

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	COMMUNITIES
DATE OF MEETING	1 October 2014
TITLE	Parking Review
AUTHOR	Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department Councillor W Gareth Roberts
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr W. Gareth Roberts
PURPOSE	To invite the Committee's observations on options and to make suggestions relating to parking management in Gwynedd.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Gwynedd Council's parking policies and procedures have remained largely unchanged since 2007. They were therefore overdue for a review in order to reassess whether the present management arrangements meet the Council's and those of the Communities it represents. A review of the appropriateness of the current fee structure was also
- 1.2 Existing parking management arrangements and ideas and options for the future have been discussed informally at several meetings over the past eighteen months. Those discussions were led by myself, as Cabinet Member, so that priorities and direction could be established and consideration given to the research work that had been undertaken. The work also included an assessment of how parking was managed in other counties.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Committee discussed the matter on the 10th December, 2013. At that time the Committee asked me for a further report when work had progressed to develop principles, priorities, options and clear recommendations.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to consider aspects of parking management and consider options on how they may be managed in the future in line with the Authority's aspirations. Recommendations have been made on each aspect considered with a rationale as to why the option should be adopted as well as outlining the possible financial, local economy and environmental impacts

- 2.2 I would be the first to acknowledge that parking can be a contentious issue and proposals for parking management can prompt strong feelings from a personal and local perspective. However, we must look at the County as a whole and reviewing the arrangements is inevitable in terms of financial sustainability in this challenging time for the authority's budgets to ensure that our practical management arrangements are effective and efficient.
- 2.3 The report focuses on principles and options and before I develop and report upon definite proposals to the Cabinet, I would appreciate the input and opinion of the Scrutiny Committee on these matters. I accept that some of the proposals will not be to everyone's liking but I believe that what I am submitting will set a direction and context for balanced and effective parking management in Gwynedd for the future.
- 2.4 Of course, if any options or proposals do not appeal, I would be very eager to hear and comprehend the ideas of Committee members on alternative proposals, especially bearing in mind the need to ensure that the parking service makes its contribution to the Council's savings, whether it is by effective working and/or by increasing income streams.
- 2.5 The main headings considered are as follows:
- Criteria for Short Stay and Long Stay, and free parking designation in the Council's off street car parks.
 - Criteria for banding of Cities, Towns and Villages
 - Proposal for car parking fee structure
 - Proposal for additional car parks to become pay and display car parks
 - Proposal/ options for parking during the Christmas period.
 - Proposal/ options on blue badge holders.
 - Proposal for on street parking charges.
 - Proposal for Bus/ Coach parking
 - Annual parking permits
 - Proposal for Residents parking
 - Proposal for parking dispensations management.
 - Management of private car parks
 - Proposed pilot schemes
 - Matters not developed and reasons
 - Considerations for the future

3. CRITERIA FOR SHORT STAY AND LONG STAY, AND FREE PARKING DESIGNATION IN THE COUNCILS OFF STREET CAR PARKS.

- 3.1 Of the 46 Council owned car parks managed by the Transport Service, 17 are designated as Short Stay car parks, 29 as Long Stay and 68 are free. Categorising these car parks has no clear criteria to support their designation, and is largely down to historical circumstances. In general however the Short stay car parks are those situated closer to town centres and long stay car parks further out. Free car parks have no set criteria for designation and consequently there are several inconsistencies resulting from this.

- 3.2 Research shows that a set criteria for designation achieves consistency and fairness. Moreover, it makes us ask the question of what our requirements are from Short and Long stay car parking.
- 3.3 The criteria outlined below is part of the solution of achieving good parking management. The designation of car parks is important, but the type of centre is also important, this is covered in the proposed criteria for banding of Cities, Towns and Villages in Section 4 of this report. The period of stay and encouragement / incentives to stay in an area for longer will come from the car parking fee structure covered in section 5 of this report.
- 3.4 The proposed criteria for the designation of Short and Long stay parking is as follows:

Car parks that are within 50 metres of Town Centres will be designated as Short Stay whilst others will be within the Long Stay category.

4. CRITERIA FOR BANDING OF CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES

- 4.1 Previous agreement that banding of Gwynedd’s centres was a sensible and fair way in which to apply car parking charges has resulted in more research into the criteria of how this has been done elsewhere. The size of the retail area, whether the centre is a tourist area etc. are now included when considering in the banding.
- 4.2 The proposed banding criteria for Gwynedd centres are as follows:

Banding	Criteria
Band 1	Between 350 – 500 retail outlets
Band 2	Between 100 – 350 retail outlets + main market towns
Band 3	Between 50 – 100 retail outlets + seasonally affected towns, villages, coastal, historical and recreational centres.
Band 4	Between 20- 50 retail outlets OR seasonally affected towns, villages, coastal, historical and recreational centres.
Band 5	Fewer than 20 retail outlets

5. PROPOSAL FOR CAR PARKING FEE STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Previous discussions and papers have clearly outlined that effective parking management can not only maintain the local economy but has the potential to develop the local economy. Clearly, the development of the local economy is a fundamental aspiration of Gwynedd Council, and as such the parking fee structure is designed with the following key aspects in mind:

- Short Stay facilities to be for short stay only with a maximum period of stay to encourage turnover of business. These car parks are predominantly for those wishing to conduct one or two matters of business and need to do it quickly.
- Long Stay facilities to be affordable for longer periods to encourage those who do not have time constraints to stay at a centre for longer periods of time
- Have a fee structure that is easy for all to understand
- Apply charges that are reasonable and easily payable
- Apply charges for 24 hour periods to avoid confusion
- Propose some opportunity for free parking during quiet periods to promote high street trade

5.2 The fee structure tables designed to meet with these criteria is shown below:

Band 1

Short Stay Car Parks: No stay longer than 3 hours

1 hour	£1.00	Hours of Enforcement: 08:00 – 18:00
2 hours	£2.00	
3 hours	£3.00	

Long stay Car Parks: Also available to annual permit holders.

The changes proposed do not differ from our current charging period and also do not affect the terms and conditions of the annual parking permit holders in terms of long stay provision.

No seasonal variations

Up to 4 hours	£2.00	Period of enforcement: 24 hours of the day
Up to 8 hours	£3.00	
Up to 12 hours	£4.00	
Up to 24 hours (carries from one day to another)	£5.00	

Band 2

Short Stay Car Parks: No stay longer than 3 hours

1 hour	£1.00	Hours of Enforcement: 10:00 – 16:30
2 hours	£2.00	
3 hours	£3.00	

Long stay Car Parks: Also available to annual permit holders.

The changes proposed do not differ from our current charging period and also do not affect the terms and conditions of the annual parking permit holders in terms of long stay provision.

No seasonal variations

Up to 4 hours	£2.00	Period of enforcement: 24 hours of the day
Up to 8 hours	£3.00	
Up to 12 hours	£4.00	
Up to 24 hours (carries from one day to another)	£5.00	

Band 3

Short Stay: No longer than 3 hours

Summer		
1 hour	£1.00	Hours of Enforcement 8:00 – 18:00
2 hour	£2.00	
3 hour	£3.00	
Winter		
1 hour	£1.00	Hours of Enforcement 10:00:00 – 16:30:00
2 hour	£2.00	
3 hour	£3.00	

Long Stay: Also available to permit holders and will be subject to 24 hours enforcement.

Summer		
Up to 4 hours	£3.00	Hours of Enforcement 24 hours
Up to 8 hours	£4.50	
Up to 12 hours	£6.00	
Up to 24 hours	£7.50	

Winter		
Up to 4 hours	£2.00	Hours of Enforcement : 24 hours
Up to 8 hours	£3.00	
Up to 12 hours	£4.00	
Up to 24 hours	£5.00	

Band 4

Long Stay: Also available to annual permit holders

Up to 4 hours	£1.00	Period of enforcement: 24 Hours
Up to 8 hours	£2.00	
Up to 12 hours	£3.00	
Up to 24 hours (carries from one day to another)	£4.00	

Band 5

Free Parking

- 5.3 I stress that the fees noted in each band are initial suggestions. The matter will have to be considered further in the context of developing a business plan after a decision on preferred options has been made.

6. PROPOSAL FOR PARKING DURING THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

- 6.1 There are numerous options of addressing parking at Christmas ranging from doing nothing at all to a free parking proposal that would cost the Council some £100,000 per annum. What is important when considering this matter is that the proposal actually meets what is required which is to encourage shoppers to Gwynedd's City and Towns to shop during the build up to Christmas.

- 6.2 Again, the proposal needs to be clear and easily understood. The arrangements put in place for Christmas 2013 were followed up by questionnaires which highlighted that most

businesses and shoppers believed it to be beneficial and hence successful. It is therefore proposed that these arrangements are adopted for the next 2 years and monitored. The findings should be reviewed afterwards and adapted over the years. The arrangements proposed for parking during the Christmas period are as follows:

Proposal	Estimated Cost (£)
Free from the weekend preceding the first full week leading up to the Christmas week. Charges reapplied on 27 th December.	Up to £40,000.00

7. PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL CAR PARKS TO BECOME PAY AND DISPLAY CAR PARKS

7.1 If one follows the recommended criteria for designation of Short stay, Long stay and free car parks (section 3), and the recommended banding criteria (section 4) this would result in 1,463 additional car parking facilities becoming pay and display car parks which should generate some additional annual revenue.

