

BARGOED TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

Introduction

Current public policy encourages the use of public transport and walking and cycling as alternative means of transport to the private car. In town centres however, and in particular smaller town centres in competition with out of town stores with ample free car parking, access to convenient and free or reasonably priced parking spaces is vital to the viability and vitality of the centre.

Nevertheless we must not lose sight of the long term aim to encourage more sustainable means of access to town centres. Indeed a major strength of most town centres is that they are also hubs of the local public transport system.

The vitality and viability of Bargoed town centre has been declining for many years and so it is particularly important that the town centre's car parking provision is attractive and accessible to potential customers.

Major changes have taken place recently and more are planned in the town centre over the next two years – changes that will affect the quantity, location and cost of car parking spaces that serve the town centre's many different user groups. A brief discussion of those groups is therefore a useful starting point for considering a parking strategy.

Users

Car parking policy in town centres has to address the very different needs of the varying groups of existing and potential users of parking space, including:

- Shoppers who require parking spaces for varying but relatively short durations throughout the 'working day' (8am to 6pm) that are safe, well located for convenience, well managed and appropriately priced.
- Town centre workers including people who work in shops and offices in the town centre who will want a safe, convenient and appropriately priced parking space for the entire working day.
- Commuters who are using the town centre's public transport facilities, particularly rail transport, to travel to jobs elsewhere. As with town centre workers, usually the need is for a safe, convenient and appropriately priced space throughout the working day but in locations as close to the relevant public transport facility as possible.
- Residents of flats over shops in the town centre and dwellings in nearby residential streets. Some will require parking spaces in the

evenings only, if they use their vehicle to commute to work elsewhere. Others will require the parking space for all or part of the working day as well as evenings and weekends.

- Disabled drivers who may also be in any of the above categories but who will need parking spaces as close as possible to their destination at locations which, in addition to being safe and convenient, do not present physical obstacles to their progress once they leave the vehicle.
- The night time economy: some businesses, principally leisure oriented, will need spaces outside the working day for workers and customers. Such businesses, which include cinemas, take-aways and other 'A3' uses, pubs and drinking clubs do most of their trade after 6pm but many also trade during the afternoon and weekends.

Reconciling the needs of these disparate users is difficult but an important distinction is to be made between shoppers and customers of the evening economy, who require short term parking and workers, commuters and residents, who require long term car parking. Car parking spaces to serve the former group are usually used several times during the day by different customers, thus accommodating far greater numbers of users than equivalent spaces for workers, commuters and residents.

In some cases, use of spaces can be complementary, particularly where one group requires spaces during the working day and another group needs parking provision during the evening and night.

Therefore the efficiency of use of parking spaces is important, not just overall provision of spaces.

The Council's car parking standards

In November 2010 the Council adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Car Parking Standards based on the Wales Parking Standards produced by the County Surveyors' Society in 2008. The CCBC document allocated each part of the county borough to one of 5 parking policy zones, depending on the density of urbanisation and access to public transport. Bargoed Town Centre is allocated as Zone 3 - Urban, described as:

“very much part of a substantial built up area with a number of basic local facilities within 400m walking distance. A range of bus routes offering up to 6 buses per hour; the range of destinations offering practical access to most but not all essential facilities. The curtilage of the site restricts, to an extent, what car parking can be provided. There are likely to be some restrictions on on-street parking and other available off-street parking is severely limited or non-existent.”¹

¹ Car Parking Standards Part 1. CCBC November 2010. page 7 para. A5.3

Significantly, the guidance states that “*The scale of parking provision varies throughout Wales and local priorities will dictate the manner in which the standards are used*”². Some flexibility in the use and application of the standards is therefore recommended by the guidance.

