

<b>SUBJECT: CAR PARKING REVIEW</b>
<b>MEETING: STRONG COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY &amp; DEVELOPMENT JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE: 2 NOVEMBER 2020</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL</b>

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to commence the Council's car parking review, seeking the input and scrutiny of this joint Select Committee to shape proposals for Cabinet Member approval when the review has concluded. This report provides context of the current car parking arrangements with data and evidence. It seeks the Joint Select Committee's steer on objectives for the review and its agreement to hold further meetings as the review progresses.
- 1.2 This review relates to the Council's car parks that sit within the Highways service: it does not include car parks that sit with MonLife, for example Caldicot Castle or at the Council's leisure centres.
- 1.3 This review will form part of the Council's Car Parking Strategy being produced by Capita. Capita will provide support and advice during this review, for example by modelling the impact of suggested changes on customer behaviour and on income.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Strong Communities Select Committee and the Economy and Development Select Committee agree to input into and scrutinise the car parking review.
- 2.2 That the Strong Communities Select Committee and the Economy and Development Select Committee note the data and evidence provided below and agree objectives and next steps for the car parking review.

## **3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Parking management and enforcement play an important role in delivering the Council's well-being objectives for its residents, workforce and visitors. High-quality management of parking in Monmouthshire can contribute to delivering local, regional and national policy objectives ranging from sustaining the local economy to contributing to sustainable outcomes such as the uptake of active travel. It is imperative that this Strategy strikes a balance between all these objectives.
- 3.2 This review will feed into the new Parking Strategy. The Strategy will cover the period 2020 to 2030 and is designed to:
  - Support the local economy (e.g. making it easier for people to visit towns in the County);
  - Provide access to key services and facilities for groups of individuals with different sets of requirements (e.g. by providing appropriate Blue Badge parking provision);
  - Encourage sustainable travel modes and help reduce reliance on the private vehicle (e.g. provision cycle storage and setting tariffs at appropriate levels);
  - Meet residents' parking needs (e.g. reviewing Resident Parking Permits);
  - Improve journey time reliability for road users (e.g. by designing and managing on-street and off-street parking to reduce traffic conflict and delays);

- Make Monmouthshire a safer place (e.g. by ensuring that parking is 'safer by design');
- Enhance the built and natural environment (e.g. reducing the amount of land required for parking and by improving the streetscape through civil parking enforcement); and
- Reduce competition between towns in the wider region (e.g. by setting car parking charges and standards that are consistent with surrounding local authorities).

### Car parking income and budget

- 3.3 Two key changes occurred in 2019/20. Firstly, car parking charges were increased by approximately 10% as part of the budget setting process, and secondly civil parking enforcement powers for a number of on-street parking offences were transferred from Heddlu Gwent Police to the Council. Both have resulted in changes to the department's budget targets. With regards civil enforcement, an additional income budget line of £250,000 was set (in addition to the off-street enforcement budget line of £101,600. For a variety of reasons, the parking enforcement budget is significantly under-recovering: this is due to a combination of the team never having been at full staffing complement due to vacancies or sickness absence, and external factors such as the floods and more recently the coronavirus pandemic. There is clearly demand for and support for the enforcement role and two new Civil Enforcement Officers have just been appointed to bring the team to full complement. Pay and display income has consistently fallen below the budgeted figure, and the budget line was therefore reduced by £80,000 in 2020/21 to reflect a more realistic figure. Members will appreciate that this has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

		<b>Total Revenue Budget £</b>
0360	Contravention Fee Income	-351,600.00
0361	Letting of car parks	-3,450.00
0363	Pay & Display Income	-1,305,200.00
0365	Recovery Fees	-2,050.00
0366	Residents Off Street Permits	-7,150.00
0367	Residents On Street Permits	-2,850.00
0368	Season Tickets Off Street	-91,700.00
<b>Total 2020-21</b>		<b>-1,764,000.00</b>

- 3.4 The financial impact of any proposed changes will need careful consideration. It is important to note that the funding generated is reinvested into services such as car park management and maintenance, traffic management, public transport, road safety, highway management/maintenance; services that would otherwise be under greater financial pressure. The Council has adopted priorities that include promoting sustainable transport (supported by WG in a review of sustainable fuel alternatives (electricity and hydrogen)), sustaining and improving rural transport. Members are also anxious to improve traffic management, infrastructure and the public realm to improve town centres. The car park income contributes to supporting such services that are otherwise under further financial pressure through the corporate budget setting exercise.

### On-street and off-street parking provision

- 3.5 Unlike many Local Authorities, Monmouthshire County Council owns and manages the vast majority of public car parks within its area. Our 3313 off-street parking spaces are located in 36 car parks across ten of our towns and villages. These spaces are supplemented by other private car parks belonging to specific shops, primarily serving

supermarkets and free to their customers for a fixed period: there are no NCP car parks in the County. Some settlements also have a significant provision of on-street town centre parking, such as Monnow Street in Monmouth (30 minute free stay), Magor Square (unlimited stay and until recently often utilised by residents or business workers rather than being available for customers) and Gilwern (various time limits).

**Recommendation 1** that on-street town centre parking provision falls within the scope of this review with consideration given to waiting limits and/or charging and enforcement.

- 3.6 Table 1 below gives a breakdown of Council-owned off-street parking provision throughout the County. Additional detail is provided at Appendix 1.
- 3.7 At present, all car parks are free with the exemption of most car parks in the three main towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth, and the car park serving Severn Tunnel Junction in Rogiet.
- 3.8 Of the total 3313 off-street parking spaces, 1350 are free (including disabled person and the current parent/child bays which are free by virtue of their location in free car parks). Our chargeable car parks are split between short stay car parks (369 spaces) which offer a maximum stay of 4 hours, and long stay car parks (1560 spaces) in which one can park all day. An interactive map of where parking is located is available on the Council's website: <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/car-parks/our-car-parks>

Table 1: Overview of parking provision

	Free	Short stay	Long stay	Disabled	Parent & Child	EV charger	Motorbikes
<b>Abergavenny</b>	293	161	855	67	0	5	Yes
<b>Caldicot</b>	159			14	0	14	No
<b>Chepstow</b>	113*	87	346	32	0	5	Yes
<b>Monmouth</b>	197	121	289	44	0	4	Yes
<b>Usk</b>	232			10	2	6	Yes
<b>Gilwern</b>	23			1	0	0	No
<b>Goytre</b>	20			2	0	0	No
<b>Magor</b>	77			9	0	0	No
<b>Rogiet</b>	0		70	0	0	0	No
<b>Raglan</b>	50			4	0	0	No
	<b>1164</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3313</b>

- 3.9 Until October 2020, none of our car parks had parent and child spaces. These spaces provide extra width to aide parents with young children in pushchairs or toddlers where space is needed to safely strap the child into a car seat: two parent and child bays take up the same space as three standard bays. Two such spaces have now been provided in Usk (Maryport Street North) and two are proposed in Magor. It is proposed to provide more parent and child spaces throughout the County.

**Recommendation 2** that parent and child spaces are provided in each of our towns.

- 3.10 Blue badge holders may park in any bay free of charge provided a valid blue badge is displayed. Specific disabled person parking bays are provided as detailed above to provide additional width and normally length to enable, for example, space for wheelchairs or mobility aides. Disabled parking bay provision is also under review, with additional disabled person bays proposed for Usk and Caldicot. This is based on data on where blue badge-holders live and their closest town for shopping, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of blue badges

<b>Main settlement</b>	<b>Blue Badges issued as at 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020</b>
Abergavenny and surroundings	724
Caldicot and surroundings	559
Chepstow and surroundings	397
Monmouth and surroundings	372
Usk and surroundings	201
Other	104
	<b>2357</b>

**Recommendation 3:** that the review of off-street disabled bay parking provision be completed and additional spaces provided accordingly.

- 3.11 Colleagues in the Marketing Team are preparing an Accessible Monmouthshire webpage providing details of disabled person parking bays, key level routes and public toilet provision. This will provide a valuable source of information to people in our communities with disabilities.
- 3.12 A number of electric vehicle charging points are being provided throughout the County, mainly using grant funding. Under the five year lease terms, users will pay to charge their vehicle but will not pay an additional fee to park. Use of the space by a vehicle that is not charging/not electric is a parking offence for which a ticket can be issued. The Climate Emergency Action Plan goes a step further and suggests that parking could be free for all electric or hydrogen vehicles in the future. Aside from the potential difficulties of policing and enforcing this, consideration needs to be given to the financial sustainability of such a proposal, given that in twenty years' time no new diesel or petrol cars can be purchased. A significant growth in EV ownership is expected in the near future. It is recommended that an EV charging strategy be prepared, including a charging schedule.

**Recommendation 4:** that an EV charging strategy be prepared, including a charging schedule.

#### Parking charges

- 3.13 The current charging schedules are shown in the tables 3-5 below. It is suggested that the charging schedule is unduly complex and could benefit from simplification. This is not helped by the appearance of the car park tariff signage, which has had multiple updates over the years. The signage requires replacing but this has been deliberately delayed until the car parking review is complete.
- 3.14 Recent discussions regarding the challenges facing our high streets have considered the pros and cons of offering a level of free car parking. This review offers an opportunity to further consider options, however careful consideration needs to be given to the financial implications for the Council as well as unintended consequences, for example incentivising car use with associated congestion and emissions, contrary to the Climate Emergency declaration.
- 3.15 Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests some of our free car parks are not fully available to visitors or shoppers due to resident use and/r use by commuters car sharing. This review provides an opportunity to consider the pros and cons of introducing charging to those car parks, perhaps with an initial free period for short stays. Again, careful consideration will be needed of unintended consequences, for example if a high charge deters car-sharing commuters, there is a risk they either park

in residential streets instead causing problems there, or cease car-sharing resulting in more traffic on the roads and more emissions. The equalities impacts of changes will need careful consideration, for example the impact on poverty, including on shop and hospitality workers who are often low paid.

Table 3 Short stay tariffs

Short Stay Car Park Tariff	Tariff Charge
Up to 2 Hours	£1.50
Up to 3 Hours	£1.90
Up to 4 Hours	£2.40
Sunday- First 2 Hours Free	£1.00 All-day

Table 4 Long stay tariffs

Long Stay Car Park Tariff	Tariff Charge
Up to 2 Hours	£1.50
Up to 3 Hours	£1.90
Up to 4 Hours	£2.40
All-Day Ticket	£4.80
5 Day Ticket	£18.00
6 Day Ticket	£21.50
Overstay Ticket	£6.00
Sunday- First 2 Hours Free	£1.00 All-day

Table 5 Permit schemes

Permit Schemes	Permit Duration	Permit Costs
Season Permit	3 Months	£110.00
Season Permit	6 Months	£220.00
Season Permit	12 Months	£430.00
Season Permit - Specific (only available for daily tariff car parks)	12 Months	£137.50
Resident Permit On/Off Street	12 Months	£60.00

3.16 In preparation for this review, additional data on car park usage was sought. For chargeable car parks, data is available breaking down tickets sold, however it is unknown, for example, whether people buying a two hour ticket typically stay 30 minutes, 60 minutes or the full two hours. No data at all was available for our free car parks. Unfortunately, however, the first set of camera monitoring was delayed due to the February 2020 floods on the basis that the floods affected shopper behaviour. The survey was rearranged and took place on week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. It is likely that shopper behaviour was already being impacted by concerns about the coronavirus pandemic albeit that lockdown was yet to be announced. Further survey data is being secured however behaviour continues to be affected by the pandemic. However, it is unknown when, and to what extent, behaviour will return to 'normal'. The data will be used to inform this review but when the long term economic impacts of the pandemic on our high streets are known, it may be necessary to further review the car parking arrangements.

**Recommendation 5:** that consideration be given to reviewing and simplifying the charging structure.

**Recommendation 6:** that the provision of free parking be reviewed.

**Recommendation 7:** that the distribution of short and long stay parking be reviewed.

### Technology

3.17 In terms of technology, the payment machines are approximately two years old and are identical to those used throughout South East Wales. The machines accept coin and card payment (including contactless) and offer instructions in English or Welsh.

Customers are required to enter their car's full registration number, which has resulted in some negative feedback particularly from older customers who say they find the buttons unclear. The main source of customer complaint is when the machine fails to connect to a card payment provider, meaning the transaction is voided and the customer must start again. The machines utilise a SIM card to connect to a mobile provider. It is recommended that measures be investigated to either improve the mobile signal in problem locations or to switch provider to a provider with stronger signal strength in the County.

**Recommendation 8:** that measures be investigated to resolve mobile signal strength to ticket machines.

- 3.18 In a number of Local Authority areas, additional systems are available to allow car park users to pay using their mobile phone. Having registered vehicle details, users then need only use an app to enter a car park name or reference number and select the duration of their stay. It is recommended that the benefits of such a system for Monmouthshire be explored.

**Recommendation 9:** that the benefits of a mobile phone payment system be explored.

- 3.19 Other technology-based changes could include live digital signage advising motorists of the number of empty parking bays available in different car parks. The cost and visual clutter of additional signage will mean such a solution is not appropriate everywhere. In the long term, a more customer-friendly payment method would arguably be to have barriers at car park entrances and exits where motorists take a ticket then pay for the time spent upon return to their car, rather than needing to pre-determine the length of their stay at arrival. Given that the current ticket machines are very new, it is unlikely to be appropriate or cost-effective to replace them in the short term.

**Recommendation 10:** that the benefits and disbenefits of technology-based changes be explored, including use of a mobile phone payment system, advance live signage and a different payment system.

### Tourism

- 3.20 During Summer 2020, the Council has been contacted by organisations representing mobile home users seeking provision of car park areas suitable for short-term (1-2 night) stays by tourists in mobile homes for a quick stop while passing through. Tourism is already an important part of Monmouthshire's economic base and it is evidenced that overnight stays result in far greater local economic benefit than day visits. It is likely that staycations and mobile home/caravan use will increase as a result of the pandemic.
- 3.21 Similarly, it has long been recognised that coach parking is required in our maintowns to allow coach drivers to park up close to toilet and refreshment facilities while tourists visit the locality.

**Recommendation 11:** that the review considers provision for tourists.

### Engagement

- 3.22 It is proposed that as this car parking review progresses, stakeholder engagement takes place. It is suggested that this includes an opportunity for Town and Community Councils and organisations representing local businesses (Chambers of Commerce

and representatives from the Local Business Forum) are invited to give evidence to the Joint Select Committee to help inform the options and proposals. Once a set of proposals or options is developed, it is suggested that wider public consultation should take place.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

- 3.23 As illustrated above, there is a number of inter-related matters that could be within the scope of this Joint Select Committee's work. Undertaking a full review will require a series of future meetings, informed by evidence and data and stakeholder input.
- 3.24 The Joint Select Committee is invited to agree overarching objectives for the review. Those set out at paragraph 3.2 provide a starting point.
- 3.25 The Joint Select Committee is invited, via a future series of meetings, to consider the recommendations above, namely:

**Recommendation 1** that on-street town centre parking provision falls within the scope of this review with consideration given to waiting limits and/or charging and enforcement.

**Recommendation 2** that parent and child spaces are provided in each of our towns.

**Recommendation 3:** that the review of off-street disabled bay parking provision be completed and additional spaces provided accordingly.

**Recommendation 4:** that an EV charging strategy be prepared, including a charging schedule.

**Recommendation 5:** that consideration be given to reviewing and simplifying the charging structure.

**Recommendation 6:** that the provision of free parking be reviewed.

**Recommendation 7:** that the distribution of short and long stay parking be reviewed.

**Recommendation 8:** that measures be investigated to resolve mobile signal strength to ticket machines.

**Recommendation 9:** that the benefits of a mobile phone payment system be explored.

**Recommendation 10:** that the benefits and disbenefits of technology-based changes be explored, including use of a mobile phone payment system, advance live signage and a different payment system.

**Recommendation 11:** that the review considers provision for tourists.

The Committee may wish to add additional recommendations or amend some of the proposed recommendations.

## **4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report seeks to commence a review process so at this stage, a Future Generations Evaluation (including equalities and sustainability impact assessment)

has not been completed. This Evaluation will be drafted for the first review meeting and will be updated as discussions and ideas progress and equality impacts arise.

#### Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting

- 4.4 There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising directly from this report.

### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 5.1 The options at this stage are simply for the Joint Select Committee to agree to assist with this review via a series of meetings, or to decline to take part. The preferred option is that the review proceeds. Although the timing of evidence gathering is not ideal due to the coronavirus pandemic, it is recommended that the review commences. If long term trends indicate that a further review or amendments are required, that can be addressed at a future time.

### **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Officer time and costs associated with the review will be met from the Highways budget and carried out by existing staff. Capita has been employed to undertake the wider Car Parking Strategy, that this review will feed into. Their work is funded by the Highways budget. The conclusions of the review may require additional capital investment.

### **7. CONSULTEES**

Highways and Flood Management team.  
Enterprise DMT

### **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **9. AUTHORS**

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### **10. CONTACT DETAILS**

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## Appendix 1: Car parking provision

Town/Car Park	Designation	Standard Bays	Free Bays	Disabled Bays	EV Bays	Parent & Child	Motorbike
<b>Abergavenny</b>							
Brewery Yard	Short Stay	84		7	0		Yes
Bus Station	Long Stay	152		7	1		No
Byfield Lane	Tuesday only		293	4			No
Castle Street	Long Stay	210		16			Yes
Fairfield	Long Stay	472		10			Yes
Tiverton	Short Stay	45		20			Yes
Trinity Terrace	Short Stay	32		2	4		No
Tudor Street	Long Stay	21		1			No
		1016	293	67	5	0	
<b>Caldicot</b>							
Jubilee Way	Free		49	8	10		No
Woodstock Way	Free		110	6	4		No
		0	159	14	14	0	
<b>Chepstow</b>							
Castle Dell	Long Stay	93		4	4		Yes
Drill Hall	Long Stay	76		5			No
Nelson Street	Short Stay	87		5			Yes
Station Road	*Free		43	0			No
Welsh Street	Long Stay	177	15	18	1		Yes
The Station Car Park	*Free		55				No
		433	113	32	5	0	

	Designation	Standard Bays	Free Bays	Disabled Bays	EV Bays	Parent & Child	Motorbike
<b>Monmouth</b>							
Chippenham	Long Stay	33		2			No
Cornwall House	Long Stay	34		12			No
Glendower Street	Short Stay	121		9	4		No
Monnow Street	Long Stay	39		2			No
Cattle Market	Long Stay	175		13			Yes
Cinderhill	*Free		41				No
Old Dixton Road	Free		30	2			No
Rockfield Road	Free		106	3			No
Rowing Club	*Free		20				No
Sports Ground	Parking Permit Only	8		1			No
		410	197	44	4	0	
<b>Usk</b>							
Maryport North	Free		138	9		2	Yes
Maryport South	Free		80		6		No
Twyn Square	Free		14	1			No
		0	232	10	6	2	
<b>Gilwern</b>							
Main Road	Free		23	1			No
		0	23	1	0	0	
<b>Goytre</b>							
Goytre Villlage	Free		20	2			No
		0	20	2		0	

	Designation	Standard Bays	Free Bays	Disabled Bays	EV Bays	Parent & Child	Motorbike	
<b>Magor</b>								
Magor Square	Free		31	3			No	
Sycamore Terrace	Free		27	5			No	
Withy Close	Free		19	2		0	No	
		0	77	10	0	0		
<b>Rogiet</b>								
Playing Fields	£2.20 all day	70	0				No	
		70	0	0	0	0		
<b>Raglan</b>								
Chepstow Road	Free		50	4			No	
		0	50	4	0	0		
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1929</b>	<b>1164</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>3313</b>