Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus

Penallta House,
Tredomen Park,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG

Tŷ Penallta,
Parc Tredomen,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CAERFFILI

www.caerphilly.gov.uk
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Am unrhyw ymholiad yn ymwneud â'r agenda hwn cysylltwch â Sharon Hughes
(Rhif Ffôn: 01443 864420 Ebost: sullie@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Dyddiad: Dydd Iau, 21 Gorffennaf 2022

I bwy bynnag a fynno wybod,

Cynhelir cyfarfod aml-leoliad o'r **Cyd-bwyllgor Craffu** yn Nhŷ Penallta, a thrwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Iau, 28ain Gorffennaf, 2022** am **5.30 pm** i ystyried y materion a gynhwysir yn yr agenda canlynol. Gall Cynghorwyr ac aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n dymuno siarad ar unrhyw eitem wneud hynny drwy wneud cais i'r Cadeirydd. Mae hefyd croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os byddwch chi'n dymuno gwneud y naill neu'r llall. Bydd gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd yn cael ei ddarparu ar gais.

Gall aelodau'r Cyhoedd neu'r Wasg fynychu'n bersonol yn Nhŷ Penallta neu gallant weld y cyfarfod yn fyw drwy'r ddolen ganlynol: live via the following link: https://civico.net/caerphilly

Bydd y cyfarfod hwn yn cael ei ffrydio'n fyw a bydd recordiad ar gael i'w weld drwy wefan y Cyngor, ac eithrio trafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig. Felly, bydd delweddau/sain yr unigolion sy'n siarad ar gael yn gyhoeddus i bawb drwy wefan y Cyngor: www.caerffili.gov.uk

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Christina Harrhy
PRIF WEITHREDWR

A G E N D A

Tudalennau

1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Atgoffi'r Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion o'u cyfrifoldeb personol i ddatgan unrhyw fuddiannau personol a/neu niweidiol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw eitem o fusnes ar yr agenda hwn yn unol â Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000, Cyfansoddiad y Cyngor a'r Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion.

I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad(au) canlynol:-

3 Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen Meysydd Parcio Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili. 1 - 30

Cylchrediad:

Cynghorwyr M.A. Adams, R. Chapman, Mrs P. Cook, D. Cushing, C.J. Cuss, D.T. Davies, N. Dix, G. Ead, C. Elsbury, M. Evans, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Gair, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, S. Kent, Mrs A. Leonard, C.P. Mann, A. McConnell, B. Owen, L. Phipps, D.W.R. Preece, Mrs D. Price, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts, A. Whitcombe, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade a C. Wright

A Swyddogion Priodol

SUT FYDDWN YN DEFNYDDIO EICH GWYBODAETH

Bydd yr unigolion hynny sy'n mynychu cyfarfodydd pwyllgor i siarad/roi tystiolaeth yn cael eu henwi yng nghofnodion y cyfarfod hynny, weithiau bydd hyn yn cynnwys eu man gweithio neu fusnes a'r barnau a fynegir. Bydd cofnodion o'r cyfarfod gan gynnwys manylion y siaradwyr ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar wefan y Cyngor ar www.caerffili.gov.uk. ac eithrio am drafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Mae gennych nifer o hawliau mewn perthynas â'r wybodaeth, gan gynnwys yr hawl i gael mynediad at wybodaeth sydd gennym amdanoch a'r hawl i gwyno os ydych yn anhapus gyda'r modd y mae eich gwybodaeth yn cael ei brosesu.

Am wybodaeth bellach ar sut rydym yn prosesu eich gwybodaeth a'ch hawliau, ewch i'r Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd Cyfarfodydd Pwyllgor Llawn ar ein gwefan neu cysylltwch â Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol drwy e-bostio griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01443 863028.

JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY AND HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEES) – 28TH JULY 2022

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to inform a joint meeting of the Environment and Sustainability and the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committees of the findings of the joint task and finish group that was established to review car parks managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council. The joint scrutiny committee is asked to consider the recommendations of the review group and determine its recommendations to Cabinet on the 21st of September 2022.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Task and Finish Group agreed that its terms of reference would be to 'to review town centre car parking charges in view of the effects of the pandemic on the high street economy'. The group decided to concentrate on the 6 main Towns of the County Borough, Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Newbridge, Risca and Ystrad Mynach.

2.2 The group reviewed published research on car parking strategies and charging and also considered information on previous annual income and costs associated with running car parks, which in 2018/19 showed a total income of £652,124 and costs of £257,130. The group were advised that the excess income/surplus is used to also fund other service areas within the Division such as roads maintenance and is not ringfenced for the car parks.

2.3 The Task and Finish Group agreed to carry out a public survey to establish what towns people visit, why they visit, how they travel and were asked to rate the importance of a number of statements related to car parks. The response to the survey was good with 1545 responses received. The group also received narrative comments on individual experiences since car parking charges were suspended.

2.4 The group also sought to gather the views of businesses in the town centres, and it was agreed to add questions to an already planned business survey. Unfortunately, the responses to the survey were poor with only 12 received. The group also considered footfall figures for the towns and compared figures before and during the Covid Pandemic.

2.5 The group agreed that their priority was to ensure that car parks spaces are available for visitors to the town centres when they are needed. Members have therefore suggested two options for scrutiny to consider, both offer a reduced initial cost for parking either one hour or two. The overall aim is to encourage people to visit the towns whilst also ensuring turnover of spaces in busier car parks.

2.6 The group were advised that any changes to the charging tariffs will take approximately 8 to 10 weeks to implement, Cabinet may therefore wish to consider if they wish to extend the suspension of free parking whilst the changes are implemented.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Environment and Sustainability and Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committees are asked to consider the findings of the Caerphilly County Borough Council Car Parks Task and Finish Group. The scrutiny committees are asked to consider the following recommendations and make their recommendations to Cabinet.

3.2 To support one of the following two options for reducing the initial hourly charge and recommend to Cabinet, either option 1 or option 2.

3.2.1 **Option 1**
First hour 40p with subsequent hours at the existing tariff. or

3.2.2 **Option 2**
First 2 hours 40p with subsequent hours at the existing tariff.

3.3 To support and recommend to Cabinet that the continued suspension of car parking charges until the car park ticket machine software can be amended, estimated to be 8 to 10 weeks.

3.4 To support and recommend to Cabinet that additional funding for the Highways Services budget should be provided to meet the shortfall as outlined in the Financial Implications in line with whichever option is recommended under 3.2.