Principles of a long-term parking strategy

1. All categories of users should be actively encouraged to use public transport or walking/cycling to access town centre facilities where possible.
2. Car parking provision for shoppers should be safe, convenient for them and priced at a level that maintains the town’s viability as a shopping centre.
3. Pedestrian links between car parks and the main shopping areas in Bargoed should be safe, convenient and direct.
4. The Bargoed Park & Ride car park should be for long-term (i.e. all-day) parking, primarily for rail passengers, and be managed and priced accordingly.
5. All other permanent car parks close to the town centre need to reflect the mix of users across the town (i.e. shoppers, visitors, retailers, workers and commuters) and should provide a balance of short stay and long stay parking to meet these needs whilst ensuring reasonable availability and supporting the economic vitality of the town.
6. Disabled drivers should be able to access all parts of the town centre safely and conveniently, although not all access routes need be DDA compliant.
7. Areas should be reserved for residents’ parking and shopper parking in streets within walking distance of the town centre. The fact that residing near a town centre has both advantages and consequences needs to be recognised.
8. Parking numbers should continue to be monitored on a regular basis to identify demand, trends and problems that may occur.
9. As part of the Council’s medium term financial plan, a wider review of the car parking provision and charging tariff across the county borough will be undertaken during 2014/15. This updated parking strategy for Bargoed town centre will need to take account of and be consistent with the conclusions and outcomes of this overarching review.

² Ibid p. 9 para. A6.1

Current Parking provision in Bargoed - September 2014

The town centre's main off street car parking sites are listed below and the current sites shown on Plan 1:

Plan ref. No.	Car Park	No. Spaces 1999	No. spaces Sept 2014	Current Status
1	Hanbury Road	97	123	Free
2	Emporium	46	27	P&D
3	St Gwladys	-	27	P&D
4	Park & Ride	-	89	Free
-	Former 'club' parking	30	-	-
6	Cardiff Road	100	-	-
7	Bus Station	-	18 + 4 CCBC spaces	Free
8	Southern car park	-	41	Free
9	Morrisons store lower deck	-	242	3 hours free
9	Morrisons store upper deck	-	145	3 hours free
10	Southern development site	-	0	Uncontrolled
	TOTAL	273	716	

The town centre therefore currently has an off-street car parking capacity of 716 spaces (of which 329 are controlled by the Council), a substantial increase from 15 years ago. However, most of it is at a different level from the town centre shops so that access to and from the car parks to Hanbury Road and High Street is an important consideration. Daytime access for the disabled and mobility impaired is now facilitated and improved by lifts in the Library and the Morrisons store.

The overall Council owned public parking provision in Bargoed town centre compares well with the larger centre of Caerphilly (311 spaces: excludes P&R sites) but is less than Blackwood (641 spaces). However, both Caerphilly and Blackwood have hundreds of additional free spaces associated with edge of town centre privately owned and managed retail stores.

Car Park Management

Bargoed's town centre car parks do not sufficiently differentiate between long and short term parking. Only the relatively small Emporium and St Gwladys car parks charge for parking, so the remainder tend to fill up with workers early in the day, to the disadvantage of shoppers. The Park & Ride car park is intended to serve rail commuters but it may be desirable to introduce further management measures to deter long term parking in shopper car parks. As part of the car park management plan for the new retail development Morrisons allow up to three hours free parking for general public use and not just their customers in this car park. Monitoring is ongoing to assess the use and impact of this facility in order to determine what changes in car park management may be required in the Council's off street car parks.

It is recognised that in the future Bargoed needs to develop and grow as a town centre by attracting more office workers. Therefore, some car parking provision should be made for long term parking to ensure that the town is an attractive location for both employers and their employees. To achieve this consideration should be given to reassignment of existing parking spaces on the fringe of the town centre in designated car parks or in areas allocated for long term parking, through a charging regime.

Private developments in the town are normally encouraged to provide additional private parking spaces for employees where appropriate through the planning system but in the vicinity of the new transport interchange in the north of the town centre the Council should try to encourage the use of public transport through Travel Plans rather than additional private parking spaces and their associated traffic movements.

Proposed future designation and use of the Council's off street car parks

Site ref.	Car Park	No. of spaces	Current Use	Proposed Use
1	Hanbury Road	123	Free	3 hrs free with long stay tariff over 3 hrs
2	Emporium	27	Short stay tariff	Long stay tariff
3	St. Gwladys	27	Short stay tariff	No change
4	Park & Ride	89	Free	No change
7	Bus station	18	Free	For building tenants only
8	Southern car park	41	Free	Long stay tariff
9	Morrisons (lower deck)	242	Free: 3 hr limit for non customers	No change
9	Morrisons (upper deck)	145	Free: 3 hr limit for non customers	No change

Reasons for proposed changes:

- Hanbury Road: to be consistent with the Morrisons car parks i.e. encourage shoppers, and discourage long term use.
- Emporium: provision for workers on that side of town.
- Bus station: to maximise the attractiveness of this site and third party tenancy/use.
- Southern car park: accommodation for long stay.
- Introducing P&D for long stay would be more consistent with car park controls in Blackwood and Caerphilly.