7.2 The intention, in developing the business plan, is to use Income estimates based on sensitivity analysis to establish the most likely additional revenue from these car parks:

Arfon	Des.	Banding	Spaces
Shell site, Caernarfon	Long	2	160
Two Car Parks situated on Beach Road, Hirael, Bangor	Long	4	20 + 50
Cae Star, Bethesda	Short	3	55
Pant Dreiniog, Bethesda	Long	3	70
Main Car Park, Groeslon, Caernarfon	Long	5	40
Main Car Park, Talysarn, Caernarfon	Long	5	100
Main Car Park, Penygroes	Long	4	80
Dwyfor	Des.	Banding	Spaces
Car Park near the Black Lion Pub, Pwllheli	Long	2	63
Penmount, Pwllheli	Long	2	59
Traeth y De, Pwllheli	Short	2	15
Rear of Lombard Street, Porthmadog	Long	2	30
Borth y Gest, Porthmadog	Long	2	60
Cei Bach, Porthmadog	Long	2	18
Abereistedd, Criccieth	Long	3	20
Car Park, Porth Neigwl	Long	4	25
Afonfawr, Penllech, Pen Llyn	Long	4	40
Glan Pwll, Nefyn	Long	4	50
Y Ddol, Nefyn	Long	4	50
Trefor	Des.	Banding	Spaces
Beach Car Park, Trefor	Long	4	60
Colwyn Banc, Beddgelert	Long	4	50

Meirionnydd	Des.	Banding	Spaces
Talbot Square, Barmouth	Short	2	40
Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdovey	Long	3	30
Castle Hotel, Harlech	Short	3	25
Rhodfa'r Mor, Tywyn	Long	3	114
Cae Bach, Tywyn	Long	3	60
Main Car Park, Penrhyndeudraeth	Long	4	40
Main Car Park, Trawsfynydd	Long	4	19

7.3 It should be noted that there is a need for capital investment to introduce pay and display facilities in these additional car parks in order to install the necessary electricity supply, machines and signage. The estimate of the cost of individual items for modifying car parks is as follows:

Description	£
Supply and installation of 1 P&D Machine (per 50 spaces)	3,200
Signs & Lines	1,700
Electricity Cost (Yearly)	400
Legal Costs (Traffic Orders, Consultation & Advertising)	1,500

7.4 The cost of modifying individual car parks could be up to £20,000. The initial estimate of the necessary capital to undertake all these modifications is around £400,000. The annual revenue required to maintain and manage the assets is also a consideration in the business plan. If this is implemented, the work would be programmed over two or three financial years.

8. PROPOSAL / OPTIONS ON BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

8.1 There has been an initial consultation on the options available to deal with blue badge parking provision. Broadly the options are as follows:

- Free parking for blue badge holders in P+D car parks (as present)
- Free parking in Long stay facilities only
- Free parking for a limited period
- Introducing a permit system
- Charge blue badge holders the same fee as other users

8.2 The recommendation of the consultation was to adopt a permit system. This was dependant on the fact that revenues generated from the permits issued should be 'ring fenced' and used to improve access facilities in general on streets.

8.3 It has been estimated that it would take six months to develop such a scheme and the annual revenue generated (based on a season ticket costing £30 per annum at that time) would be up to £30,000 per annum. The price of an annual ticket would have to be examined again if it is decided to proceed with this option.

- 8.4 It should be noted that prior to implementing such a scheme a full equality impact assessment and further consultation would be required. This may take 9 to 12 months to complete for the whole of the County.
- 8.5 Gwynedd Council's current procedures gives leniency for the first offence of any parking contravention by Blue Badge Holders. This costs the authority approximately £22,000.00 per annum.
- 8.6 It is proposed that there should not be such an arrangement in place and contraventions of blue badge holders should be dealt with in the same manner as other cases.