Option 1 – An annual income loss of £83k

Option 2 – An annual income loss of £232k

3.5 That an impact report is provided to scrutiny 12 months after the implementation of the changes if they are approved.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 These recommendations have been suggested to improve the availability of car park provision in town centres and encourage visitors to the high streets.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The car parks task and finish group were established firstly in 2016 and made its first report to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 4th July 2017. The group reconvened to consider the impact of civil parking enforcement and reported to a joint meeting of the Environment and Sustainability and the Housing and Regeneration scrutiny committees on the 15th of December 2020. The task and finish group then re-convened for the third time to consider car parking charges following the temporary suspension of charges in town centres during the coronavirus pandemic.

Membership

5.2 Members of the Environment and Sustainability and the Housing and Regeneration scrutiny committees were invited to participate in the review and the following members indicated that they would like to join the group:

Councillor A. Hussey,
Councillor P. Leonard
Councillor B. Owen,
Councillor D. Preece (Chair)
Councillor J Ridgewell (Vice Chair)
Councillor J. Roberts
Councillor W. Williams

5.3 Expressions of interest were received from councillors not on the respective scrutiny committees as stated in 5.2. In view of number of places filled by members from the parent scrutiny committees, there were spare places. In addition, the Members who had expressed an interest have particular knowledge and skills that would be of benefit to the group. The group were therefore asked to accept the following councillors as co-opted members:

Councillor N. Dix
Councillor S. Morgan
Councillor G. Simmonds
Councillor J. Taylor

Terms of Reference and Methodology

5.4 The task and finish group met for the first time on 20th October 2021 held a total of 4 meetings and 1 workshop. The group agreed to receive an update on impact of the suspension of parking charges to include loss of income, staffing implications and costs to run the car parks, including possible impact on grant funding and agreed the following terms of reference:

'To review town centre car parking charges in view of the effects of the pandemic on the high street economy'

The group agreed that the focus would be on the main towns in the county borough, namely:

- Bargoed

- Blackwood
- Caerphilly
- Newbridge
- Risca
- Ystrad Mynach

The group considered the methodology for the review and agreed the following:

- Review existing research and policies
- Pros and cons of free parking
- Consult with town centre businesses
- Gather information from the public on how and why they visit towns.

It was agreed that further work will be needed to look at resident parking permits.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

5.5 Prior to the first meeting the group were provided with examples of research carried out on car parking strategies and assessing the impact of car parking charges and some of the findings of the research is highlighted below:

Assessing the Impact of Car Parking Charges on Town Centre Footfall
This report was commissioned from MRUK Research by Welsh Government and published in 2015 and can be found here: 150610-assessing-impact-car-parking-charges-town-centre-footfall-en.pdf (gov.wales) . The research looked at:

- The relationships between local authority decision making in relation to parking charges in Wales.
- The views of people visiting town centres cross Wales
- The views of local stakeholders
- Examples of best practice across the UK

The key conclusions of the research included the following points:

- Car parking charging is a complex issue and one that is part of a mix of factors that affect the impact of car parking more generally, as well as the health of local economies at a more macro level.
- Car parking charges are only one of a number of factors at play in influencing footfall and town centre vitality. The research has indicated that the following parking related factors are important determinants of people’s behaviour in relation to town centres.

- Availability of spaces
- Restrictions on parking (i.e., how long people can park for)
- Proximity of parking to intended destination
- Traffic flow
- Signage
- Overall retail offering
- Out of town retail offering
- Out of town parking charges
- Price of car parking
- Security of car park
- Incentives for parking

- The survey carried out by the researchers also indicated that, while people did agree that car parking charges affect their behaviour, convenience is also a critical factor. In addition, the accessibility of spaces, the number of spaces, and the proximity of parking to the town centre were all shown to be as important as cost.
- ‘blanket’ free parking strategy has been suggested to encourage more car park users, these were generally found not to benefit target visitors (for example town centre workers who were taking up the spaces all day, rather than shoppers) and consequently had a surprisingly negative impact on footfall. Contrastingly, another Local Authority implemented this type of scheme during their Christmas shopping period and found that footfall, of people coming into the town specifically to shop, increased.
- Visitors suggested that car park charging was likely to have an impact on how long they decided to stay in the town centre and, consequently, how much they would spend whilst there.
- So, whilst there is evidence to suggest that car parking charges do have an impact on decisions about whether or not to drive into a town centre and behaviours once in the town centre, general availability of spaces and the extent to which the car park is likely to be busy are often felt to be more important factors than cost in their overall decision about visiting.
- the impact that similar charging strategies can have in different town or city centres emphasises the point that charging must be tailored to the demographic and retail/ business offering nuances of the local area, in order to optimise the positive impact that charging has on footfall and the overall health of the local economy. Remaining engaged with the key stakeholders involved in the local

economy, for example business owners, shoppers, council members etc., is also key to ensuring the optimum charging strategies are adopted

Research into Car Park Charging Strategies Report 2017

This report was commissioned by Welsh Government and looked at whether there is evidence of a link between free car parking and town centre footfall, and consider the views and experiences of local authorities on free car parking.

The research consisted of a literature review to provide an understanding of various car parking strategies across the UK and beyond, to see if there is evidence of links between car parking strategies and town centre footfall/visitor numbers. In addition, there was a survey of all local authorities in Wales to gain an understanding of various car parking charge and strategies, perceived benefits and challenges of all day free parking. A link to the report can be found here: [Research into car park charging strategies | GOV.WALES]

The findings of the research highlighted the following:

- A report undertaken by the British Parking Association by McDonald (2013), does present a correlation between a reduced parking cost and an initial increase in footfall but the report did not look at completely free car parking.

- An evaluative study by Van Der Waerden et al (2009) used a questionnaire to ascertain travel and shopping behaviours before and after the introduction of paid parking in an individual's town or city centre. The results of the questionnaire showed a considerable decline in shopping behaviour and consumer expenditure after the introduction of paid parking. In this case, change in consumer expenditure was linked to visit frequency which was significantly dependent on car parking charges.

This research highlighted the two case studies within a Wales specific context are mentioned in MRUK (2015) above.

- Wrexham and Denbighshire County both implemented completely free all day car parking throughout a period of time and measured the impact that this had on usage and footfall. In Wrexham, monitoring showed that within the free multi-storey car park, excess demand (from workers and visitors) led to visitors being unable to find a space.

- In Denbighshire County, similarly to Wrexham, the free all day car parking was taken up by workers in the town rather than visitors. A report published by RGDATA (2013) also looked at the model of completely free car parking and claimed that this can be found to lead to excess demand, resulting in more congestion in the 5 town/city centre, and more visitors spending their time cruising to find an available space rather than spending time and money within the centre.