Monitoring Off Street Parking

Regular surveys of the public car parks between 12.00 and 13.00 on the last Friday of the month have revealed that the car parks are between 50% and 70% occupied at that time. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this but it is believed that workers in the town centre may take up a significant proportion of the public parking spaces.

On Street Parking

All of the town centres in Caerphilly county borough adjoin residential areas comprising dense terraced housing with limited off street parking provision of their own. Residents with cars therefore have to park on street but in the streets within walking distance of the town centre there is also pressure from shoppers and town centre workers looking for convenient parking spaces.

The shopping streets themselves are obviously the most convenient of all potential parking spaces but here conflict for spaces is at its most intense between the needs of shoppers, the disabled, loading bays, bus access, the free flow of traffic and pedestrian space.

In Bargoed this issue is as acute as in any other centre. Consequently most of the on-street parking areas in adjoining residential streets are reserved for residents only during the working day. Sections of Church Place, Greenfield Street, South Street, West Street and Cardiff Road have limited waiting (30 minutes) and a section of Francis Street has limited waiting for up to one hour. Together these streets can accommodate perhaps 100 visitors' cars.

There are also large sections of these streets with no waiting at any time but some streets near the town centre – Gilfach Street and most of West Street and parts of Church Street have no parking restrictions at least on one side.

All on-street parking restrictions within the town are periodically reviewed as part of the traffic regulations order review process (typically on an annual basis). The current parking restrictions are considered to make best use of the available on street parking space for the different users in the town, but will continue to be monitored and reviewed.

Parking abuses remain a significant problem in Hanbury Road and High Street and the subject of some concern among community representatives and traders as well as the police. The Council will continue to engage with the local community and the police to ensure on street parking enforcement remains a high priority.

Since the reduction in the width of the carriageway to a single lane, the abusive parking has reduced but is still a significant and persistent problem.

Proposed changes and Short-term parking strategy

Further works are proposed for Bargoed between 2014 and 2016 that will affect the parking situation. There is therefore a need to maintain the status quo during these works in order to minimise the impact on the town centre's vitality and viability. The proposed future works include:

