking bay provisions in pay & display car parks
- Appendix 8 – Concessions offered to blue badge holders by Welsh Local Authorities
- Appendix 9 – Comments received from public consultation exercise
- Appendix 10 – Summary of responses received from public consultation exercise
- Appendix 11 – Recommended actions
- Appendix 12 – Equalities Impact Assessment