The report states that there is some evidence that business owners and shopkeepers tend to believe footfall and consumer expenditure is based on car parking prices, whereas visitors to the town centres generally base their decision to visit a town centre on other factors.

- The review of London Councils (Tyler et al 2012) suggests that parking fees are correlated with the level of service in an area, and willingness to pay for parking is not seen as a fundamental influence on increasing or decreasing footfall: “In opposition of offering free or cheaper parking as an offer to attract people to retail centres, the TRL report (2010) (citing evidence from Betts (2009) and Litman (2010)) explains that parking fees can be correlated to the level of service in an area (quality of retail mix). For example, a convenient, diverse and quality mix of retail will attract people to one centre over another, even if the second centre offers free parking.”

- A report by McDonald (2013) suggests that the number of parking spaces as opposed to the cost of parking will initially increase footfall. The study identified a number of parking measures which affect an increase or decrease in visits. These included parking and payment methods, enforcement and fines, security, provisions for disabled users, location of the parking and the quantity of spaces. When also looking at what determines decisions to visit a town/city centre, MRUK (2015) finds that out-of-town competition such as retail parks, the economic vibrancy of the town centre and the size of the town centre in comparison to the county are all important factors. The report also includes statements from typical town centre visitors, who feel that the availability of spaces, traffic flow within the town centre and signage were more important in determining visitation rather than the cost of parking. The report concludes that the cost of parking cannot be looked at in isolation to 6 convenience and availability of the car park. Another study found that the decision to reduce the number of visits to the town centre made by potential visitors was due to feeling burdened by parking restrictions as opposed to the cost of parking (Palmer & Ferris 2010).

5.6 The task and Finish group were also provided with two other research reports as background reading:

Measuring the impact of two free hours car parking on town centre businesses – Vale of White Horse District Council Microsoft Word - Impact of 2 hour free parking - 2013.doc (svbs.co.uk)

This report reviewed the impact of two hours free parking in council owned car parks introduced in December 2011, on the towns of Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage plus the settlement of Botley. The review consisted of three business surveys, one carried out before the introduction the free parking, another one year after the introduction and another two years after the introduction.

The conclusions from the surveys showed that businesses felt that the two hour free parking has had a positive effect on footfall, the number of customers and turnover.

Re-Think! Parking on the High Street: Guidance on Parking Provision in Town and City Centres 2013 re-thinking_car_parking.pdf (britishparking.co.uk)

The Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) the British Parking Association (BPA), Springboard Research Ltd and Parking Data & Research International (PDRI) joined forces to explore what evidence can be collated and what can be learned regarding the relationship between car parking provision and town centre prosperity.

Some of the key findings were:

- Parking operators are providing parking provision which equates to the footfall levels achieved by their location.

- There is no clear relationship between car parking charges (set by parking owners/operators) and the amenities on offer in a location with some mid-range and smaller centres charging more than what is consistent with the national average

- The mid-range and smaller groupings of centres that charge more than the national average in accordance with their offer, suffered a higher than average decline in footfall for 2011.

These findings come with caveats. They do not conclusively demonstrate that parking tariffs are influencing decline in locations across the UK, or suggest that all centres in the specified range have tariffs higher than the national average. They do however suggest that further research is needed over time to learn more about the relationship between town centre prosperity and parking tariffs and that mid-range and smaller centres in particular, must play a role here.

Ultimately, there is no simple formula that can be given on determining the right kind of tariff to be introduced nationally because every location is exposed to an individual set of dynamics and factors. The only universal answer is that local authorities and other operators must develop a plan for parking provision that faces up to the question, “What and who is our parking for?” and complements a wider strategy for accessibility that again, fits with a strategy for the town centre or local authority area.

Car Parks in the County Borough

5.7 The review group were provided with a presentation to outline the current provision of car parks in the county borough, their location and number of parking bays. The following is a list of the types and numbers of car parks in the main towns considered by the group, with the number of bays is in brackets:

Town	Pay & Display (P &D)	P & D/ Season Tickets	Residents only	Residents & Season Tickets	Free	Free 2 hrs & season tickets
Bargoed	0	2 (68 bays)	0	0	4 (174 bays)	0
Blackwood	5 (332)	4 (214)	2 (19)	1 (20)	1 (25)	
Caerphilly	1 (62)	3 (210)	0	0	0	2 (24)
Newbridge	0	0	0	0	5 (67)	0
Risca	0	0	0	0	4 (124)	0
Ystrad Mynach	1 (64)	0	0	0	0	0

Income and Costs

5.8 The review group were provided with information on the income generated before charging was suspended, as follows;

Income 2018/19
Ticket Sales £571,101
Excess Charge Notices (ECN's) £81,023
Total Income = £652,124

Costs 2018/19
Energy Costs £7,358
Staff and resources £117,185
NNDR £132,586
Total Costs = £257,130

5.9 The group were advised that the income above refers to ECNs which ended in March 2019, since then we now issue a Parking Charge Notice (PCN). The group were informed that it's impossible to predict income levels for these in our car parks as it forms part of the Civil Parking Enforcement Operations. The excess income/surplus is used to fund other service areas within the Division such as roads maintenance and is not ringfenced for the car parks. The group were advised that there is no specific amount allocated to the car parks each year, as requirements can change for year to year. In some years for example larger amounts may be needed for maintenance works.

5.10 The group discussed NNDR – National Non-Domestic Rates which is applicable for all car parks, regardless of whether they charge for parking. The NNDR on all property/land is based off the estimated rateable value of the asset on the open market, which is usually assessed by the Valuation Office every 5 years. Then an NNDR multiplier (for business rates) is applied to the estimated rateable to give the annual NNDR as the multiplier increases each year. As part of the assessment period, we sometimes have to complete forms confirming we own an asset and any income etc received from it. Sometimes our Valuers have been involved in assessments or appeals if we believe the rateable value to be too high.

5.11 In Wales there will be a revaluation of all non-domestic properties with effect from 1st April 2023. This task is performed by the Valuation Office Agency, an external organisation part of HMRC, with the revaluation based on rental information etc as at 1st April 2021.

5.12 Members expressed concerns that the authority is responsible for payment of NNDR for park and ride car parks, and other running costs. They compared a person parking in a park and ride car park who then travels to Cardiff by train, to people who park in pay and display to visit our local towns. Members felt that local visitors are subsidising the park and ride users. It was explained that the authority has taken a decision to not charge at park and ride car parks, but this could be reviewed at a later date. It was suggested that this could be a recommendation that the group re-convenes and consider this issue. The park and ride car parks were excluded from consideration for the purposes of this review.

