

Report of the:

**Environment, Regeneration and Street
scene Services Scrutiny Committee**

**A Task and Finish Group to Review
of the Parking Review Options
Report 2023**

May 2023



Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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CHAIRS FORWARD

The report below is the result of three ‘task and finish’ meetings of the scrutiny committee members and officers, as well as other discussions and member officer meetings. I would like to thank all members and officers for their time in looking at these proposals in detail.

By way of context, the need for this piece of work has arisen mainly due to two factors:

The first being that the parking service income has not recovered since the pandemic and has a £100,000 shortfall in its budget.

Secondly in the 2023/24 budget an additional £200,000 income target was placed upon the parking service by the administration.

A report with options was presented to scrutiny committee to make recommendations on - with the primary aim of raising additional income for the service in line with the budget. The scrutiny committee has no influence at this stage over the previously agreed budget position by the administration.

The scrutiny committee has also previously indicated it wished to explore options for some free bus services, in line with neighbouring councils.

In order to make the income target agreed in the budget many of the options presented to us for increased parking fees are now unavoidable at this stage. Therefore the committee has focussed on how to best mitigate the impact of these proposed increases on our residents and businesses.

We have not made recommendations on every option in the proposals, only those where we feel an amendment will both be beneficial and deliverable given the budget position.

The decision of the final charges and options will be taken by the cabinet board, who will take on board our recommendations contained within this report.

Councillor Sean Pursey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members of the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee undertook a Task and Finish Group to consider and review the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's ("the Council") Parking Options 2023. The overall purpose of this was to look at options for parking and transport solutions to support the vitality of town centres and support sustainable transport with a view to agreeing a set of recommendations for Cabinet Board to consider ..

The Task and Finish Group met for three workshop sessions to focus specifically within Parking Review Options Report 2023.

The Task and Finish Group held two workshop sessions with officers on the 28th of April and the 10th of May to gather all information required to develop recommendations. Members then had a summary workshop on the 18th of May to pull together their recommendations. A summary of the discussions is included within the report.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Environment, Regeneration and Street scene Services Scrutiny Committee are the appropriate scrutiny committee for the consideration of the Parking Review Options Report 2023.

The Committee were keen to arrange a Task and Finish Group to consider the Christmas Parking options for 2023. Officers had completed a report on Parking Options Review 2023 that included Christmas parking as part of it.

The overall purpose of this Task and Finish group was to look at options for parking and transport solutions to support the vitality of town centres and support sustainable transport with a view to agreeing a set of recommendations for Cabinet Board to consider. .

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Task and Finish Objective	To look at options for parking and transport solutions to support the vitality of town centres and support sustainable transport with a view to agreeing a set of proposals for Cabinet Board to decision.
Membership	<u>Elected Members</u> Cllr. S. Pursey (Chair) Cllr. T. Bowen (Vice chair) Cllr. L. Williams Cllr. W. Carpenter Cllr. C. James Cllr. N. Goldup-John Cllr. S. Grimshaw <u>Advisors/Support Officers</u> Charlotte Davies Tom Rees Alison Thomas David W. Griffiths Steve Cook Ian Rees Brendan Griffiths

	<p>Andrew Collins Laura Webley Chris Saunders</p> <p>Dependent on discussion of the committee, further officers/ external providers be invited at the discretion of the Chair.</p>
The main aims of the Project	To enable the Task and Finish Group to explore and suggest recommendations to the Cabinet Members on the Parking Review Options Report 2023 including Christmas parking options, prior to decision by Cabinet Board.
Scope of the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the Task and Finish group to feed in to the suggested recommendations of the Parking Review Options report • To consider periodic free or subsidised sustainable transport schemes • To provide an effective service for all members of the public. • To ensure that there is an effective and efficient service for the public.
How it will contribute to achieving Corporate/Community Objectives / Priorities.	<p>The proposals suggested aim to aid service recovery, increase income generated and enhance Town Centre footfall, and support the council’s commitment to sustainable transport.</p> <p>Any increases in revenue should be used to offset the £100,000 deficit in income 2022/23 and to generate an additional £200K income target set by the Council for 2023/24.</p>
Initial list of key officers, stakeholders, partners or other agencies to involve	Officers – as stated above

<p>Key issues to be addressed</p>	<p>That the Task and Finish group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that the proposals suggested in the report will aid service recovery, increase income generated and enhance Town Centre footfall and comply with our commitments to promote sustainable transport. • Look at Christmas parking arrangements. • Look at measures that will help offset the combined £300,000 income deficit during 2023/2024 to be achieved by the Council. • Look at measures to introduce free or subsidised sustainable transport schemes. • Has undertaken it's pre-scrutiny duty in relation to Cabinet Board proposals
<p>Timescale for completion of the task</p>	<p>Three day Task and finish group – Any findings to be taken to the Environment, Regeneration and Street Scene Services Scrutiny Committee due to be held on the 2nd June 2023 to commend the Task and Finish Groups views to the Cabinet Board prior to decision in June</p>
<p>Meeting Dates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28th April 2023 • 10th May 2023 • 18th May 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the following recommendations be considered and agreed by Cabinet Board:

