



CCBC CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON 21ST JULY 2016 AT 10AM

PRESENT:

Councillor N. Dix – Chair
Councillor R Gough – Vice-Chair

Councillors:

L. Aldworth and C. Elsbury.

Together with:

C Campbell C Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), D Smith

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Nominations were sought in respect of the position of chair of the task and finish group. It was moved and seconded that Councillor N. Dix be appointed as Chair of the Caerphilly County Borough Council Car Parks Task and Finish Group and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Councillor N. Dix be appointed Chair of the County Borough Council Car Parks Task and Finish Group.

Nominations were sought in respect of the position of Vice Chair of the task and finish group. It was moved and seconded that Councillor R. Gough be appointed as Vice Chair of the County Borough Council Car Parks Task and Finish Group and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Councillor R. Gough be appointed Vice Chair of the County Borough Council Car Parks Task and Finish Group.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Bevan and D.T Davies.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made or during the course of the meeting.

4. COUNTYWIDE REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHWAY OWNED COUNCIL CAR PARKS – TERMS OF REFERENCE AND METHODOLOGY

Members discussed the methodology of the review and agreed the focus should be on car parks with over 25 spaces (unless they are already Pay & Display), parity of provision and charging. The review group wished to discuss use of park and ride car parks and car parks used by businesses. In some cases Council vans are parked overnight in car parks e.g. Montclair Avenue.

Members discussed car parks which are located near to schools, such as Libanus in Blackwood, Tyn y Wern in Trethomas and Ysgol Y Castell in Caerphilly.

Members stated that they would like information on car parks above 25 spaces and the potential income generation for car parks that are currently free, including park and ride car parks for an estimated charge of £2 per day. The review group asked for information on the criteria (if there is one) for applying car parking fees e.g. is it for economic regeneration? Officers stated that in some instances free car parking has been in place prior to 1996, Members asked if considering charging across all car parks what type of criteria would be considered, officer stated that any criteria would need to take in to consideration the role of the car park; the demands upon the area; long term or short term parking requirements; and a consistency of approach. Officers also suggested that Members might want to include issues such as misuse of car parks, and the review group asked that affect upon enforcement staff and excess charge notices etc. be included.

Members felt that consideration should also be given to the cost of maintaining these car parks, cleaning, CCTV etc. and asked what contribution was made by the railway company towards the cost. Officer stated that some are owned by the railway company, but that new or improved park and ride facilities were part funded by Welsh Government and generally the responsibility of the Council to maintain.

The terms of reference were agreed as:

The aim of the task and finish group is to determine if the current strategy and regime for the management and operation of the Council's Highway owned off street car parks is still appropriate and what alternative or additional options should be considered in the future.

The methodology of the review was agreed as follows;

Meeting 2 (September)
Site visits.

Meeting 3 (September)
Workshop session – Operational Challenges

- Enforcement
- Existing provision & charging regime
- Concessions & Restrictions
- Payment Methods

Meeting 4 (October)
Evidence from invited witnesses
Review of analysis
Recommended outcomes and way forward

The review group agreed that the following car parks would be included:

Bargoed – Bargoed station
Bargoed – Emporium

Bargoed – Gateway
Bargoed – Hanbury Road
Bargoed – Restaurant Site
Bargoed – St Gwladys
Bedwas – Bridgend Inn
Blackwood – Bus Station
Blackwood – Cliff Road
Blackwood – Court House
Blackwood – High Street
Blackwood – Market Traders
Blackwood – Thorncombe 2
Blackwood – Thorncombe 3
Blackwood – Wesley Road
Blackwood – Woodbine Road
Caerphilly – Aber Station
Caerphilly – Bedwas Road
Caerphilly - Caerphilly Station
Caerphilly – Crescent Road
Caerphilly – Energlyn & Churchill Park
Caerphilly – Station Tce
Caerphilly – Twyn
Crosskeys – Gladstone Street
Hengoed – Hengoed Station
Nelson – Dynevor Tce
Newbridge – High Street
Newbridge – Newbridge Station
Pengam – Pengam Station
Pontymister – Herbert Avenue
Pontymister – Risca Station
Rhymney – Rhymney Station
Risca – Longbridge
Risca – Tredegar Tce
Ystrad Mynach – Oakfield Street
Ystrad Mynach – Ystrad Station

5. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW, CURRENT STATUS, PARKING REGIME AND TARIFFS

Members considered if Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers should be included as part of the review, officers advised that this is a Gwent wide, complex issue which should be considered separately, consideration would need to be given of costs compared to income generation and deterrent. To set up CPE is a long process and would require a budget commitment. Members agreed that CPE would not be included as part of the review of car parks.

Members asked if the condition of car parks and claims for accidents were an issue, officers stated that claims for liability were low as car parks are generally in good condition. Members asked if CCBC were asked to provide CCTV footage were there are car to car accidents in car parks, officers stated this can happen occasionally within the constraints of data protection regulations.

The review group queried the history and background to provision of free car parks in some town centres, and commented that free car parking doesn't encourage turnover use of parking spaces.

Members discussed the car parks at Risca, which are across two sites and are free of charge. There are car parks located in local supermarkets which are currently free without any restrictions, should parking fees be introduced at council owned car parks this could impact on

the demand for free spaces at the supermarket car parks and as a result cause the introduction of restrictions. There could also be an impact on side streets in residential areas.

Officers stated that should charging be introduced at some park and ride car parks there would likely be displaced car parking on side streets which would impact on local residents. There are already issues at some station such as Aber Halt with parking near to the Scout Huts.

The review group discussed examples of car parks where charges vary, such as Blackwood and the Twyn in Caerphilly and asked if the higher cost to park is working in terms of ensuring spaces are available throughout the day. Officers confirmed that yes it does work and the car parks are busy all day. Members stated that as a result of the charges people who work in local businesses will park in free car parks or side streets.

The number of car parks available will also have an impact in town centres, Ystrad Mynach for example has only one car park which has charges, and there is an impact upon parking on the high street. Consideration has to be given to charging versus control of parking.

Members stated that the free car park at Bargoed – Hanbury Road is always full, Officers commented that this has been linked to the regeneration of the town. Consideration needs to be given to the adjacent free car park at Morrisons. There is also a park and ride car park which is not necessarily used by commuters. The Blackwood example of free spaces in ASDA was highlighted, which appears to work alongside car parks that charge. Officers stated that demand needs to be considered as well.

Members stated the car park above the bus station in Blackwood is often empty, and suggested perhaps consideration should be given to lowering charges to encourage more usage.

The review group queried use of car parks for events and loss of income, such as the Twyn for markets. Officers stated it depends on the purpose, if it is for community use and/or promoted by the Council it can be accommodated, but if it is purely commercial it cannot.

Members expressed concern that veterans have to pay on Remembrance Sunday at the Twyn car park and asked if we need to charge on Sundays. Officers agreed to review this.

The meeting closed at 11:30.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2016 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIRMAN