

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

10TH MARCH 2024

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Revised Staff and Member Car Parking Scheme

Matter: For Decision

Purpose of Report

To propose revised arrangements in relation to the Staff and Member Car Parking Scheme.

Background

The Staff and Member Car Parking Scheme was first implemented in 2011, as part of several measures agreed under the Workforce Strategy Collective Agreement, and with the aim of avoiding compulsory redundancies. The terms of the Scheme have been updated since 2011. The Scheme states:

“The income generated through the operation of this Scheme will continue to contribute to the safeguarding of the employment of all Neath Port Talbot employees to the maximum extent possible, as part of the Council’s Forward Financial Plan”.

The Scheme sets out a framework for charging council staff and elected members who park in pay and display car parks or Civic Office car parks, either via a purchased parking permit, or using pay and display parking at the appropriate tariff.

The current fees are:

Tariff A - All Designated Car Parks (except Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Contractual Hours of Work	Annual Charge	Monthly Equivalent
23 hours pw, or more	£180 pa	£15
Less than 23 hours per week	£90 pa	£7.50

Tariff B - Barrier Car Park at Port Talbot Civic Centre

Contractual Hours of Work	Annual Charge	Monthly Equivalent
23 hours pw, or more	£234 pa	£19.50
Less than 23 hours per week	£117pa	£9.75

The scheme contains specific arrangements for Blue Badge holders and employees with short term mobility difficulties.

Income generation

The current scheme was budgeted to generate income of £208K per annum from staff and Members

Suspension of payments

On 23rd March 2020, the Welsh Government introduced a series of measures designed to curb the spread of the Covid 19 virus pandemic and protect the nation. This became known as 'lockdown'. For a period,

many businesses and workplaces were closed, and only key workers could attend their place of work. In June 2020, the instruction changed to 'those who can work at home must work at home'.

In accordance with the guidance from Welsh Government, the majority of the council's office-based workforce, approximately 2,000 employees, became home workers in March 2020 and the decision was taken to suspend the payments associated with the car parking scheme. This decision was taken via an Urgency Action dated 1st May 2020, to suspend off-street charging and on-street enforcement and the payments have not yet been re-instated. It is important to note that whilst payments have been suspended, carpark permits have continued to be issued, now as a virtual permit via the Mi Permit Application – employees must have a valid virtual permit to park without payment in e.g. Neath or Port Talbot multi-storey carparks.

Hybrid Working

The introduction of Hybrid working which enables employees and elected members to work in a much more flexible and mobile way, working where the particular work activity can best be carried out. It is evidenced that the majority of employees in our Civic Centres, spend the majority of their working week outside of the workplace, whether it is working at home or out in the community.

Proposal

As a result of the changes in the workplace, it is proposed to withdraw the Staff and Member Car parking Scheme, and replace with a permit scheme that will enable employees and elected members to park without payment in a restricted number of carparks associated with their place of work, e.g.,

Port Talbot and Neath multi-storey car parks and The Quays. The draft proposed scheme is attached at appendix 1.

Financial Impacts:

This proposal will have no impact on the parking budget as this has previously been corrected to reflect the fact that no income has been payable since March 2020.

Integrated impact assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, 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, attached at appendix 2 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Impacts.

Workforce Impacts:

There will no longer be a requirement for employees to pay for car parking in designated council car parks. Employees will be required to hold a valid car parking permit to park in designated car parks set out in the revised scheme.

Legal Impacts:

No impact.

Risk Management Impacts:

No impact.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

No impact.

Counter Terrorism Impacts

No impact

Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. The proposed revisions to this policy have been fully endorsed by the Trade Unions.

Recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the revised Staff and Member Car Parking Scheme.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Revised Staff and Member Car Parking Scheme

Appendix 2 - IIA

List of background papers:

None.