



COUNCIL – 5TH OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF MOTION – ABOLITION OF CAR PARKING CHARGES IN TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Council is asked to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report and make an appropriate recommendation, in accordance with Rule 11(3) of the Constitution the motion was first considered by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 14th September 2021 and was not supported.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A Notice of Motion has been received from Councillor K. Etheridge and is supported by Councillors A. Farina-Childs, R. Gough, N. Dix, B. Owen and G. Simmonds.
- 2.2 The Notice of Motion meets the criteria set out in the Council's Constitution and in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure was first considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, Members debated the motion and by a majority voted not to support the motion.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Council are asked to consider the notice of motion the Notice of Motion as outlined in paragraph 5.1 and make an appropriate recommendation.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 **Notice of Motion**

Councillor Etheridge in his notice of motion calls on the Council to abolish charges within the Town Centre Car Parks in order to help traders and businesses within our Towns when a review is conducted in September

Free Parking has seen an increase of cars using car parks and has been a success in improving trade and footfall over the past 2 months and it is essential that our towns remain vibrant and successful.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 As a notice of motion is a procedural matter and must be dealt with in accordance with Council's Constitution, no assumptions have been made.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report does not require an Integrated Impact Assessment as it relates to a procedural matter under the Council's Constitution.
- 7.2 The procedural rules regarding a Notice of Motion are contained within Council's Constitution as adopted in May 2002. The Council's Constitution sets out the framework for the decision-making roles and responsibilities.
- 7.3 However the outcome of the Notice of Motion and any subsequent reports arising from it may require an Integrated Impact Assessment.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The Notice of Motion was considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 14th September 2021 the comments of the Committee are summarised below.
- 10.2 Councillor Etheridge summarised his motion and advised that a petition of 440 signatures would also be presented to Council on this matter. He thanked Cabinet for the 12-month suspension of charges but to remove uncertainty for retailers asked the Scrutiny Committee to support the motion and abolish car parking charges permanently and emphasised the importance of supporting town centre business and traders.
- 10.3 Members expressed concern that abolishing car parking charges would not assist in the rotation and flow of traffic in town centres, particularly for smaller car parks such as The Twyn in Caerphilly and would prefer to see a limited free parking allocation for

example 2-3 hours. Currently this car park is full by 9am by the staff and employees of the various business in that area, this in turn disperses shoppers' cars into side streets or loading bays causing congestion. It was felt that car parking issues needed to be looked at in a much wider context and welcomed the involvement of a Task and Finish Group but that this needed to be fast tracked if its recommendations were to make an impact on Town Centre recovery. The Member suggested that a traffic flow survey might give a true representation of use.

Officers confirmed that Cabinet were acutely aware of the issues and that these issues were exacerbated at the Twyn car park due to its size and explained the implications in terms of traffic regulations orders and the time this would take. It was however confirmed that a further report on this specific issue was due to be considered by cabinet. An Officer also explained that although a traffic count was easy to set up it was very resource intensive as it required a manual count by staff to note registration and identify length of stay etc. Members asked whether volunteers could be used for this and the Officer explained that this was a possibility but explained that they would require training, and this would also take time.

- 10.4 A Member applauded the extension to September 2022 but expressed concern for smaller town centres and smaller car parks as so much of the COVID recover process was still unknown. He emphasised the impact that any reduction in foot fall would have on a town centre like Risca, which had the smallest foot fall of the town centres and felt that any proposed solutions must be looked at in the longer term.
- 10.5 Reference was made to the income generated by car parks and Officer's confirmed that was estimated to be between £630k-£700k and the service costs between £550k-£600k, providing an approximately £100k surplus, which is invested into other highways services. Without it, the infrastructure division would either need to make £700k of savings or the Authority would need to introduce a budget to replace the lost income.
- 10.6 Members sought clarification as to Park and Ride charging and the Officer confirmed that there was currently no charge in Park and Ride car parks as part of a drive to promote and increase the use of public transport while avoiding users seeking to park in residential side streets..
- 10.7 Having been fully considered and debated and in noting that there were 3 For, 6 Against and 2 Abstention the motion was declared lost and Council be advised that the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee did not support the notice of motion.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000

Author: Emma Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

Appendices: Appendix 1 Signed copy of Notice of Motion.