1. Care worker on street parking permit cost to stay the same and not increase.
2. Resident Permits – It is proposed that permits are increased from £20.00 to £25.00 to stay at a cost neutral position and increase annually thereafter to cover costs.
3. The middle (10%) option is chosen for Town Centre tariffs, the funding gap over the 15% option funded by Recommendation 4.
4. Remove free Christmas parking offer for town centres, budget used to fund lower increase on Recommendation 3.
5. Introduce free travel on the local bus network within the County Borough for the six Saturdays and Sundays leading up to Christmas.
6. Promote the use of season permits for the regular users of the car parks for residents to access discounted parking.
7. Seafront - Change the seasonal charging start date to 1st of April to capture an extra months income, in line with Bridgend county.
8. Seafront - Change the hours of charging to fall between 9am - 6pm for off and on street car parking.
9. Seafront – Off-season free parking for 2 hours in lay-by/ on street parking to remain.
10. Seafront - Introduce charges to the lay-by/on street parking bays along the seafront (during peak season only)
11. Seafront - Officers should explore overnight campervan parking options.
12. Seafront - Undertake a review of mitigation measures and on street parking restrictions nearby, to mitigate the impacts of the charging increases.

Additional Measures/Recommendations:

The Task and Finish Group also propose the following additional recommendations :

1. Provide an extra hour free on top of current tariffs to blue badge holders.
2. Explore a Visitors Parking Permit that would cover all car parks / attractions in the county (to include country parks).

3. Review all changes in a year, with an update report in six months time, to include – data on car park income and usage, town centre/seafront footfall and any other relevant feedback.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The following Members of the Environment, regeneration and Street scene Services Scrutiny Committee took part in the Task and Finish Group:

Cllr. S. Pursey (Chair)
Cllr. T. Bowen (Vice chair)
Cllr. L. Williams
Cllr. W. Carpenter
Cllr. C. James
Cllr. N. Goldup-John
Cllr. S. Grimshaw

Members were provided with support from the following officers:

Tom Rees
Alison Thomas
David W. Griffiths
Steve Cook
Ian Rees
Brendan Griffiths
Andrew Collins
Laura Webley
Chris Saunders

Members were provided with the Parking Review Options Report 2023 to consider and to ensure that the Scrutiny Committee undertook and discharged their scrutiny role.

On-street Parking Permits

- On-street Parking Permits – Members felt that Care worker permit costs should stay the same and does not increase.
- Resident Permits – Members proposed that as a minimum, permits are increased from £20.00 to £25.00 to stay at a cost neutral position and increase annually.

The Task and Finish Group felt that the Residents Permits Costs be reviewed in a year's time to ensure that the costs are correct and factor in current inflation and costs and to avoid sudden large cost increases.

Off Street Parking

Members decided that there should be an Increase all parking charges due to budget pressure to one of the new 10% Tariff Town Centre Pay and Display Tariffs.

Members felt that there should be a removal of free Christmas parking and instead spread the free parking across the year to maintain the 10% increase.

Task and Finish group members wished to keep free travel on the local bus network within the County Borough for the six Saturdays and Sundays leading up to Christmas. For Christmas 2023, those dates would be November 18th, 19th, 25th, 26th and December 02nd, 03rd, 09th, 10th, 16th, 17th, 24th and 25th.

The Task and Finish Group suggested a review of the free bus travel of Option 5 at a scrutiny meeting in six months time, once the bus service situation regarding routes and funding is settled with Welsh government and Transport for Wales.

Season Permits

Members felt that the authority should promote the use of season permits for the regular users of the car parks.

The Task and Finish Group suggested that Parking should work with the Communications team to promote Season Permits.

Seafront

Members recommended the following;

- Change the seasonal charging start date to 1st of April to capture an extra months income.
- Change the hours of charging to fall between 9am - 6pm.
- Offseason free parking for 2 hours.

The Task and finish group felt that the change from the current seasonal arrangements of May – September to start in April, would fall in line with

Bridgend and Porthcawl. The additional month would increase income for the authority.

It was felt that changing the hours to 9am -6pm would take pressure off residents and put emphasis on visitors paying as they are more likely to park during daytime hours.

Task and Finish Group members believe that having free parking for 2 hours in offseason would support businesses.

Seafront

Members also wanted to put forward the following recommendations.

- Introduce charges to the free parking bays along the seafront (during peak season.)
- Officers should explore Campervan Parking options.
- Undertake a review of mitigation measures and on street parking restrictions nearby, to mitigate the impacts of the charging increases.

Additional Measures/Recommendations:

The Task and Finish Group also wished to propose the following considerations:

- Blue badge concessions – provide an extra hour free on top of current tariffs to blue badge holders.
- Visitors Parking Permit that would cover all car parks / attractions in the county –to explore further (to include country parks).
- Review all changes in a year – data car park usage/income etc. and see if they have worked.

Members felt that providing the extra hour for Blue Badge holders would be in line with other neighbouring authorities. It was felt that a visitor parking permit could be lucrative for the authority and should be explored by officers.

Members also felt it was important to review all changes in a year to check if changes have had a positive impact.