Footfall in Town Centres

5.13 The group received comparison data on footfall figure before and during the pandemic. The table below shows some of the data with same months for different years for comparison. A full list of footfall is attached as appendix 1.

Month	Bargoed	Blackwood	Caerphilly	Newbridge	Risca	Ystrad Mynach
April 2018	44681	134320	106805	30164	33076	60678
April 2019	46500	130453	98607	65901	32207	57738
April 2020	13943	29810	32449	21481	16947	23838
April 2021	30231	81031	64996	26899	24248	44678
Aug 2018	49924	149020	115388	33371	35324	52810
Aug 2019	50912	139405	106797	67330	32712	48571
Aug 2020	35040	82943	81645	26866	22561	37169
Aug 2021	45226	118457	103191	33436	26100	57875

Task and Finish Group Research

5.14 The task and finish group discussed options for gathering information from the public on car parking and gain an understanding why people visit town centres. The group also considered how best to engage with town centre businesses. It was decided that the group would carry out an on-line public survey and group members were provided with links to the survey to allow them to encourage a good response. It was also agreed that the Communications team would be asked to share on the Councils social media as well.

5.15 The group were also keen to engage with town centre businesses and following discussion it was agreed that additional questions from the group would be added to the already planned Town Centre Business Survey, to avoid duplication of similar requests. The Town Centre Manager agreed to facilitate this element of the research.

Public Survey

5.16 The questions for the public survey were drafted and agreed by the members of the group, translated into Welsh and the link to the survey was published on the Council website and shared on social media, with the survey open for two weeks. All task and finish group members were provided with the link and kept updated with the level of responses during the two-week period and Town and Community Councils were also sent the link.

Respondents

5.17 After two weeks there were 1545 responses to the survey, 1478 were residents of the county borough, 6 elected members, 19 business persons, 2 third sector, 1 other public sector representative, 17 members of staff and 22 other (visitors). Based on the population size of the county borough (178,806) the percentage of overall responses was 0.9%.

5.18 The number of respondents were broken down and compared to the profile of Caerphilly County Borough population. We have to use the 2011 census data, as the results of the 2021 census are not due to be published until 28th June 2022. The gender breakdown for the survey was as follows:

Gender	Number of Responses	% of population	Population size 2011
Female	974	1.07%	91,105
Male	520	0.59%	87,701
Other	1	-	-
Prefer not to Say	38	-	-

5.19 Of the respondents 275 (17.8%) stated they had a disability, 1173 stated they did not have a disability and 78 preferred not to say. It is difficult to compare this to the census data but the 2011 data shows that the percentage of those that were long term sick/disabled, 8.6% of males and 7.8% of females.

5.20 The age groups of respondents were as follows:

Age Range	Number of Responses	% of Responses
<16	0	0%
16-26	49	3.2%
26-39	371	24%

40-49	300	19.4%
50-65	503	32.6%
66>	301	19.5%

It is difficult to compare age ranges of the respondents to the age ranges in the census data to see if the responses were representative, as they are not precisely the same. But broadly speaking in 2011 those aged 66+ in 2011 were 16.5% of the population, showing that these age groups are slightly overrepresented in the survey results. For those aged up to 26 in 2011 they made up 30.5% of the population, so the above results show an under representative response level. In terms of the mid age ranges (between 26 to 65), in 2011 these groups made up of 52.8% of the population, which is about 20% lower than the above responses, showing that these age groups are overrepresented in the survey results.

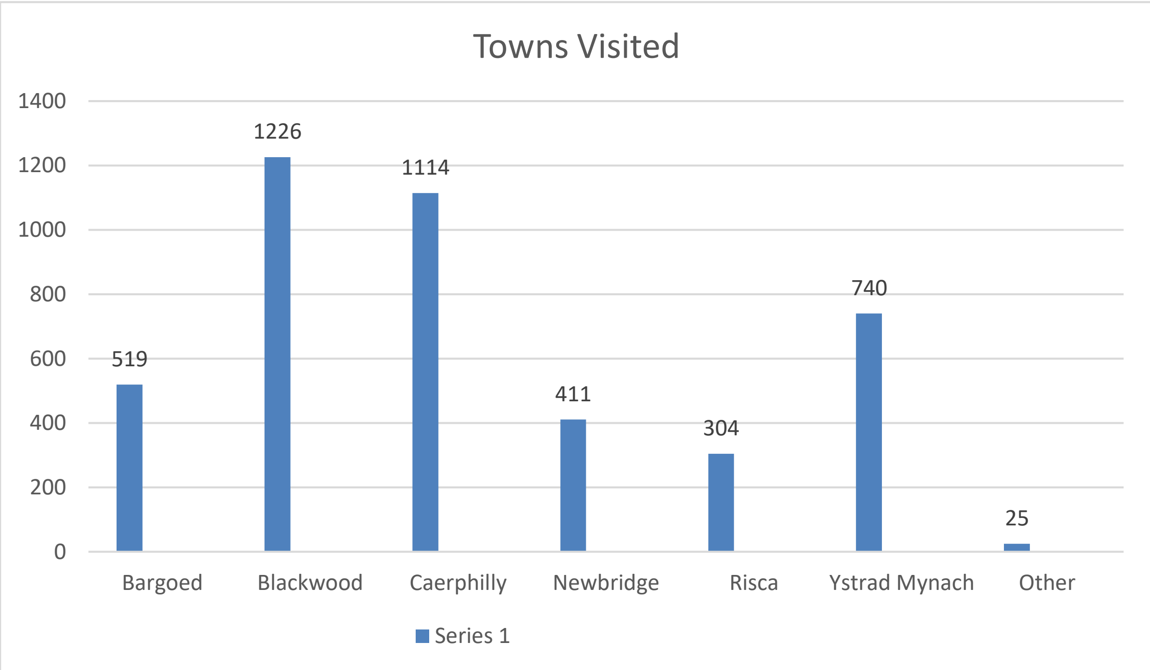
5.21 Respondents were asked to provide their postcodes to allow the reviews group to see if there were a range of responses across the county borough, the majority of responses were as follows:

Postcode	**Areas**	**Number of responses for area**	**Response rate for area**	**Proportion of all Responses**	**Area Population size relative to CCBC**
CF46	Nelson,	25	0.5%	0.01%	2.6%
CF81	Fochriw, Deri, Pontlottyn, Aberbargoed, Bargoed	120	0.7%	0.07%	9.2%
CF82	Gelligaer, Hengoed, Cefn Hengoed, Maesycwmmer, Ystrad Mynach	200	1%	0.11%	11.3%
CF83	Caerphilly, Llanbradach, Abertridwr, Senghenydd, Bedwas, Machen	440	0.8%	0.25%	30.9%
NP11	Abercarn, Cwmcarn, Newbridge,	224	0.6%	0.13%	21.1%

	Ynysddu, Cwmfelinfach, Risca				
NP12	Blackwood, Markham, Argoed, Oakdale, Pontllanfraith	483	1.4%	0.27%	18.7%
NP24	New Tredegar	19	0.4%	0.01%	2.8%

Survey Findings

5.22 Respondents were asked what towns they visited (many visit more than one):



Frequency of Visits

5.23 Respondents were then asked to state how often they visit. Some of the main findings from the responses showed the following:

Main Town	Daily Visits	Weekly Visits	Monthly Visits	Never
Bargoed	63	209	238	726
Blackwood	178	607	311	161
Caerphilly	152	430	426	146
Newbridge	58	197	166	840

Risca	60	119	121	956
Ystrad Mynach	112	256	310	439

Mode of Transport

5.24 Respondents were asked how they travel to their main town choice (option to choose more than one).

Mode of Transport	Number of Respondents
Car (driver)	1412
Walk	412
Car (passenger)	362
Bus	133
Bicycle	31
Taxi	24
Train	15
Motorbike	14
Other	6

Reasons for Visiting

5.25 Respondents were asked why they chose to visit their main town choice more often (option to choose more than one).

Reason for Choice	Number of Respondents
More Convenient	1186
Service is located here	612
Selection of Shops Better	450
Easier Parking	373
Prefer the town	362
Parking charges are lower	166
Public Transport	151
Other	118

No Other Choice	22

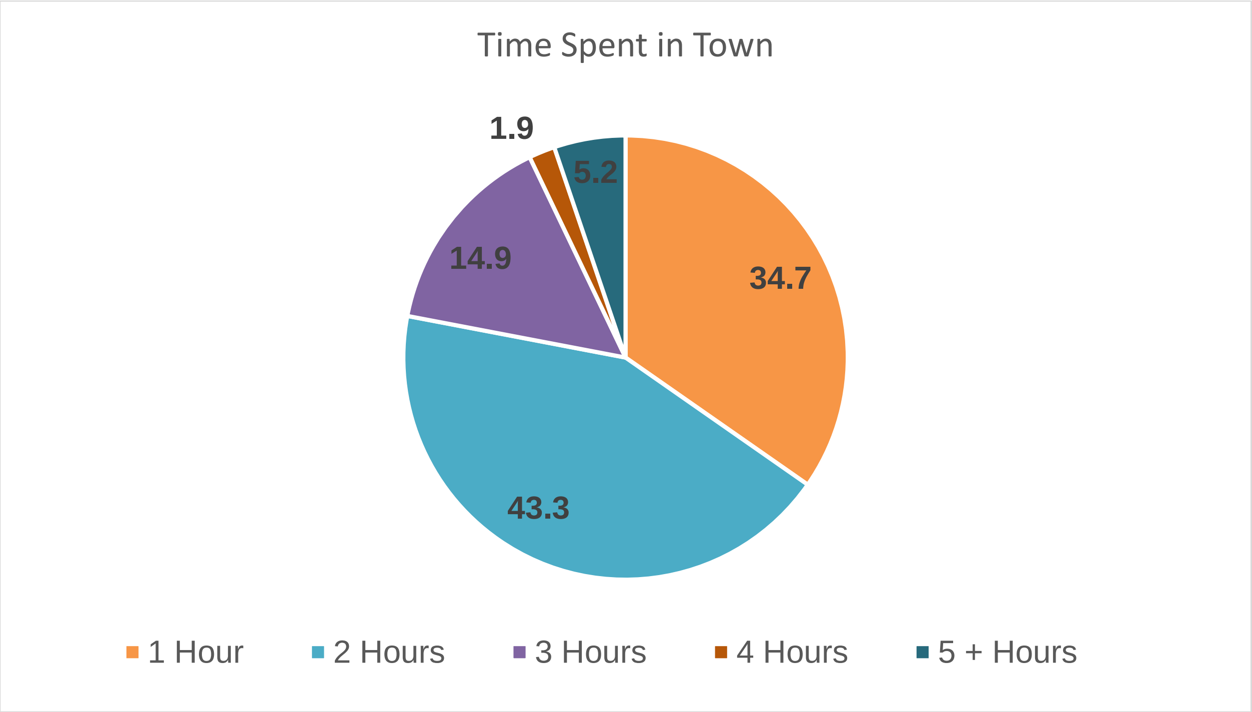
Most Recent Visit

5.26 Respondents were asked the reasons for their last visit to their main town choice (option to choose more than one).

Reason for last Visit	Number of Respondents
Non-food shopping	701
Food shopping	617
Personal business or appointment	550
Leisure	523
Meet friends	323
For work	107
Other	107
Library	93
Tourism	25

How Long on Average do they Spend in the Town?

5.27 Respondents were asked how long on average do they spend in the town.

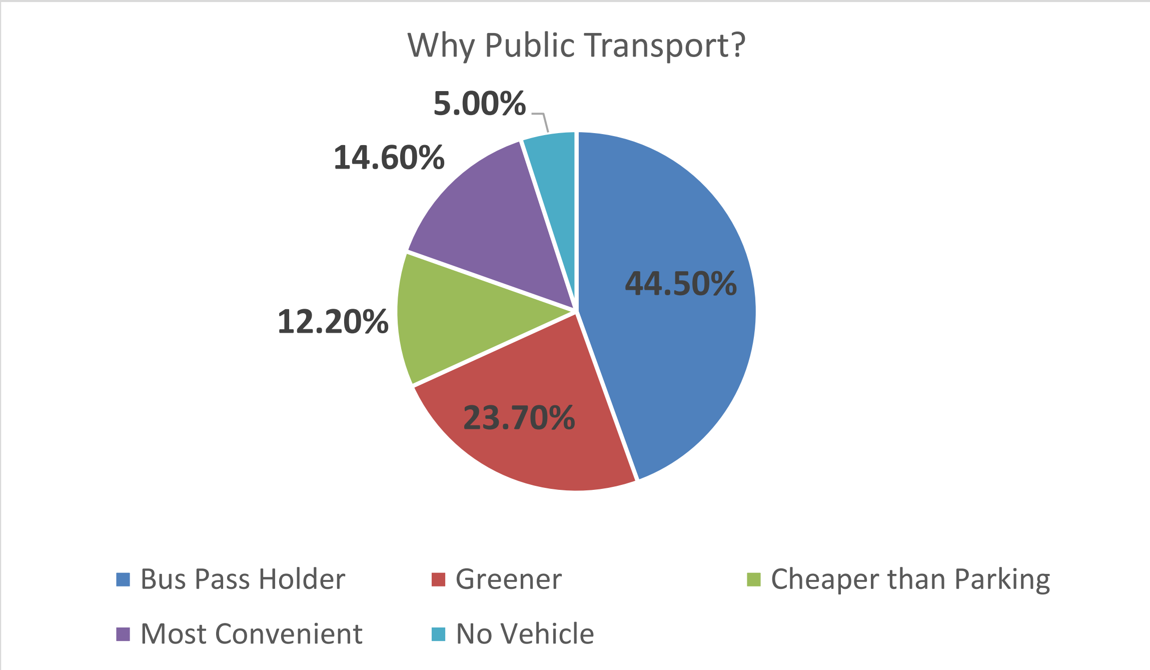


What Would Encourage Them to Spend More Time in the Town?

5.28 When asked what would encourage them to spend more time in the town 46% said shops, this was further elaborated into the selection, variety, choice etc. 31% said free parking would encourage them to stay for longer, and 3% said parking charges, with 2% stating better parking or parking fees.

Public Transport Users

5.29 The survey asked those that used public transport to visit the towns to give the reason for their choice. There were 515 respondents to this question and the chart below shows that the highest number of those travelling by public transport were bus pass holders.



Does your Disability Affect your Transport Choices?

5.30 The survey asked those people who identified as having a disability to rate the following statements as true to see if their disability affected their choice of transport.

Question	Not True	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Extremely True
I find it easier to travel in a private vehicle	4.9%	3.9%	12.7%	78.6%
My Disability prevents me from driving	88.5%	5.1%	4.2%	4%
I have no problem using public transport	25.6%	19.6%	22.6%	32.2%

My Disability means I cannot easily access public transport	65.4%	10.1%	14.6%	9.9%

Where do People Usually Park?

5.31 Respondents were asked to indicate where they usually park when they visit town centres.

Where do you Park	Responses
Paid car park – currently suspended	752
Free Car Park	424
Time Limited on Street	171
Free on Street	113
Private Business	10
Residential	10

Importance of various aspects of car parks.

5.32 The respondents were asked to rate the importance of the following when they consider whether to drive to a town centre and park there. They were asked to score out of 5, where 5 is Very Important and 1 is Not Important.

How Important are (number of responses)	1	2	3	4	5
Convenience of Payment Systems (1381)	93	88	310	282	608
Information/Facilities in Car Park (1387)	151	163	432	284	357
Road Congestion into Town Centre (1404)	89	135	438	300	442
Opening Times of Car Parks (1410)	108	118	337	315	532
Security of Car Park (1418)	76	108	342	351	541
Distance from Town Centre (1434)	90	98	322	287	637
Price of the Parking Ticket (1430)	75	33	115	158	1049
How Busy the Car Park is Likely to be (1433)	59	49	293	394	638
Availability of Spaces (1519)	48	23	136	273	1039

The responses show that respondents consider the most important aspect of car parks are the price of the car parking and availability of spaces. The least important were Information and facilities in the car park and opening times.

Narrative Comments

5.33 A number of respondents provided additional comments on car parks and some of these highlighted below;

- ‘Free parking - the system just isn't working as far as the Twyn car park is concerned. People working in the town are using this and parking all day, there is never any spaces for visitors or shoppers. Disabled people cannot walk from Crescent Road to the town. Bring in a time limit or make it pay and display please.’
- ‘Parking should be free and the council charge everybody for everything, you get rent from the shops so help the shops stay open by encouraging the public to keep returning it’s a fact that places with free parking brings the public by the thousands. open and keep the public coming to our shops don't drive people away.’
- ‘You charge for parking and your driving people out of the area and turning our towns into ghost towns with empty boarded up shops with no money going to the council on rented shops it doesn't take a genius to recognise the economic consequences of parking fees don't be greedy keeps the shops.’
- ‘The most practical method of control is charging but prices need to be cheap to encourage shoppers. I recommend reinstatement of pay and display but with much reduced short stay rates. For example, the current 1 and 2 hour rates could be reduced from 60p and 70p to 20p and 40p and the 3 hour remain at 90p’
- ‘Although it has been generous of CCBC to give free parking at the Twyn Car Park, I’m afraid the idea has had a backlash. Many people are parking there ALL day and thus making it impossible for people EVEN THE DISABLED TO PARK AT ALL. The added loss of space due to electric car recharge spaces has only exacerbated the situation - Surely you could now consider charging again and /or restricting parking to 2 Hours perhaps’
- ‘Car parking should be free for all shoppers for at least 2 hours after 2 hours they should be charged’

Business Survey

5.34 The responses to the business survey were disappointing with a total of 12 responses received. Initially the survey was sent to Town Centre businesses with a total of 6 responses received, following this, the request was sent to the wider business community to try and increase the number of responses, and this resulted in an additional 6 responses.

The responses were broken down into 5 retail, 1 rental and 6 service sectors, as follows:

- Bargoed – 2 responses - 1 retail and 1 service
- Blackwood – 5 responses – 3 retail and 2 service
- Caerphilly – 2 service sector responses
- Rhymney – 1 response rental
- St Mellons – 1 response - therefore discounted
- Ystrad Mynach - 1 response retail

5.35 The survey asked the following questions:

Question 1. Has there been an increase or decrease in footfall to your business compared to the footfall prior to the Coronavirus lockdown?

- Retail responses stated that 2 had an increase and 2 had a decrease, with 1 stating that they were new so had no comparator.

- Service/Rental sector – 1 stated there had been an increase and 3 stated a decrease.

When asked to quantify the differences the following comments were received:

Retail	**Service/Rental**
Busier by 20%	Decrease by 500
	Yes, all of my staff are now working remotely so the studio footfall has dropped considerably. That would have an impact on local retail as there will be at least 10 less people potentially visiting the centre of town.

Question 2. If the weekly footfall to your businesses has increased, do you consider free car parking is the reason?

- There were 3 out of 5 retail responses said yes to this question, and 2 out of 6 service/rental sector responded yes to this question.

When asked to comment why they stated:

Retail	**Service/Rental**
Free parking has had a huge help. People also spend longer in my business & spend more. Before they would always say ‘my car parking is running out I need to go’ free car park has been really positive	Parking (access to the offices) is certainly a consideration. It's not necessarily the cost - 50p is neither here nor there, but the convenience. Also, we have some private parking at our Blackwood office and since the introduction of free parking, there have been far fewer people parking in our car park to using other local services. When charging resumes, I expect this may change and we might need to engage parking enforcement
Free parking is the main factors. Better for myself parking for free and have had many comments on Free Parking from customers. If free parking continues Blackwood, I’m sure will grow as is Cwmbran	Free parking at the Twyn has been good, but it’s so busy getting any spots is difficult. We are seeing more people trying to use our private carparking behind our studio which has made it difficult to park some days.

