



CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2017

SUBJECT: FREE CHRISTMAS PARKING PROPOSAL FOR CAERPHILLY TOWN

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to introduce a 2 hour free parking period in all Caerphilly town pay and display car parks for two weeks in the run up to Christmas 2017.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In order to demonstrate the Council's continuing support for traders in Caerphilly town in light of the impact of the ongoing A468/A469 Pwllpant roundabout highway improvement works and the still challenging economic climate, it is proposed to introduce the 2 hour free parking period in the town's pay and display car parks for two weeks in the run up to Christmas 2017 in an effort to support and increase trade in the town.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report links to the Council's priority to ensure that communities are safe, green and clean places to live and to improve residents' quality of life.
- 3.2 The recommended course of action contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
- *A prosperous Wales*
 - *A resilient Wales*
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities*
 - *A globally responsible Wales.*

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Construction of the A468/A469 Pwllpant roundabout highway improvement commenced on the 9th October 2017 and is programmed to take 12 months to complete. After the first few days of significant disruption to traffic, the increase in journey times has reduced significantly to generally 10-15 minutes at peak times. However, traders continue to express concern about the reduction in footfall and trade, and in particular the potential impact on the Christmas trade which is one of the busiest times for most traders. The impact of the temporary traffic management is under review and further mitigation measures are being considered.

- 4.2 The Cabinet acknowledges the ongoing pressures facing traders in the Caerphilly County Borough owing to the ongoing challenging economic climate and the potential impact of the highway improvement works on Caerphilly town in particular. Every opportunity must be taken to encourage shoppers and visitors to come into the town, particularly during the Christmas period. In previous years a 2 hour free parking for a two week period in the run-up to Christmas was introduced and was well received as part of the Council's support to increase trade in the borough (last introduced in 2011).
- 4.3 During the Christmas period the car parks are full for the majority of the day and demand for parking is at its highest at this time of year. Free parking up to 2 hours (with no return for 2 hours) in Caerphilly town, whilst diminishing some turnover, will ensure that there is turnover of car parking spaces; that commuter and worker parking is discouraged from the main car parks; and that there is general availability for shoppers and visitors to the town in the car parks most suited for their needs. Any users wishing to stay for longer than 2 hours will be required to pay the normal tariff (i.e. 3 hours and over).
- 4.4 To ensure compliance with the 2 hour free parking with no return for 2 hours a higher level of enforcement will be required at the most heavily used short stay sites. It will be important to ensure adequate signage is provided to avoid confusion with users. To control the free car parking users will still be required to display a ticket otherwise they may be issued with an excess charge notice. The early stages of this period will need to be monitored to determine how motorists react to the changes.
- 4.5 Given the practicalities of implementing this proposal just before the statutory holidays, it is proposed that the free parking will commence in Caerphilly town on Saturday 9 December 2017 until Saturday 23 December 2017.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 As a "one off" short term measure the proposal is not expected to have a long term impact, but does contribute to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact has been identified, therefore a full EIA has not been carried out.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of implementing the proposal borough wide in 2011 was approximately £30,000 but since that time usage of the car parks has remained similar and there has been no increase in the parking tariffs. To implement the free parking proposals in Caerphilly town in 2017 it is estimated to cost the Council around £5-10,000 (covering loss of income, legal and implementation costs). This cost will be met from existing Engineering Services budgets.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Cabinet are asked to approve the implementation of free parking in Caerphilly town for up to 2 hours with no return for 2 hours in the two weeks before Christmas 2017.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 As described in 4.1 – 4.2.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

13. URGENCY

- 13.1 This report is urgent on the basis that Caerphilly town businesses have cited that the Pwllpant Roundabout improvement works have had a detrimental impact on their trading figures as a result of reduced footfall and visitor numbers within the town. A significant amount of their annual trade is undertaken in the run up to Christmas.
- 13.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution the Mayor has agreed that the decision proposed is reasonable and has agreed that the decision should be treated as exempt from Call in.

Author: Clive Campbell - Transportation Engineering Manager

Consultees: Cllr David Poole, Leader of the Council

Cllr Sean Morgan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing and Future generations Champion

Cllr John Bevan, Mayor

Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive

Christina HARRY, Corporate Director - Communities

Steve Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Services

Marcus Lloyd, Acting Head of Engineering Services

Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities & Welsh Language

Mike Eedy, Finance Manager

Shaun Watkins, HR Service Manager

Dean Smith, Principal Engineer (Traffic Management)