

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION & STREETSCENE SERVICES**  
**CABINET BOARD**

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**Joint Report of the Head of Engineering & Transport – David W. Griffiths and the Head of Support Services & Transformation – Rhiannon Crowhurst**

**Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:**

Neath North

**Patrons Car Parking Scheme for Neath Leisure Centre and Gwyn Hall**

**Purpose of the Report:**

To agree arrangements in relation to the provision of car parking and specifically the arrangements that relate to patrons using the new Neath leisure centre.

**Executive Summary:**

There is a need to decide if patrons of the new Neath leisure centre are required to pay for parking or are given free car parking as part of their monthly membership.

**Background:**

Following Cabinets decision to insource the Celtic Leisure Service back to the local authority, arrangements will now need to be addressed with regards to patrons using Neath multi-storey car park whilst using the new leisure facility. The proposed operating hours for the leisure centre are:

Day	Time
Monday - Friday	6.15 am - 9.45 pm
Saturday - Sunday	8.00 am - 7.45 pm

In order for staff to have adequate time to open and close the building, the car park would need to open half an hour before and after the leisure centre opening and closing times.

This along with the additional hours that the Gwyn Hall require, subsequently mean the new car parking operational hours will be:

Day	Time
Monday to Saturday	5:45 am to 11:00 pm
Sunday	7:30 am to 8:30 pm

Currently the Neath multi-storey car park is open for 82.5 hours per week but will increase to 116.5 hours per week. The new operational times will lead to an additional 34 hours per week that the car park would need to remain open. These lead to extra security, lighting and electricity costs that will need to be budgeted for.

To accommodate the new arrangements the current tariff charge that operates from 08.00am to 18.00pm Monday to Saturday and Sundays 09.00am to 17.00pm will also have to be legally advertised and amended accordingly.

It is proposed to change the tariff structure in this car park to reflect the proposed opening hours so all non-leisure centre or sports club members will be required to pay and display between 06.00am until 23.00pm, Monday to Saturday and 07.30am until 20.30pm on Sundays.

#### Leisure Services Requirements:

The Local Government Association has recognised that leisure centres have an intrinsic value to society, and they play an important role in tackling health inequalities and social isolation, improving educational outcomes, promoting community cohesion and generating economic growth; making local areas attractive places to live, work and play. They will also be essential to the recovery of individuals suffering from long-COVID.

Celtic leisure like all operators including local authority providers generate significant income from Direct Debit (DD) paying members, be it for gym membership or Swim schools. Taking into consideration that indoor leisure is transferring to the council in April 2023, and there is no separate charge for parking at other leisure centres, it is proposed that the car parking charge is included in patron's monthly DD payment and no additional charge is levied. Members pay via DD as the package is

attractive, if an additional charge is levied for parking every time they visit the centre the package becomes less attractive and will result in membership being cancelled, resulting in loss of income for Celtic leisure and post April 23 for the Council.

It is further proposed that clients who visit the centre to attend the National exercise referral scheme (NERS) delivered by the Physical activity and sport service (PASS), also have car parking charge included in their session payment which is set by Public Health Wales who fund the programme nationally. NERS clients are amongst the most vulnerable residents in our communities, clients will have been referred to the programme by a health practitioner and will be recovering from serious illness such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart attack, cancer and strokes.

Day users will be expected to pay and display if they choose to use council car parks, while sports club members will be entitled to free car parking through the use of the software recommended above.

### Software Solutions.

Parking services have been in dialogue with their software supplier to ascertain which of the current products would allow patrons to park and utilise the leisure centre. They have advised that Leisure services acquire a 15" POD (Tablet for entering VRNs) so patrons can present their membership card to the RFID reader, which will then give them or leisure centre receptionists access to enter their Vehicle Registration Number to give them four hours free parking. When Direct Debit paying members cancel their membership, on cancellation of their Membership id card, the software will automatically update the system and the POD will no longer allow the users free parking.

In the interim period parking enforcement officers will allow a fifteen minute observation period to allow permitted leisure centre users time to give their registration to leisure centre reception. These registrations will need to be emailed to [parkingpermits@npt.gov.uk](mailto:parkingpermits@npt.gov.uk) immediately to avoid a penalty charge notice being issued.

## **Financial Impacts:**

The additional revenue and one off costs as set out below will be offset by the number of new direct debit paying leisure centre members anticipated to be in excess of 200 people to cover the additional budget costs.

### Security

The additional security for the car park will equate to 27k per annum.

### Electricity

The additional opening hours will result in a 41% increase in electricity usage which at the current tariff will equate to £9,171 per annum. The current electricity tariff is expected to increase in April when renewed.

### Information Technology

This application requires a stand £383.00 or wall mounted kit £92.00 and a specialist POD £1231.00 including RFID reader at current prices. Lead times on these are around 6-8 months at the moment. Prices are changing regularly so the supplier cannot commit to price staying the same until order is placed. Configuration Cost £1000.00 - Support £250 per year – Running costs 5p per activation.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included in Appendices A.

## **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

No implications.

## **Workforce Impacts:**

No implications

**Legal Impacts:**

There will be need to change and advertise the off-street car parking order and schedule.

**Risk Management Impacts:**

Offering free car parking to leisure centre members and sports clubs requires them to log in their car through the hardware that will be installed in the leisure centre. There will be a 5p cost for each transaction that will need to be absorbed by Education/Leisure Services. It is not possible to exactly predict how many transactions will be generated each day.

Should no scheme be implemented for Direct Debit paying customers and clubs then there is a significant risk that patronage of the new Neath leisure centre will be negatively impacted.

**Consultation:**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendations:**

Having due regard to the first stage Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommend that:

- Members note that the additional costs of circa 45K will be offset against the uptake in new monthly direct debit paying leisure centre members to cover the costs associated with longer car park opening hours, including additional security, increased electricity costs, equipment and software required to facilitate the new leisure centre and car parking operational arrangements.
- The opening hours of Neath multi-storey car park are increased in line with operational times of the new leisure centre and Gwyn Hall.

Monday to Saturday	5:45 am to 11:00 pm
Sunday	7:30 am to 8:30 pm

- That the charging tariff times are changed to correspond with the proposed opening hours.

Monday to Saturday	5:45 am to 11:00 pm
Sunday	7:30 am to 8:30 pm

- Approval be granted for ELLL officers to purchase the hardware and software solutions to facilitate the new arrangements as set out in the circulated report.
- That ongoing support costs for the hardware and software solution of £250 per annum be met from the increased number of leisure centres users and be managed through the leisure services budget.
- That the £6,500 cost of daily activations of parking for direct debit members and sports clubs, currently 5p per transaction be met from the increased number of leisure centres users and be managed through the leisure services budget.
- Members agree that monthly direct debit members, sports club members belonging to Neath swimming club, Polar bear swimming club and Neath Tri as well as clients attending the leisure centre through the National exercise referral scheme be entitled to free car parking through the use of the software recommended above as part of the proposal.
- Members agree that ad-hoc daily users of the Gwyn Hall and Neath leisure centre pay for parking when using council owned carparks.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To enable patron's access to convenient parking when attending the new leisure centre and to encourage growth in Leisure Memberships and to sustain the local sports and swimming clubs.

### **Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

### **Appendices:**

A - Integrated Impact Assessment

## **List of Background Papers:**

No background paper

## **Officer Contacts:**

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