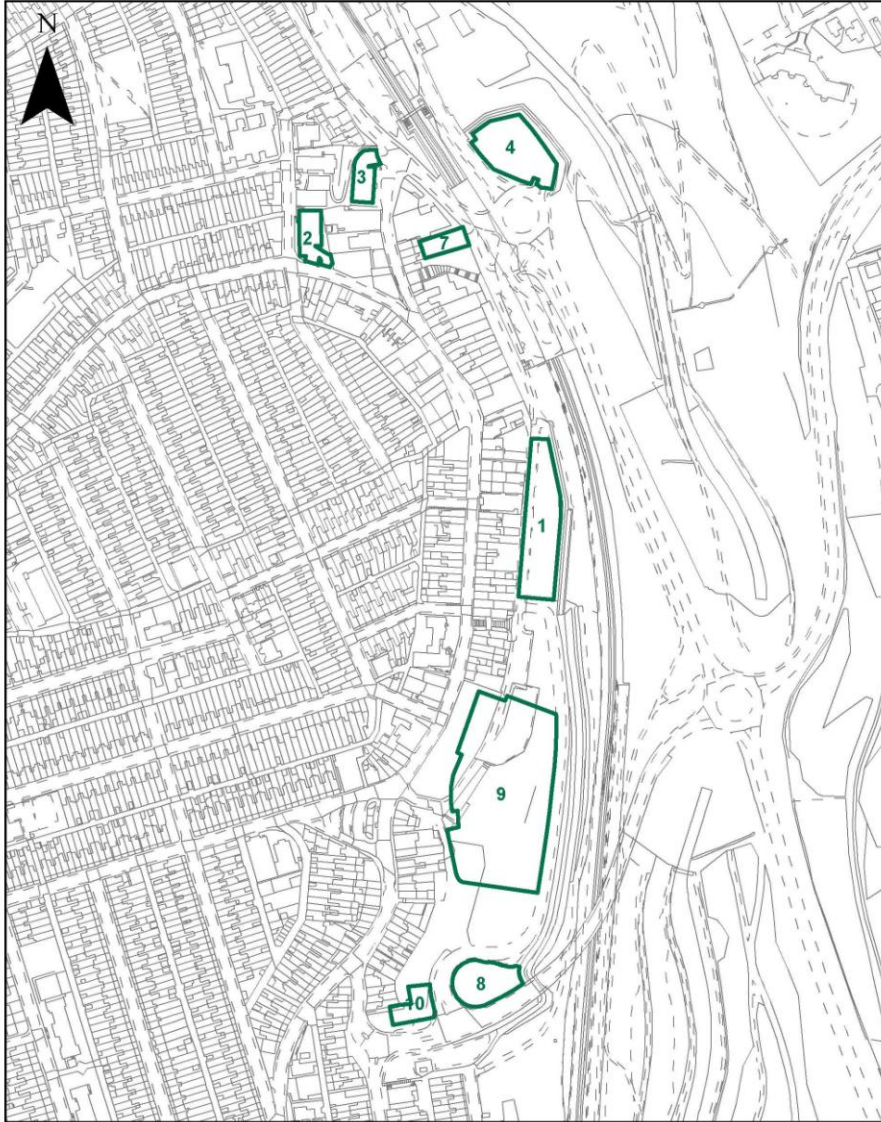
- Phase 4b of the public realm enhancement to extend the Hanbury Road and Hanbury Square public realm improvements southwards to include under Cardiff Road construction; planned for autumn 2014 to spring 2015.
- A pocket park proposal in Hanbury Road car park: construction planned for autumn 2014 to spring 2015.
- Demolition of HJJ building and implementation of Collier's Walk improvements: planned between autumn 2014 to spring 2015.
- Delivery of the cinema proposal: construction anticipated for summer 2015 to autumn 2016.
- Temporary store yards and offices will need to be accommodated in close proximity to the site of the proposed infrastructure works. It is anticipated that these temporary store yards will be located in areas currently used as car parks resulting in loss of parking spaces whilst the infrastructure works take place.

Once these works are complete it is recommended that the changes in the designation and management of off-street car parks suggested be implemented.

Plan 1

Bargoed Car Parks 2014

1:4,000



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BARGOED TOWN PARKING STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

	What?	Why?	Action	Target Date	Cost	Who?	Comment/Progress
1.	Revise Parking strategy	Identify long and short term parking requirements for the town	Officers to prepare a revised draft strategy for consultation	September 2014	Nil	CC & AD	Completed
			Undertake consultation with all stakeholders	Sept. & Oct. 2014	Nil	AD & CC	
			Finalise the strategy	Oct/Nov 2014	Nil	AD & CC with TCMG	
			Agree parking management plan with Morrisons	August 2013	Nil	CC	Completed
2.	Charging regime and waiting restrictions	Ensure compatibility between retail development parking management and CCBC parking management	Review car parking charges and waiting restrictions to all off street car parks (linked to wider county borough review)	Nov. 2014 - March 2015	TBC	CC	Progressing via the MTFP process with the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
3.	Car parking surveys	Monitor usage and trends in car parks	Undertake usage surveys of all identified parking areas: between 12:00 & 13:00 on the last Friday of each month	Monthly surveys with six monthly update reports to TCMG	Nil	HS	

4.	On street parking	Monitor parking on Hanbury Road and High Street	Checks on usage	As and when required	Nil	TM	Surveys recently undertaken.
			Reinstate double yellow lines on Hanbury Road and High Street	August 2013	£2k	TM & AD	Completed
			Liaise with the Police on enforcement issues	Report as and when required	Nil	TM & AD	Regular liaison with local Inspector undertaken. Ongoing
			Review TRO requirements as construction progresses	October 2013	£2k	TM with design team	Completed October 2013
5.	Bus station car park	Implement CCBC controls	Prepare and make TRO to introduce formal controls to the car park	December 2014	tbc	TM	On hold
			Commence enforcement	January 2015	Nil	TM	On hold
Version 5 Last updated 6 October 2014 (CC)							

CC – Clive Campbell
AD – Allan Dallimore
HS – Helen Simmonds
TM – CCBC Traffic Management