Question 3. What other impacts, if any, has free car parking had on your business?

Retail	Service/rental
New shoppers	General town footfall has fallen but not as much as if charging were in place More footfall
less parking tickets	Just the above and people using our private parking as no spaces in the Twyn, or blocking the entrance to it, which is between Casa Mia and the library, several times people park on the double yellows.
Very positive comments from customers	Free car parking is essential if the town centre are going to flourish again. Shopping for the likes clothes etc has gone - town centre have to become places to socialise
"It has meant people spend more time plus people no longer asking me for change constantly! People asking for change for the car Park meter was the Bain of my life"	

Question 4. Has the introduction of free parking in your town had an impact on your turnover?

Retail	Service/rental
4 said Yes	3 answered no
1 stated I'm guessing Yes	Hard to say it has impacted turnover, but I do think it has helped generally with access for clients
	I couldn't say as we don't have a retail business.
	Too early to tell due to covid restrictions being held for so much longer in Wales compared to England

Question 5. Do you consider that free parking encourages your customers to remain for longer when they visit the town?

Retail	Service/rental
5 said yes	5 said yes 1 said no

Question 6. Have you had any feedback from the public on the free parking initiative, either positive or negative?

Retail	Service/rental
1 Yes and 1 No	1 non applicable, 1 Yes and 1 No
All positive	Yes, in that it is much easier to call in to us
This allows customers to look through my shop which has tons of Vinyl Records with no worries about	I think it's positive, it's just always very busy so maybe if there was a way to restrict it for a certain amount of hours could be good as

getting a ticket which a few have when they get carried away when searching through the Boxes & Crates of Albums & 45's.	noticing some businesses are using it as their own parking. Easy to spot with the livery on their cars
We have positive feedback about this every day. People are very happy with it. They hated the pay & display system.	Free parking is positive but maybe restrict to 4hrs, so the immediate car park does not get full with workers.

Question 7. Do you consider that since free parking has been implemented that shoppers and visitors have found it more difficult to find spaces in car parks?

Retail	**Service/rental**
2 Yes 2 No	3 Yes 3 No
Have not heard this.	
Its working! Free Parking that is.	
We have had a few comments about car parks being full!	

Question 8. Do you have any other comments about the future of the free car parking in Caerphilly County Borough Towns?

Retail	**Service/rental**
Keep it. it makes it easier for visitors and locals to visit the local community shops	Hope they carry on with free parking
Free parking is one of the few things we have over Cardiff. Don't take it away!	Only to reinforce that for us, it’s been a positive experience
Please continue with the free parking, it makes sense	Free parking is great, but maybe the issues with people parking there all day outweigh it.
Free car parking needs to stay permanently	For as long as supermarkets and out of town shopping has free parking our towns need to maintain free parking, or they will die.

Question 9. Businesses were asked to respond to the following statements:

Free car parking has ……	**Agree**	**Disagree**
“made it easier for clients / customers to access my business	9	2
attracted more people to shop in the town centre, increasing footfall on the high street	10	1
increased the number of visitors to my business/shop	8	3
increased client/customer wellbeing as they no longer feel time pressured	10	1
reduced the cost to staff and customers/clients working/visiting my business	10	1
attracted shoppers into town centres who would have otherwise shopped elsewhere	9	2

meant that people who have to use their cars to access shopping opportunities have not felt excluded	10	1
meant that there are fewer spaces available for visitors/shoppers	5	6

Options for Future Charging

5.36 The review group considered a range of options in relation to future charging and looked at the pros and cons whilst balancing them against the research and survey information) which can take 6- 9 months to implement. It was explained that the income loss is an estimate as it is difficult to predict how shopping patterns would change if there were limited free parking. For example, if 1 hour free parking was offered, some people might prefer to curtail their visit to 1 hour to avoid paying, thereby reducing the time spent on the high street and also reducing the overall car parking income for the second hour.

The options were as follows:

Option	Detail	Pros	Cons
1. Return to previous charging	**Charges reinstated in Sept 2022 at the current tariff**	**No changes would be required to TRO, signage, machine software etc.**	**Potential loss of trade in town centres.**
2. One hour free	**Current annual 1 hour ticket sales – 276,000 tickets = £174,000**	**Would encourage turnover of spaces. Perceived increase in trade.**	**Would require new TRO 6-9 months. A further 8–10-week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process. May result in reduction of 2 hr ticket sales. Potential to cause confusion for customers who may not realise that they need to obtain a free ticket. Total loss of income would be - £174,000**
3. Two hours free	**Current annual 1 and 2 hour ticket sales – 480,000 tickets = £370,000**	**Would encourage turnover of spaces. Perceived increase in trade.**	**Would require new TRO 6-9 months. A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process. May result in reduction of 3 hr ticket sales.**

			Potential to cause confusion for customers who may not realise that they need to obtain a free ticket. **Total loss of income would be £370,000.**
4. Free parking at all car parks	Loss of £652,124 per annum (2018/19)	Perceived increase in trade. Likely to be favoured by workers within the town centre.	Would require new TRO 6-9 months to revoke charges. A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process. Unregulated use of the car parks could lead to excessive long-term parking. WG grant for P & D machines to be repaid £170k Costs such as NNDR and maintenance would still need to be met. Total loss of income would be £652,124.
5. Mix of free and paid parking	Where this is not currently available after September 2022	Would encourage use of underused car parks.	Would require new TRO 6-9 months. A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process.
6. Free after 3pm on weekdays and after 10am on Saturdays	Current annual ticket sales after these times (data taken from average weeks in May and September) – 189,000 tickets - £175,000	Would encourage visitors outside of normal peak hour trading?	Would require new TRO 6-9 months. A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process. Total loss of income would be £175,000.
7. Free on Mondays and Tuesdays	Current annual ticket sales on these days (data taken from average weeks in May and September) –	Would encourage visitors on what are generally considered quieter shopping days.	Would require new TRO 6-9 months. A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced

	214,000 tickets - £225,000		until the conclusion of the TRO process. Total income loss would be £225,000.
8. Free on Saturdays	Current annual ticket sales on Saturdays (data taken from average weeks in May and September) – 109,000 tickets - £123,000	Perceived increase in trade.	Would require new TRO 6-9 months. A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process. Total income loss would be £123,000.
9. Up to one hour at nominal 20p rate **Up to two hours at nominal 40p**	**Current annual 1 hour ticket sales – 276,000 tickets = £174,000** **Current annual 2 hour ticket sales – 204,000** **Current annual 1 and 2 hour ticket sales – 480,000 tickets = £370,000**	**Changes could be introduced using reduced TRO procedure (2-3 months).**	**Total loss of income would be £233,200 £55,200 (1 hour) plus £81,600 (2 hour). Could result in a reduction of 3 hour ticket sales.** **A further 8-10 week period would need to be allowed to amend the machine software, which could not be commenced until the conclusion of the TRO process.**

The options highlighted in bold, 1,2,3 and 9 were initially the main options that the group wished to consider.