9. PROPOSAL FOR ON STREET PARKING CHARGES

- 9.1 There is certainly scope for on-street charging in Cities, Towns and other centres. This may generate revenues, but equally in some cases could have an adverse effect on the local economy, especially for those wishing to 'pop in' to shops as passing trade.
- 9.2 The research previously presented clearly outlines that effective parking management means that there is a good mix of free short term parking as well as managed facilities for those wishing to spend longer period in centres. Therefore, limited waiting bays providing free parking for short periods in centres provides an essential function for those wishing to undertake those errands that are quick, and supports the local economy.
- 9.3 There are however some areas that would benefit from on-street parking charges as a way to manage the street effectively. Gwynedd already has such provisions at the Promenade in Barmouth and at Pen-y-Gwryd. Such areas compliment the off-street parking facilities available and help in attaining a good balance of on and off street parking where no short term parking is required.
- 9.4 The recommended locations, number of spaces and estimated revenue opportunity for on-street parking facilities are outlined in the table below

Location	Spaces
Ffordd y Cob, Pwllheli	37
Promenade, Pwllheli	168
Promenade, Tywyn	102

Total Spaces
307

10. PROPOSAL FOR BUS/ COACH PARKING

- 10.1 Attracting Coach Tours to Gwynedd’s tourist centres is very important to the local economy. Support for those coaches in terms of adequate parking facilities, that are adequately signed is also important, and dedicated coach parking would ensure that spaces were available for those wishing to visit the key tourist destinations.
- 10.2 Providing and dedicating spaces for coaches at car parks would require the sacrifice of some car parking spaces, and therefore would incur some loss of revenue. It is therefore reasonable to apply a parking fee on visiting coaches
- 10.3 The recommended fees for coach parking at Long stay facilities only within the 4 bands recommended are outlined in the table as follows:

Fees
£3.00 Half Day - £4.00 Whole

Location	Spaces
Shell Site, Caernarfon	8
Maes Car Park, Criccieth	2
Iard yr Orsaf, Porthmadog	7
Green Car Park, Bala	9
Black Patch Car Park, Barmouth	10
Diffwys Square, Blaenau Ffestiniog	2
Min y Don Car Park, Harlech	6
Marian Car Park, Dolgellau	2

Total Spaces
46

*** Based on 30% of capacity

11. PROPOSAL FOR ANNUAL PARKING PERMITS

- 11.1 The current annual parking permit policy and fees have been in place since the last full parking review during 2007. The uptake on annual permits is surprisingly low considering the value for money they offer, with about 1200 Gwynedd residents purchasing permits annually for £100. The permit fee for those residing outside of Gwynedd is £200, and the uptake is extremely low at about 29 Permits annually.
- 11.2 The apparent low uptake of annual permits is not really a problem in terms of the operation and management of parking in Gwynedd. However, it is a good offer, and could benefit from improved marketing. The differential fees for those residing outside Gwynedd seem to be a disincentive for the purchase of the annual permits, and may be seen as parochial.
- 11.3 The proposal regarding annual permits is twofold:

- 11.3.1 Improve the marketing for the annual permits to encourage greater uptake and promote as good news.
- 11.3.2 Do away with the differential fees for Gwynedd and non-Gwynedd residents, and have a fee that is £100 annually for all.
- 11.3.3 As the fee for a ticket has not increased since 2007, the fee level would have to be examined in detail as part of the business case.

12. PROPOSAL FOR RESIDENTS PARKING

- 12.1 The current residents parking policy was necessary in order that that the Council would recover its costs in adopting a resident's parking scheme at any location. The current scheme broadly allows a resident to have a permit for up to 2 cars. The current costs for this are £50 for the first car and £80 for the second. There have been a few successful residents parking schemes in Gwynedd, and a few areas have declined the introduction of a scheme following consultation.
- 12.2 It is proposed to keep this policy the same as the balance seems to be correct at present with the uptake and fees. The fee has not increased since the plans were established and, therefore, the fee will have to be reviewed as part of the development of the business case.

13. PROPOSAL FOR PARKING DISPENSATIONS MANAGEMENT.

- 13.1 Parking dispensation are short term permits issued to companies or individuals needing to undertake activities which necessitates them to park in areas with parking restrictions. There is a weekly fee for this which is £20.00 for 7 consecutive days. The fee for companies using locations such as Bangor city centre and Castle Square in Caernarfon for tables and trading is £200.000.
- 13.2 The proposal for parking dispensation management is to keep the arrangements as at present. However, I propose to review the fees to reflect inflation and administrative costs.

14. MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE CAR PARKS

- 14.1 The Transportation Service has been successful in attracting and undertaking management operations including enforcement, inspections, maintenance, cash collection for numerous private car parks. The details at the managed sites and the number and annual income are as follows:

Location	Commission	Spaces
Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor	Management & Enforcement	1,867
Menai Car Park, Bangor	Management & Enforcement	403
Y Galeri, Caernarfon	Management & Enforcement	20
Ysbyty Alltwen, Tremadog	Enforcement	140
Lon y Felin, Felinheli	Enforcement	41

*it should be noted that the CADW car park is currently under construction, therefore no agreement is in place until further negotiations are conducted with CADW.

** currently no enforcement in undertaken at this location on the request of the land owner.

Total Spaces
2,496

14.2 There are variations in the scope of activities and the financial arrangements of the bodies which have commissioned Gwynedd Council to provide these services. This is unavoidable and covers enforcement and administrative costs to meets the needs of the land owners concerned under individual Agreements.

14.3 Contracting with private / public bodies to manage car parking is clearly an income generating opportunity, but the agreements and fees should be regularly reviewed and monitored against the actual costs of managing the assets. This will ensure that the activities are not costing the Authority more than the fees generated.

14.4 The proposal is to continue with current arrangements but monitor the actual costs to the Council of undertaking these activities on behalf of external bodies/companies and act on any loss making situation by renegotiating or terminating the agreement.

15. PROPOSED PILOT SCHEMES

15.1 Cashless Payment:

15.1.1 The Authority's pay and display machines require those using them to have coins and do not give change if the correct amount is not deposited into the machine. This has been a subject of some negative press coverage.

15.1.2 There are annual costs of some £36,450 to a private company to empty the coins in pay and display machines on an annual basis.

15.1.3 There have been a few incidents where the pay and display machines have been broken into and the cash taken, thus incurring not only the loss in cash but also ongoing revenue loss due to machines being out of commission.

15.1.4 The new fee structure as proposed in Section 5 makes the situation far easier for users as the fees for periods are rounder to a full £1, this however does not allow further incremental future increases in parking fees in line with inflation etc.

15.1.5 The proposal is to pilot some cashless options by introducing pay and display machines where people may pay with credit / debit cards or even by phone. Having piloted and researched further the technology available and associated costs, the new machines could be phased in over a period of time as the current pay and display machines come to the end of their operational lives.

16. MATTERS NOT DEVELOPED AFTER INITIAL CONSIDERATION AND REASONS

16.1 Pay on exit

16.1.1 It is accepted that pay on exit can allow those parking the flexibility to stay in centres for longer than anticipated periods without the fear of receiving a parking ticket.

16.1.2 There are significant installation and maintenance (on call) costs associated with pay on exit arrangements, and due to the drain on staff time and financial resources this option has been discounted and not developed as part of this review. Also the installation and operation of a pay on exit system would impede entering and egressing car parks where “turn over” of parking spaces is significant. In addition, parking spaces would be lost to accommodate the installation and operation of such a system.

16.2 Automatic number plate recognition.

16.2.1 This technology allows Civil Enforcement Officers to use camera technology to establish whether or not certain vehicles have paid and displayed in the Council’s off-street car parks.

16.2.2 There would need to be significant investment in order to ensure the successful implementation of such a system. The pay and display machines would need to be changed to a type where the number plate of the vehicle would need to be inputted. There would also be a need for a central database to check the data gathered in car parks.

16.2.3 Due to the significant capital set up costs and complicated system, this option has been discounted and not developed further as part of this review

16.3 CCTV enforcement

- 16.3.1 CCTV enforcement may be used to enforce parking contraventions in areas covered by CCTV e.g. High Street environment. Those contravening the parking order would receive a penalty charge notice by post.
- 16.3.2 This system is adopted in some city centres but is seen as impersonal. There is also a high set up cost and complications with the quality of CCTV cameras required.
- 16.3.3 Due to costs, complexity and negative and impersonal image, this option has been discounted and has not been developed further as part of this review.

17. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

17.1 Car parking assets in other departments:

- 17.1.1 It is clear that the Council own many car parks in Country Parks, Leisure Centres etc. And there is clearly a different management regime on how different Departments within the Council deal with the assets.
- 17.1.2 As the Council is seen by the general public to be one homogeneous body it is considered that it would be worth adopting the proposals outlined in this review to all parking assets under the Council's ownership
- 17.1.3 It is proposed that after this review, that further work is undertaken to identify other parking assets in the County and establish what revenue could be generated from these assets if the proposals set out in this review were adopted.

18. RECOMMENDATION

- 18.1 I invite the observations of the Scrutiny Committee on the options and proposals, along with the Committee's suggestions for alternative plans so that I am able to consider the matter in its entirety during this very challenging financial period.