



CABINET – 12TH JULY 2023

SUBJECT: COURT HOUSE CAR PARK, BLACKWOOD – VARIATION OF PARKING CHARGES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to vary the parking charges in Courthouse Car Park, Blackwood to allow up to 1 hour parking free of charge for all users.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A new play area adjacent to Blackwood Road was constructed to support the Chartist Gardens development and enhance play provision in the Pontllanfraith area. In considering how better to facilitate use of the new play area a review of the parking charges for Courthouse car park has been carried out.
- 2.2 The report details recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the variation of parking charges in Courthouse Car Park, Blackwood to allow up to 1 hour parking free of charge for all users.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The allowance of 1 hour parking free of charge will encourage families that typically arrive by car to make use of the new play area.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Following the construction of the new play area adjacent to Blackwood Road as part of the Chartist Gardens development, a review of the parking charges for Courthouse car park has been carried out in accordance with recommendation 3.2 of the Cabinet meeting held on 22nd July 2020 – *'That Cabinet approves the review, as part of the*

wider scrutiny of car parking charges, of parking charges for Courthouse car park and in particular that consideration be given to making the first three hours free of charge' to ensure public access to play provision in the Pontllanfraith area is not diminished.

5.2 The Task and Finish Group review of car parking charges recommended consistency of charges across the borough. This has recently been implemented.

5.3 However, in terms of consistency, other play areas are generally served by free parking provision (for example Blackwood Showfield, Ystrad Mynach Park, etc) but these are typically not located on the periphery of Town Centres. Consequently there is a need to ensure that any charging strategy for the courthouse car park recognises its unique position as a car park which serves the new play area as well as being on the periphery of the town centre. A review of the charging has therefore been undertaken in accordance with the previous Cabinet recommendation (to consider 3 hours free parking) and the recommendations of the task and finish group referred to above. This review has concluded that the optimum charging mechanism is to offer the first hour free (which will encourage use of the play area) and to charge for all periods thereafter in accordance with current tariffs This will avoid the car park filling with users of the town centre to the detriment of the play area).

5.4 The proposed period of free parking will encourage families that typically arrive by car to make use of the new play area. It is considered that a 1-hour period of free parking will provide adequate time for the majority of play area visits.

5.5 The proposed tariffs are therefore:

- Up to 1 hour – Free (NEW)
- Up to 2 hours – 90p (existing)
- Up to 3 hours - £1.10 (existing)
- Up to 4 hours - £1.40 (existing)
- Daily – £2.20 (existing)
- Weekly - £10.00 (existing)

5.6 The tariffs will apply to blue badge holders, however they may park for 1 additional hour free after the expiry time shown on their ticket.

5.7 The proposed tariff changes will require the car park ticket machine software and existing traffic regulation order to be varied which will take in the order of 3-4 months to complete.

5.8 **Conclusion**

The proposed period of free parking will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing by encouraging families to make use of the new play area.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 The assumption is that by offering a period of parking at no cost it will encourage people to visit the play area.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has identified a positive impact as it enables the public to make use of the play facility at no cost when arriving by car, which will promote health and wellbeing. Encouraging use of the play area should promote healthy lifestyle choices that the families will adopt throughout their lives increasing long term health and wellbeing. It will also enable parents/guardians to utilise the car park free of charge when picking up/dropping off children at Libanus Primary School.

[Link to IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Estimated annual income loss from ticket sales - £2k and will result in a reduction in budget available within the Infrastructure Division
- 8.2 Estimated cost to amend tariff boards, reprogramme pay and display machine software and arrange Public Notice in press - £2.5k.
- 8.3 The above costs will be absorbed within the Infrastructure Division's budget.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The comments of all consultees have been incorporated into the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Author: Dean Smith, Principal Engineer

Consultees: Councillor Tudor Davies Chair Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Adrian Hussey Vice Chair Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor James Pritchard Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways
Councillor Mike Adams, Pontllanfraith Ward Member
Councillor Patricia Cook, Pontllanfraith Ward Member
Councillor Colin J Gordon, Pontllanfraith Ward Member
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive.
Mark S. Williams Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure

Mike Headington, Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer

Background Papers:

[Report to Cabinet, 22/7/2020 – Construction of a replacement play area, Pontllanfraith](#)