5.37 The group considered the following questions when finalising their conclusions and recommendations:

- What do they want to achieve?
- Who is the parking for?

5.38 The group agreed that the priority for parking should be visitors to the high streets. Members agreed that they want the car parks used to their full potential by visitors and that they want to ensure that parking spaces are available. The group considered various options including those listed at 5.36. Option 9 was seen as the best option, but the group felt the nominal rate should be slightly higher at 40p. Therefore, it was agreed that the scrutiny committees should be given two options:

Option 1

One hour at 40p then additional hours set at the standard rate, as below:

Short Stay1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	All Day	Week	Quarter	Year
40p	£1.00	£1.40	£2.20	£3.70	N/A	N/A	N/A

Long Stay

1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	All Day	Week	Quarter	Year
40p	90p	£1.10	£1.40	£2.20	£10.00	£105	£385

Option 2

Two hours at 40p then additional hours at the standard rate, as below:

Short Stay

1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	All Day	Week	Quarter	Year
40p	40p	£1.40	£2.20	£3.70	N/A	N/A	N/A

Long Stay

1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	All Day	Week	Quarter	Year
40p	40p	£1.10	£1.40	£2.20	£10.00	£105	£385

5.39 The group considered how to find a balance of offering an initial low rate to encourage visitors, but also ensure that spaces are available throughout the day. The group do not want to curtail the amount of time that visitors stay in the town centres, and some felt that just offering a one hour tariff reduction may cause that to happen. It was agreed that it is difficult to predict the impact of these changes and how they may change shopping habits, therefore the group would like an update report on the impact to be presented to the scrutiny committees after they have been in place for 12 months, if the recommendations are supported by Scrutiny and agreed by Cabinet.

5.40 The financial impact of these changes is outlined in section 8, but these are estimated based on previous income received. The group were also advised that the changes to ticket machines to update the hourly rates would take between 8 to 10 weeks. Therefore, Members suggested that Cabinet be asked to extend the suspension of free parking until the updates can be done.

5.41 **Conclusion**

The task and finish group have reviewed the previous task and finish group reports on CCBC car parks and the findings of research on the topic. The group also carried out a public survey to gather information on car parking and gain an understanding why people visit town centres. The group also considered how best to engage with town centre businesses and added additional question to a business survey. This all showed that parking strategies are complex and people's motivations to visits town centres are driven by a range of factors including retail offering and availability of spaces, the cost is not the main issue.

5.42 The public survey illustrated the reasons why people visit the town centres in the county borough and the highest number of responses stated that convenience was the reason with lower parking charges the 6th highest reason. When asked for the purpose of their visit non-food shopping and Food shopping ranked highest. However, when asked to rate the importance of aspects of the car parking offer, a significant proportion rated the price of the parking ticket as very important, closely followed by the availability of spaces. A number of narrative responses were also received with people commenting that since parking were suspended that in some car parks are full all day with no spaces available. There was support for free parking with comments that charging drives people away from town centres and also comments suggesting limited free parking as the solution or a reduced rate for one or two hours.

5.43 Overall the group agreed that the recommendation should address the issues of availability of parking spaces but also offer an incentive to visitors to use our town centres and therefore would like to see a low initial parking tariff.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 The assumption is that by offering a lower tariff for 1 or 2 hours it will encourage people to visit the town centres and will also ensure that spaces are available.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Integrated Impact assessment identified positive outcomes if the recommendations in this report are approved. The proposed lower initial charge aims to encourage visitors whilst also ensure availability of spaces. This lower charge will mean the initial hourly charge is reduced by either 30p or 50p dependent on which option is supported.

Link to the full Integrated Impact Assessment

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Option 1 – An annual income loss of £83k

8.2 Option 2 – An annual income loss of £232k

8.3 In either case the loss of income will result in a reduction in budget available within the highways service which is used to fund various highway maintenance elements.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 There are no consultations responses not included in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

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Consultees: Caerphilly County Borough Car Park Task and Finish Group
Councillor Tudor Davies Chair Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Adrian Hussey Vice Chair Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe Chair Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Pat Cook Vice Chair Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Julian Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation
Councillor James Pritchard Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
Mark S. Williams Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Dean Smith, Principal Engineer – Traffic Management
Paul Hudson, Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer

Background Papers:
Caerphilly County Borough Council Car Parks Task and Finish Group.pdf

Update on the Task and Finish Group Review of the Operation and Management of Highway Owned Council Car Parks.pdf

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Town Centre Footfall

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Town Centre Footfall

Before Pandemic 2018 – 2020

Month/Year	Bargoed	Blackwood	Caerphilly	Newbridge	Risca	Ystrad Mynach
Apr 2018	44681	134320	106805	30164	33076	60678
Aug 2018	49924	149020	115388	33371	35324	52810
Dec 2018	37609	182377	109144	52969	32240	53904
Apr 2019	46500	130453	98607	65901	32207	57738
Aug 2019	50912	139405	106797	67330	32712	48571
Dec 2019	40696	153988	107411	53069	30987	52447

Since Pandemic 2020-2021

Month/Year	Bargoed	Blackwood	Caerphilly	Newbridge	Risca	Ystrad Mynach
Apr 2020	13943	29810	32449	21481	16947	23838
Aug 2020	35040	82943	81645	26866	22561	37169
Jan 2021	19051	49114	39087	15752	17069	26127
Feb 2021	18809	56889	40277	16977	16999	27179
March 2021	26676	69493	50377	24075	22916	37625
April 2021	30231	81031	64996	26899	24248	44678
May 2021	25864	64826	57202	23974	20150	36043
June 2021	35812	91476	81816	30009	25782	47793
July 2021	37148	94795	84269	29594	25501	46881
August 2021	45226	118457	103191	33436	26100	57875
Sept 2021	45528	120160	98794	36532	28063	62979
Oct 2021	36507	108834	76085	31702	21346	45556

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol