

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2025

REFERENCE FROM SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2025

“ CAR PARKING (REF) –

Prior to the start of this item, the Chair informed the Committee, public speakers and other attendees or observers how the meeting would be organised and the process involved. The Chair also stated that the Cabinet decision on this reference / report and proposals concerning changes to car parking measures were ‘in-principle’ only, which meant no final decision had been made on these. It was now for the Committee to consider the report, and the views expressed by all parties at the meeting, and to then indicate either their approval of the proposals or for their comments, concerns and recommendations on these to go back to Cabinet for them to consider the report and proposals further. The Chair also referred to the various emails, written representations from members of the public, Elected Members and other interested parties, which had been shared with Committee Members and on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website.

The reference from Cabinet of 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 was co-presented by the Director of Environment and Housing and Head of Neighbourhood Services, the purpose of which was for the Committee to consider and comment on the proposed introduction of off-street and on-street parking charges at several coastal locations, advise of future proposals for residential parking and determine the future of the Court Road Multi-Storey Car Park in Barry, as part of a more ‘holistic’ approach to car parking and charging in the County.

These proposals were set within the current climate of a challenging budgetary position for the Council and relevant Directorate, the need for savings, as well as the need to reduce congestion and moving motorists from on-street parking into car parks wherever possible. The measures would also help to move people to other forms of more ‘active’ travel and public transport, as part of environmental considerations. There would be benefits or support for local residents and others, such as the availability of season tickets for local residents for on-street car parking, equating to only £2 per week for residents and traders.

Furthermore, the proposals complied with the legislative framework in place (i.e. Section 55 of the Road Traffic regulation act 1984 and Traffic Management Act 2024 for the on-street parking charges) and the relevant Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) had been completed for these. They would also be subject to Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) as part of the changes to be implemented and subject to a 21-day consultation period so the Council would have to apply notices, if these proceed to those locations advising of the TRO changes in detail and the

subsequent 21-day consultation period would be an opportunity for residents to raise any objections, comments and concerns.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services stated he would be keenly listening to the debate and would address any queries or comments raised by Elected Members and members of the public.

A presentation, accompanying the report, was shared at the meeting, which covered the key areas and would help to inform and structure the meeting and the subsequent speeches, discussions, debate and questions on these proposals:

- Context and introduction to the car parking report and proposals.
- Car parking proposals - on-street.
- Car parking proposals - off-street.
- Court road multi storey car park.
- Residential parking permits.

Following the presentation of each of these sections, several public speakers spoke, which included the following:

- Miss. Laura Davenport drew the Committee's attention to what she felt would be the negative impact on local businesses and visitors, particularly local residents who lived too far away to walk and regularly used local shops and businesses, off-season, with the introduction of the proposed changes to car parking charges. This would deter visitors and local residents from coming to Barry and particularly Barry Island and the use of local cafes, restaurants and other businesses, at a time when residents and businesses were feeling the economic impact of the current cost of living crisis. The strength of feeling was such that a public petition on this matter and the concerns around it had attracted 3,500 signatures so far. She felt there had been no consultation or conversation with all interested parties on these proposals and suggested that consideration be given to applying 'seasonality' considerations around the car parking proposals, such as making the first few hours free and to take into account the insight from surveys undertaken with local people and businesses on what they want in Barry Island (such as the Placemaking work). It was also important for the Council to consider other alternatives in lowering costs for the upkeep of Barry Island. The knock-on effect on investment and on the local economy would be significant.
- Mr. Louis Ross felt that the previous position of some Elected Members in opposing similar measures around car parking and support to traders in 2019 had now been abandoned and forgotten. He felt there had been no engagement with traders on Barry Island on the street parking proposals and the impact on the local economy. Whilst he agreed with charging tourists for parking this should not be applied to local residents due to them supporting local businesses and the economy off season. A key to the ongoing success of the local economy and the security of local jobs in the long term was to continue to have trade off-season, which the proposals could undo by driving local people away to places with free car parking. Any benefits to the Council's budget regarding these car parking proposals would not be felt for

some time. He felt 2 hours of free parking on Barry Island and then charging users after this time would be sufficient to allow the Council to both control congestion and receive additional revenue, as well as allow local traders to maintain local trade, footfall and jobs.

- Mr. Matt Holland spoke about the Cliff Walk car park in Penarth and the impact charging would have on his business nearby. He referred to the experience he had when similar charges had been rolled out at Cosmeston car park, which was again near to a business which he owned. His business at Cosmeston had seen a 30% drop in trade due to the charges introduced, leading to a reduction in the days that his business traded there. Trade had picked up again, albeit slowly, but it was still 20% lower than pre-car parking charges and there was less usage of Cosmeston overflow car park, even in the summertime. There had been a loss of a job as a result. He also referred to the poor and potentially hazardous condition of the Cliff Walk car park and that it had no electric capacity for the installation of ticket machines / meters or lighting. He felt that 1-2 hours free parking would benefit the local community who came to his shop for coffee and food. On a point of clarification, Councillor Hooper asked if Mr. Holland's business in Cosmeston was still down to 5 days, which he confirmed was still the case. On Councillor Ernest's point about the difference in volumes of trade between Summer and Winter, it was explained that the drop in trade in Winter was up to 50%, particularly from October onwards, despite the best efforts to drive up trade at this time.
- Mr. Osborne, who owned several businesses on Barry Island, felt the process around these proposals was flawed and the proposals were being rushed through without proper consultation. This would result in a significant loss of business and jobs, with visitors and locals alike going elsewhere as a result. He referred to how income from the imposition of charges due to the Council's budget shortfall would be used i.e. to support local holiday resorts and queried this, as he believed charges could only be set for relieving or preventing congestion of traffic and the enforcement / monitoring of these charges, and not for any other reason under the relevant road traffic legislation. He also cited the potential increased traffic congestion, the significant public disquiet at these proposals (with a significant response on a local petition and emails to the Council), and that he believed the proposals would have a negative effect on tourism and events coming to Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan. The 'Gavin and Stacy' effect would not last forever and the Council needed to start looking at what other resorts were doing to attract people not sending them away.
- Mrs. Cook referred to the proposed closure of the multi-storey car park at Court Road in Barry and stated that the occupancy surveys undertaken had been done at off peak times and were therefore not comprehensive or accurate enough. She had done her own survey, which found at least 50% occupancy at 11am in the daytime at the car park (over 100 cars). On the expense involved in having security for the car park, she and others she had spoken to had not observed any such security in place. On the alternative parking nearby at Wyndham Street, this would be too small to cope with an influx of shoppers and workers from Court Road. She also cited the lack of season tickets for workers in other car parks, etc., public transport not being a sufficient or viable, alternative, as well as the impact on parking, safety and

congestion in residential areas in Barry Town centre. Also, while the Council were making an investment in renovating Barry it seemingly was closing down key locations for parking which would hamper these efforts and prevent the aim of getting more people to park off-road. The appropriate impact assessment should also have been available and shared at this meeting.

- Mrs, Louise Slimings, as the Practice Manager of Holton Dental Centre, referred to the negative impact of closing down the multi-storey car park at Court Road in Barry on the nearby Holton Dental Centre, due to significant numbers of both staff and patients using and heavily reliant on the car park. Public transport was insufficient to take up the slack or to be a viable alternative. There had been insufficient consultation and engagement with local businesses on this, with the data used to assess usage of the car park in question being flawed and not reflecting the typical or peak usage. This would negatively affect the practice's provision of essential health (NHS) Services and reduce footfall, with a loss of essential staff and visitors / patients. Wyndham Street would not be a large enough or a viable alternative. She urged the Council to reconsider these proposals and explore alternative options that would support the dental practice, the staff, and visitors for the practice, Holton Primary School and the businesses in the town.
- Dr. Ralphs, a dentist at Holton Dental Centre and a regular user of the Court Road car park was incredibly concerned regarding the impact this proposal would have on the practice and its ability to provide NHS dental care to the residents of Barry and the rest of the Vale of Glamorgan, as the vast majority of its staff and patients used the car park to attend the practice every day. The Council's proposition that the Wyndham Street car park would be sufficient to accommodate this loss of parking space was unrealistic as there were not enough spaces for all the people who use the car park on a daily basis let alone the additional annual financial implications of a £6.50 per day parking charge for the practice's full-time staff. Furthermore, the impact on other essential services and businesses in the area did not seem to have been considered fully. For these reasons, he urged the Committee to reject this proposal and ask the Council to explore alternative options to the closure of the car park in order to avoid a detrimental effect on the practice and the local community.

Subsequently, non-Committee Elected Members were invited to speak on the various areas / proposals of the reference and report:

- Councillor Charles referred to the concerns that had been raised with her by local residents and constituents around the proposed closure of the Court Road car park and its impact, plus the cost of implementing such proposals, the impact of, in her view, greater congestion and the decline of footfall, business activity and conditions, etc within the town centre that would be caused by these changes. There was a perceived lack of transparency and consultation with the town centre and Barry Island traders, already under pressure due to increases in National Insurance and the Minimum Wage.
- Councillor Godfrey raised concerns about the impact of the car parking charges on the Marie Curie Hospice in Bridgerman Road, Penarth and suggested a registration machine be installed at the hospice for visitors in

order to avoid this. He also pointed to Cwmbran where the Council had maintained free car parking and to the detrimental effect that the proposals would have on Holton Road.

- Councillor Hodges referred to the proposals around the Bron y Mor and Cold Knap off street car parks in Barry and the potentially negative impact to both visitors and local residents, as well as local businesses that relied on this type of footfall and the poor quality of the surfaces there. On Barry Island and on-street parking charges, he enquired about how the charging regime would be explained to tourists parking there and was sceptical about the benefits of issuing season tickets, as well as the local public concern and anger over these proposals. Despite the lack of maintenance, Court Road car park was well used and questioned what its future use would be. He felt that due to these reasons, the proposals should be withdrawn.
- Councillor Dr. Johnson stated that this was the third occasion that the Council had made proposals on car parking charges and felt these would have a negative impact on the locations highlighted, including the town centre in terms of parking and the loss of footfall and income to local businesses. There had not been any consultation with the interested parties and the usage survey for Court Road car park was flawed. Wyndham Street car park would not be able to take up the slack. The closure of this car park would also negatively impact the regeneration of the town. These proposals needed to go back to Cabinet to be reassessed and revisited, with a view of having these replaced.
- Councillor Collins also referred to the lack of consultation on these proposals and the detrimental impact they would have on Barry Town Centre, and they would be the 'final nail in the coffin' for the town. These would also have a knock-on effect on residential car parking and side streets. She suggested that the report be withdrawn, and the proposals go out for consultation.
- Councillor Thomas referred to the potential negative impact of the car parking proposals on the local economy and community of Penarth, in particular around Penarth Esplanade and the seafront. He felt there had been no consultation and the Council was not providing an environment conducive to supporting and fostering local businesses.

During the presentation of the report, several Members of the Committee raised a number of questions or made comments about the proposals:

- Councillor Norman referred to the Council's aim for these proposals to encourage residents and others to leave their cars and use suitable alternatives to travel, but this was not practicable within the Rural Vale, with its limited public transport and the use of a car was therefore vital to travel from these areas to Barry, and it was essential to have as much car parking available in urban areas such as Barry as possible. The proposals around parking charges and the Court Road car park were therefore disadvantageous and would negatively impact local visitors and workers.
- Councillor Champion echoed the comments made by some public speakers about having the first hour or so free car parking, citing the experience in his ward. Cars were still essential for many journeys within the Vale and therefore, the proposals were not appropriate.

- Councillor Hooper also echoed the concerns raised about the use of revenue from the car parking charges under the relevant Road Traffic Act, the concerns of traders about the return to seasonality of trade at Barry Island, the breakdown of trust around charging, the potential loss of trade and congestion. He also stressed the importance of the Court Road multi-storey car park to residents and the wider public to access services, work and schools. He highlighted concerns about the potential loss of trade and income for local businesses in the areas where car parking charges would come in, such as Bron Y Mor car park and poor surfacing at car parks, with no electric capacity for ticket meters at Cliff Walk. Displacement would be made worse by these proposals. Engagement had been non-existent, with the process around these proposals also of concern and was critical of the circumstances around diminishing Council budgets.
- The Chair stated that it was important for the relevant Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be included in reports and proposed they should be available for Members to see and questioned the current status on resurfacing of car parks in Barry and Penarth. She also referred to the absence of traffic surveys, the need for consideration to be given on seasonal car parking charges, and the resurfacing of the car parks such as Bron Y Mor and Cliff Walk, prior to the charges and proposals being implemented. She also raised concerns on the affordability of season tickets and car parking charges.
- The Vice-Chair queried whether any assessment had been undertaken on the potential parking displacement resulting from these proposals, and it was important to have this information and the EIA in order to make an informed opinion on these proposals including the one relating to parking near to Marie Curie. An up-to-date survey of users of Court Road car park and other stakeholders were required. She also asked about the difference between the car parking charges off – and on – street and the need for more cycle stands, etc.
- Councillor Protheroe was concerned about the potential loss to local businesses concerning these proposals. More information and assessment was needed around the impact of the proposals on local traders and businesses. There seemed to be a need for more work to be done around these proposals, and the need to compromise with or prepare those stakeholders directly affected better, whilst acknowledging the need to make savings and to support and protect key services. It was also important to highlight the potential impact on visitors to Barry Town Centre and the need to retain adequate parking there until public transport was enhanced.
- Councillor Penn raised his concerns around certain aspects of the proposals but understood the background to these in light of shrinking Council budgets and stressed that Elected Members and the Council did listen to the concerns raised. It was possible to get large numbers of visitors to come to Penarth seafront and the Esplanade on foot but felt that there should be an initial hour free for visitors or locals that parked their cars nearby. This scheme should be reviewed after a set period (i.e. once the summer season was over) and any data collected should be used to make any evidence-based changes and to address any adverse impacts. In relation to off-street charges there should be engagement with the relevant stakeholders in the Western Vale in relation to the service design of car parks in that area.

- Councillor Ernest raised his concerns about parking proposals and the potential impact on the Marie Curie shop / hospice in Bridgerman Road, Penarth and on staff and visitors in terms of parking and additional congestion on this road. He also referred to the Cliff Walk car park and the lack of regular transport back and forth to there and the potential impact on disabled users. He highlighted the poor surfaces at the car park and the additional cost of changing the relevant traffic regulations. He also raised whether there could be alternatives to the proposed car parking charges and savings made elsewhere. There would be significant losses to business and tourism, as well as to visitors and staff and concerns around the cost of the proposed season ticket. He also agreed with withdrawing the proposals as they were currently presented.
- Councillor Wiliam referred to the previous proposals around car park changes, the lack of consultation on this process and that the proposals and the process itself had been rushed and ill conceived. He also felt that such circumstances would result in a loss of trust in the Council, as well as damage to the local economy, livelihoods and cause significant parking displacement and congestion on Barry Island and at other locations. One-hour free parking would be insufficient to benefit local trade. A season ticket for parking for residents, although an interesting idea in principle, would still be perceived as costly overall and the suggestion around having low-cost loans in order to help residents afford this was not realistic. He also endorsed the potential motion to withdraw these proposals.
- The Committee did welcome the proposals on residential parking permits.

The Director of Environment and Housing and Head of Neighbourhood Services addressed the issues and questions raised, including:

- On the conditions on using the revenue raised from these measures under the Road Traffic Act, it was explained that the Council could only use this revenue for specific areas and the relevant legal advice had been sought. The money would be used and invested in compliance with legislation. This included not just reducing congestion and encouraging drivers to park in off street car parks, but also environmental considerations, highway infrastructure and others such as lighting and local facilities.
- In terms of traffic surveys, desktop reviews had only been undertaken at this time.
- With regard to on-street car parking charges, these were inextricably linked with their off-street counterparts, i.e. any free parking time given to on-street parking would be then the parking position of choice for residents and tourists alike and not off-street parking, and the aim was to have slightly higher on-street car park charges to encourage people to use local car parks and public transport instead, thereby relieving congestion in areas such as Barry Island.
- On surfacing / resurfacing and improving car parks such as Bron y Mor and Cliff Walk, surfaces were currently inspected and more funding was being sought from Welsh Government for resurfacing. The Chair had also sought assurance that the works on resurfacing and improvements to car parks would be undertaken prior to any charging proposals being put in place. Subsequently, it was identified in the report that at paragraph 2.17 a

commitment had been made that works would be required to improve the surface at Cliff Walk prior to charging. A similar intention was also suggested for Bron y Mor. However, it was explained that no guarantee could be given fully at this time that resurfacing could be done or completed prior to the proposed charges being introduced, due to the need to wait on the new financial year's budget being allocated / set and on funding from central government. However, the need for resurfacing in the car parks identified remained a key part of the Council's aspirations, proposals and plans, in terms of its legal duties and due to the recognition that works needed to be done to improve these surfaces where people would be paying to park.

- On signage and informing visitors of the difference in parking charges between on-street and off-street car parking in order to encourage them to do the latter, this would be achieved by placing information on the Council's website, on adjoining parking meters and on signage designed to convey this information effectively.
- It was confirmed that the proposals would not impact disabled drivers with blue badges who could still park anywhere and would still have specific parking bays.
- TROs, although expensive, were costed into the arrangements and would be subject to a further review.
- On Cliff Walk, the facility would be upgraded and appropriately managed, with solar powered ticketing machines to be installed.
- Reference was made to the costs of running and maintaining the Court Road multi-storey car park and the competing needs and challenges with this, the desktop surveys and studies around its use, and future structural works which would be substantial in light of the car park being under-utilised based on the data collated. The issues raised around security there would be looked into. There were no plans currently on what would be developed at this site.
- Bicycle stands were available in areas such as Holton Road but whether these were sufficient would be looked into.
- On the EIAs, these looked at issues concerning protected characteristics and not directly at traders or businesses.
- On the Marie Curie Hospice, it did have its own parking which would not be affected. Any issues around displacement could be looked at properly once the proposals had been implemented. Other alternatives could be looked at in terms of reserving car parking spaces nearby i.e. resident permits.

The Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services also spoke, referring to the need to look at and review car parking charges, and similar proposals due to the challenging budgetary pressures the Council faced. A key aim of these proposals was to create 'churn', by freeing up car parking spaces for residents and visitors, as well as helping to encourage active travel. These proposals would ultimately help the local community and economy. A more holistic and diversified approach was being undertaken in order to support and develop both urban and resort areas using a review and incremental approach. On the issues around the cost of season tickets, low-cost loans via the Credit Union were being discussed, as well as the use of six monthly or annual tickets and the potential benefits of using these as an inexpensive way of accessing leisure facilities and resorts. What had been raised at



the meeting around the potential impact on parking for workers, residents, etc. and the other concerns raised would be considered and listened to.

A recorded vote was called for a motion / recommendation put forward and seconded which asked for the current proposals within the reference and report to be withdrawn (except for the one concerning residential parking permits) and for these to be referred back to Cabinet and new proposals drafted, in light of the comments made by the Committee, Elected Members and members of the public at the meeting:

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
S. Lloyd-Selby		√	
C. Iannucci-Williams		√	
C.E.A. Champion	√		
P. Drake		√	
V.P. Driscoll	√		
A.M. Ernest	√		
M.J. Hooper	√		
J.M. Norman			√
E. Penn		√	
J. Protheroe		√	
S.T. William	√		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

Due to there being a tied vote, the Chair, with her casting vote, voted against the motion / recommendation and therefore it was not carried.

Subsequently, a further motion / recommendation and recorded vote was put forward and seconded which asked for the report to be referred back to Cabinet with the comments made and issues highlighted by the Committee, Elected Members and members of the public at the meeting, in order for additional work to be done on the report's proposals prior to implementation:

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
S. Lloyd-Selby	√		

C. Iannucci-Williams	√		
C.E.A. Champion		√	
P. Drake	√		
V.P. Driscoll		√	
A.M. Ernest		√	
M.J. Hooper		√	
J.M. Norman	√		
E. Penn			√
J. Protheroe	√		
S.T. William		√	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

Due to there being a tied vote, the Chair, with her casting vote, voted for the motion / recommendation and therefore it was carried.

The Chair outlined the key comments and issues raised at the meeting, which would be referred to Cabinet as part of the recommendation carried.

Following the recorded votes, Committee

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T**, following consideration by the Committee, the report be referred back to Cabinet with the following comments / issues identified, in order for additional work to be done on the report's proposals prior to implementation:

- The Committee welcomes the proposal concerning residential parking permits;
- That Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) be applied to each of the proposals referred to in the report. The Committee felt there had been insufficient consideration on these and the impacts on the locations affected and further work was required;
- Regarding the point on the use of EIAs above, this included Court Road multi-storey car park, with further work needed to identify current use and the potential impact of its closure on the availability of alternative car parking spaces, the potential impact that might have on nearby residents and any mitigation that would be required to address those concerns. The Committee was of the view that the future of Court Road car park should be set within a vision for the town centre in relation to town centre renewal and that consideration should be given to include a capital bid to secure the future of the car park as part of that process. Creative solutions should be explored to secure the future of the car park;

- Regarding the on-street car parking proposals, further consideration be given on this, including a period for free car parking of one or two hours and / or seasonal parking;
- Should on-street parking charges be introduced, then there should be a review period built into that so appropriate changes could be made as required;
- That the legal position in relation to the use of any money that might be raised through the introduction of car parking charges be clarified, in order to fully understand what that money could be spent on specifically;
- With regard to street parking charges, the Committee's view was that work should be done to improve the car parking facilities at Cliff Walk – Penarth, and Bron y Mor – Barry, prior to the implementation of charging at those locations;
- That appropriate enforcement capacity would be required to achieve the objectives of introducing charging both in on-street and off-street areas;
- Consideration should be given to what approaches could be made to ensure affordability in relation to parking permits so that local residents who might be experiencing financial hardship were not disadvantaged;
- In relation to off-street charges there should be engagement with the relevant stakeholders in the Western Vale in relation to the service design of car parks in that area.

#### Reason for the recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference, the appended report and discussions at the meeting, the Committee felt that further consideration and consultation were needed as part of reviewing the report's proposals, and their comments should be considered by Cabinet as part of this.