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**Gwasanaeth Democraidd**  
**Democratic Service**  
Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Cyfarfod / Meeting

**PWYLLGOR CRAFFU CYMUNEDAU**  
**COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Dyddiad ac Amser / Date and Time

**10:00AM, DYDD MAWRTH, 10 RHAGFYR, 2013**

**10.00AM, TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER, 2013**

Nodwch y lleoliad ogydd / Please note the venue

Lleoliad / Location

**SIAMBR HYWEL DDA**  
**SWYDDFEYDD Y CYNGOR / COUNCIL OFFICES, CAERNARFON**

Pwynt Cyswllt / Contact Point

**Ioan Hughes (01286 679780)**

[IoanHughes@gwynedd.gov.uk](mailto:IoanHughes@gwynedd.gov.uk)

Dosbarthwyd 03-12-2013

**Aelodaeth/Membership (18)**

**Plaid Cymru (9)**

Y Cynghorwyr/Councillors

Craig ab Iago	Annwen Hughes	Gethin Glyn Williams
Dilwyn Morgan	Linda Morgan	Tudor Owen
Caerwyn Roberts	Mandy Williams-Davies	Eurig Wyn

**Annibynnol/Independent (4)**

Y Cynghorwyr / Councillors

Eric M. Jones	Nigel Pickavance	Angela Russell	Mike Stevens
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**Llais Gwynedd (3)**

Y Cynghorwyr/Councillors

Louise Hughes	Gruffydd Williams	Robert J. Wright
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**Llafur/Labour (1)**

Y Cynghorydd/Councillor

Gwynfor Edwards

**Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol / Liberal Democrats (1)**

Y Cynghorydd/Councillor

Stephen Churchman

**Aelodau Ex-officio / Ex-officio Members**

Cadeirydd ac Is-Gadeirydd y Cyngor / Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council – Y Cynghorwyr / Councillors Huw Edwards a / and Dewi Owen.

## **AGENDA**

### **1. APOLOGIES**

To accept any apologies for absence.

### **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

### **3. URGENT ITEMS**

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration

### **4. MINUTES**

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee, held on 15 October, 2013, be signed as a true record, (copy herewith – **yellow** enclosure).

### **5. NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

A presentation will be given by the Chief Fire Officer on the North Wales Fire Service Improvement Plan.

### **6. THE PARKING SYSTEM IN GWYNEDD**

To consider the report of the Cabinet Member – Environment prepared in response to questions submitted by members of this Scrutiny Committee, (copy herewith – **grey** enclosure

### **7. THE COMMITTEE'S FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

(Copy attached)

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## COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15/10/13

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**PRESENT** - Councillor Eric M. Jones, (Chairman)  
Councillor Angela Russell, (Vice-chair).

Councillors:- Stephen Churchman, Annwen Hughes, Linda Morgan, Caerwyn Roberts, Gruffydd Williams, Mandy Williams-Davies, Gethin Glyn Williams, Eurig Wyn and Robert J. Wright.

**OFFICERS:** Debbie Anne Williams Jones, (Democratic Services Manager) and Ioan Hughes, (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

**Also PRESENT:** Representatives from Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and Arwel Wyn Owen, (Senior Housing Officer).

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Louise Hughes, Dilwyn Morgan and Mike Stevens.

### 1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

- Councillor Angela Russell declared a personal interest in item 5 on the agenda, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd

The member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and she withdrew from the chamber during the discussion on the issue.

### 2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 9 July 2013, as a true record.

### 3. CARTREFI CYMUNEDOL GWYNEDD

a) Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd's Annual Report was presented by the Chief Executive, Ffrancon Williams.

It was noted that the report dealt with the following areas:

- Delivery of offer document promises;
- Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) investment works;
- Consultation arrangements with tenants;
- Obligations under the Agreement (Nomination and Housing Agency Agreements, Service Level Agreements and Housing Benefit Protocol);
- Elected Members' Protocol;
- Partnership working on strategically important housing items,
- Other operational matters.

b) These matters were expanded upon individually and attention was drawn to the following main issues:

- The Offer Document for tenants included 170 promises. As at 31 March 2013, 116 (69%) of the promises had been successfully delivered with the remainder on track to be delivered by 2015.
- As at 31st March 2013, 65% of the labour employed on the improvement programme lived in Gwynedd itself, and 89% lived in North Wales;

- All CCG's service providers had now bought into the concept of putting something tangible back into the community with in excess of 40 community benefit schemes having been provided by them;
- The stabilisation of CCG's service providers meant that there was far more investment works on site with a capital spend of £28.1 million compared to £16.7 million in the previous operational year.
- Despite the increase noted above, there continued to be a £4.7 million shortfall from the planned expenditure;
- The fact that tenants were unwilling for work to commence was one reason for this;
- 40 houses per week were being brought back into use;
- The recruitment to key posts on the asset and investment side had been problematic, but almost all posts had now been filled;
- Input from tenants was considered to be crucial prior to any matter being presented to CCG's Board;
- The success of a number of forums emphasised this;
- The Customer Panel offered a further method for tenants to engage with CCG;
- The junior warden scheme was an example of a scheme that provided community benefit. In this scheme, 9 - 10 year old children held interesting activities with the wardens, and were given guidance in an entertaining manner on what was, and what was not acceptable behaviour. Those who completed the 6-week scheme were awarded certificates. A positive response had been received from children and parents;
- Lessons had been learnt from the introduction of the Common Housing Register, but the situation was now under control;
- Since the transfer of 170 Council staff, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd had increased its number of staff, with 292 being employed as at 31 March 2013. In addition, over 400 were employed by contractors;
- Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd intended to commence its first new house building scheme in 2013/14 with a development in Pwllheli. There was another planned scheme in y Felinheli for 2014/15.

c) Members were given an opportunity to ask questions, and in response to an enquiry the following main points were made:-

1. Detailed reference was made to the efforts to ensure that the standard of the improvement and maintenance works satisfied the tenants. Reference was made to the project manager, work managers and contact officers' duties, and it was noted that CCG also relied on the tenants to inform them if problems arose.
2. It was noted that to date there had been no significant impact following the changes to the benefits system. However, there was acknowledgement that some changes had affected some tenants. It was added that there was no information available regarding the Discretionary Housing Payments for next year and this was causing concern. There was no evident pattern in the areas affected by the changes.
3. It was explained that 70% of the staff employed by contractors lived in Gwynedd, and that these figures were being reviewed on a monthly basis.
4. It was noted that contractors contributed to communities and that the Community Investment fund had also been valuable. The Fund originally held £1.25 million for a period of 5 years. Possible methods of continuing with the Fund were currently under consideration.
5. A decision had been made on where there was demand for new housing, in conjunction with officers from Gwynedd Council Housing Department.

6. It was noted that the two new housing developments included four houses and two bungalows, each with two bedrooms. It was added that it was intended to provide smaller units, creating more opportunities for families who were possibly under-occupying some units to move, thereby freeing the larger units.

7. In relation to the possibility that they could be let to people from outside the area, it was explained that houses were let to those at the top of the priority list. This was specifically referred to in relation to larger houses being released as new, smaller houses were built. It was explained that all housing associations had to adhere to these arrangements when letting houses.

8. Officers did not anticipate that it would be reasonable to note a bedroom as a 'box room' or cupboard in order to avoid the 'bedroom tax'. In addition, consideration would have to be given to the cost of demolishing walls in order to combine two bedrooms.

9. Tenants could not be forced to accept improvements to their houses apart from occasions when health and safety matters were a consideration.

10. It was accepted that it could be beneficial to couple the Community Investment Fund with methods of ensuring the continuation of the apprentices' employment.

11. The same opportunities had been provided to all Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd employees, and there were no differences between various parts of the County.

12. Different areas had been targeted to participate in the Junior Warden Scheme, and it was intended to contact different areas each year.

13. There was no intention to reduce the community warden resource. However, the overall warden arrangements were under consideration and trials had been undertaken with some wardens not residing within the specific sites of flats.

14. It was noted that CCG were now more familiar with their stock and intended to make better use of it. As a result, effort would be made not to dispose of provision that could be useful.

15. It was confirmed that no companies had received contracts without having tendered for the work.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd for their work and for attending the meeting.

#### **4. ELECT NOMINEE – CARTREFI CYMUNEDOL GWYNEDD**

a) It was noted that a request had been received for this Scrutiny Committee to elect a member to attend Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd's meetings held every six months.

b) Councillor Stephen Churchman expressed his willingness to attend the meetings.

**RESOLVED to elect Councillor Stephen Churchman to attend Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd meetings on behalf of this Scrutiny Committee.**

#### **5. SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION – SCOPING SUMMARY**

a) The Democratic Services Manager presented the Scope of the Scrutiny Investigation - Post-16 Further Education Transport.

b) She expanded on the background of the proposed scrutiny investigation and the draft scope was discussed further.

The main questions that the investigation would aim to answer were listed, and it was noted that two questions had been omitted from the Welsh version:

- What would be the outcome of changing the Post-16 Further Education Transport Policy?
- What is the outlook for Post-16 Education Transport?

c) It was explained that the investigation would start in December 2013 with a report submitted from scrutiny to the Executive in July 2014.

ch) The importance of the investigation was highlighted by a number of members, and the need to complete the investigation within a tight timescale was emphasised, so that any changes could be recommended in time for the next academic year.

d) It was confirmed that Debbie A. W. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) would act as Lead Officer for this scrutiny investigation.

**RESOLVED to elect the following members to be members of the lead group for the scrutiny investigation: -**

**Councillors - Stephen Churchman, Craig ap Iago, Caerwyn Roberts, Angela Russell, Gethin Glyn Williams and Gruffydd Williams.**

## **6. SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14**

a) The most recent version of this Scrutiny Committee's work programme was presented, and the Democratic Services Manager noted that the matters listed were open-ended and that it would be beneficial to note what the members wished to scrutinise in more detail. The members agreed, and it was decided to give the matter further consideration at the next Preparatory Meeting.

Following this, it was hoped that it would be possible to note what members wished to pursue when dealing with each individual matter.

b) It was confirmed that 'Marine Conservation Zones' and 'Antur Aelhaearn' were not now included in the work programme.

c) It was decided to change the wording of the second matter on the work programme to read: 'Control of caravans parking without permission on Council property and other land'.

ch) It was emphasised that the matters in the forward work programme had not been listed according to priority. Specific attention was drawn to 'parking fees' and it was agreed to request a report on the matter at the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee which would be held on 10 December 2013.

## **7. CRIME AND DISORDER MEETING**

In accordance with the resolution made in the Preparatory Meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 12 September 2013, enquiries were made in relation to arranging presentations from the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and the Head of North Wales Police Communications Centre at the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee, in its capacity as the Communities Scrutiny Committee (Crime and Disorder).

Unfortunately, it was not convenient for either to attend.

**RESOLVED to invite the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and the Head of North Wales Police Communications Centre to attend a meeting of this**



**Committee on 4 March 2014, acting in its capacity as the Communities Scrutiny Committee (Crime and Disorder).**

**8. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman noted that the renovations to Siambr Hywel Dda had now been completed and that it would be preferable for this Scrutiny Committee to meet there. He accepted that Ystafell Dwryd Penrhyndeudraeth was suitable for the Preparatory Meetings. This was accepted by the other members.

Furthermore, the Chairman requested that members send their apologies beforehand if they did not intend to attend Committee meetings. He added that this would be of particular value bearing in mind that the translators travelled to meetings only to find that their service was not required.

The meeting commenced at 10am and concluded at 12:05pm.

<b>NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 DECEMBER, 2013</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>The Parking System in Gwynedd</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Councillor W. Gareth Roberts</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>Councillor W. Gareth Roberts</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To respond to questions raised by the Committee.</b>

1. I was asked to respond to a series of questions by the Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to parking matters. I understand Committee members' interest in this matter and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to them at this Committee meeting.
2. Firstly, I would like to emphasise that I am currently not in a position to fully respond to all questions. The reason for this is that I have asked the Regulatory Department to undertake a review involving several matters which relate to parking. This work has been in the pipeline for some months and I am confident that it will now be completed within a few weeks. Once I have received all requested information, I intend to consider the findings and compile a report with recommendations to the attention of the Cabinet. My intention is to draw up proposals for the parking system which are suitable and appropriate for the towns, villages and communities of Gwynedd.
3. There can be no parking system that is ideal for everyone. Elements that appeal to some may be unacceptable to others. By establishing a new system in Gwynedd, my aim will be to try and have a system that meets the needs of communities and visitors to Gwynedd in the wider context of transport requirements, traffic and road safety. Of course, we cannot forget the critical financial context of local authorities when considering this matter.
4. We must accept that parking fees are never going to be popular. Given the choice, many would choose not to pay for parking. However, parking is an important tool in terms of traffic management and road safety in town centres and when used correctly, it is a very important mode of supporting and promoting the economy

on a local level, particularly in town centres. The important thing is to strike the right balance.

5. Many of us consider that paying for parking when we go on our holidays or on a shopping trip to a town outside our own areas is completely acceptable, but at the same time, we are not comfortable with paying for parking in our own. It is neither practical nor realistic to be to expect to get the best of both worlds.
6. It is likely that all members of the Scrutiny Committee are fully aware that the last time parking fees in Gwynedd were increased was back in April 2007. This was the first increase for about ten years. At the time, officers were strongly criticised by members for not pushing the idea of gradually increasing the parking fees over a period of time and that it had led to one substantial increase in 2007. At the time, clear guidance was provided from the Environment Scrutiny Committee that the fees were expected to be reviewed, and potentially increased on an annual basis, in order to avoid a similar situation.
7. Since 2007, the Regulatory Department has examined the fees and submitted information in relation to increasing the fees in accordance with the requirement of the regulations. For each year this had been done, the decision has been taken not to proceed with these increases, mainly due to the economic situation that has been in existence over this period. In addition, there is a need to bear in mind that Gwynedd fees, which were established in 2007, have been comparatively higher than other authorities over time. The information was considered in this context and it was decided to keep the fees as they were.
8. Two years ago, a review of the fees was undertaken by officers. Again, a decision was made in the context of the economic situation not to increase the fees, and to bridge the income deficit that arose due to the failure to increase fees for a period of two years. Hand in hand with this, it was agreed that a review of the fees structure should be undertaken. This review is part of a broader review that I have commissioned over the last few months.

### **Consistency of Fees**

9. Prior to 2007, fee levels were there was no consistency in the level of the fees across the county. Fees and prices could vary between car parks within specific towns and there was a very broad variety from one end of the county to the other. At the time, it was decided to try and simplify the system and to have a structure that was much simpler.
10. The decision on the new structure was based on the type of centres that some of the Council's pay and display car parks served. Having considered all available information, it was decided that Bangor, as a sub-regional shopping centre, would be the only town that could be considered differently, and only during winter months. Therefore, parking fees are consistent throughout the whole County

between 1 March and 31 October. These fees remain at the same level throughout the year in Bangor but fees everywhere else in the county are slightly lower during November, December, January and February. I can confirm that a few questions have been raised by members regarding the justification of this difference however there was a firm logic behind the decision made.

### **Determining fees**

11. Parking fees are determined based on the best information the Council has at the time. Obviously, the current fees level is an important consideration in this and considerations such as annual inflation and changes in VAT also influence this.
12. It should also be noted that fees are determined according to the status of a car park status and its location within a town or village. On this basis, car parks are designated as long stay, short stay or free car parks. There is a difference between prices that are charged in long stay car parks and short stay car parks if the driver wishes to park for a period of more than two hours. Usually, the short stay car parks are those that are close to town centres where turnover is important. In order to facilitate this, fees to park for longer periods are substantially higher in short stay car parks.
13. The determination of parking fees is also made in the context of the parking fees charged by other counties and the fees of private car parks. There is no consistency between the fees of public and private car parks across north Wales or even from county to county. However, over the last few years, and to a degree following changes to the arrangements in Gwynedd, several other Councils have adopted arrangements and fees similar to those of Gwynedd. Until recently, Gwynedd's fees have continued to be amongst the highest. It should also be borne in mind that the financial context local authorities are faced with means that prices are being increased in many counties in Wales for 2014.
14. The income derived from the Council's car parks is substantial. In 2012-13, income from car parks was £1.248m. However, the target income for the same period was £1.488m, which left the Service with a substantial financial deficit at the end of the year, mainly due to the inclement weather of summer 2012. In order to bridge this financial gap, the Service had to transfer funding from other budgets such as maintenance and improvement work and had to use funding from arrears received during the year. This had a considerable impact on the Department's ability to provide some services and to deliver improvement plans.
15. The Department's income target from pay and display car parks has increased in line with inflation nearly every year. Therefore, in order to meet the target, the fees should also increase by a percentage which is in line with inflation. Verbal information received from other authorities suggests that the situation has been similar in other authorities.

16. Of course, the weather is the greatest influence on parking income, and due to the inclement weather during summer 2012 the coastal car parks produced far less income than had been anticipated.
17. Even during a year with good weather such as summer 2013, the fees have only just reached the income target and this poses a significant risk to the Council and this risk will receive specific attention during my review of the Service.
18. The income raised from car parks is used for several other elements of providing Council services. It seems that the easiest way of looking at the situation is that the net income received centrally and that the money is then distributed to the various services as part of the Council's core budget. If the income was lower, in the current critical financial situation, more savings would have to be found, most probably through implementing cuts, in order to avoid an overspend. That would have an impact on the Council's ability to maintain some of those services. On the other hand, successfully increasing the income, if possible, would create an opportunity to reduce the need for cuts. My aim is to strike the correct balance in terms of the viability of town centres, to create an income and maintain services, rather than having to make further cuts and savings.

### **Reviewing the fees**

19. The Department has a responsibility to review the fees annually and conduct detailed reviews of the fees every three years. Whilst this has been undertaken during the previous years, it was been decided not to increase the fees in the context of the economy's situation. The review I have commissioned is a detailed review and it will introduce new recommendations on determining parking fees in the future.
20. In my opinion, there is nothing to prevent us from reviewing the current fees. There is a complex and broad context to be set. As I have noted, I am currently addressing these issues and I will submit a report to the Cabinet on the structure of new fees in the coming months.

### **Christmas Parking**

21. As the Committee Members are aware, as the Cabinet Member I am responsible for parking issues and every year I collaborate with the Cabinet Member for the Economy to seek to provide the parking scheme to support town centre businesses by providing free parking during the period leading up to Christmas. We have done this again this year and you probably saw the attention that was drawn to this in the local press and in Newyddion Gwynedd.
22. When drawing up the scheme this year, consideration was given to research work undertaken with local business in our towns and villages and an effort was made

to adapt the scheme to reflect the findings of that work and to consider the observations received from residents, especially in relation to commuters misusing the system and working against the basic aim of establishing the scheme.

23. Consideration to incorporating the Christmas Parking scheme into the permanent arrangement forms part of the review I have commissioned.

### **Consultation**

24. Information regarding the impact of parking arrangements on businesses and the viability of town centres in other areas has been collected and consideration will be given to this when I form my findings and report to the Cabinet. I am also working closely on the matter with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and the local information obtained by the Economy and Community Department is also very important for the review.

### **The Parking Review**

25. Several discussions have been held on establishing the direction and purpose of the Gwynedd Parking Review. The questions of what exactly is the role of parking, and what impact the methods used to control parking in the county are having on the local economy have been central to the discussions.
26. It is worth noting that the decision to begin the work on the Review was motivated by financial reasons, as the level of fees and parking prices had been established since 2007, and therefore these had not increased to correspond with inflation or changes in VAT rates. The outcome of this is that it is virtually impossible to reach the income targets from pay and display car parks as noted in the annual budget. Generally, the income targets have been increasing with annual inflation.
27. Following the initial attention given after the increases in 2007, generally only a very small number of observations or complaints were received in relation to the level of the current fees. Some observations were received in relation to how 'fair' the parking fee levels were when comparing centres, for example Dolgellau and Caernarfon, and observations noting that Bangor City was not enjoying a reduction in fees during the winter (November – February). The Service is receiving more comments in relation to the methods of controlling pay and display sites e.g. suggest paying as you leave the car parks and the machinery's inability to offer change rather than the fee levels.
28. Based on the information we have, whilst nearly everyone would wish not to pay for parking, there is no substantial dissatisfaction in relation to the current fee levels.

29. The proposed framework would give specific attention to the main aspects that the Council wishes to see if it were decided to change parking control arrangements. Having established and prioritised the main objectives, I will then move on to draw up operational options to achieve these. For example, should priority be given to supporting sustainable transport, perhaps an increase in the parking fee income could contribute to offering a subsidy to buses in rural areas. If priority was given to issues involving marketing centres for the benefit of the local economy, the increase or part of it could be given as an annual financial contribution to the centres e.g. through the city/town/community councils to be spent on schemes or improvements that are a priority for them locally, such as repairing buildings or public places in town centres, Christmas lights, town centre officers etc. A system like this would mean that the amount of contribution would naturally depend on the income received during the previous year.
30. I have included a copy of a discussion paper on parking issues as Appendix A to this report. This was presented to me to encourage discussion during the review. It includes a number of suggestions involving setting a direction and we would be happy to receive any observations on its contents. I wish to draw Members' attention to paragraphs 31 to 39 in the Appendix which provides an example of how the status of car parks could be designated based on the mandatory area and land use zone. Committee Members' observations on this example in particular would be very useful.
31. I will, of course, be considering a vast number of options, and therefore I will be looking at all of them in great detail during the coming weeks. I welcome the Communities Scrutiny Committee's desire to contribute to the discussion and to offer suggestions so I can present practical options to meet these objectives.

## CYNGOR GWYNEDD COUNCIL

**PARKING DISCUSSION PAPER****Introduction****Overview**

1. It is widely recognised that parking is an issue which received considerable attention when the future of commercial centres, market towns and rural communities are considered. It could be argued that the availability of adequate parking apart, many issues relating to parking get more attention than their influence on the viability of town centres possibly warrants.
2. Dealing with existing and future parking problems, such as a lack of parking supply at peak times or parked cars in sensitive locations, is an important factor in both achieving wider transport objectives and local town centre regeneration objectives. However, experience shows that overcoming them can, initially at least, appear difficult.
3. What is generally accepted is that appropriate management of parking can enhance public spaces, making towns more attractive to residents and visitors, thereby improving their economic viability. This is particularly pertinent in areas and centres benefiting from tourism, but also applies on a wider basis due to the significant growth of online and out of town shopping, where town centres experience higher levels of comparison shopping and competition. Most town centres looking at these issues put the emphasis on providing a wider and uniquely appealing offer on behalf of the town to offset these factors.

**Parking is not the primary factor affecting economic performance and vitality.**

4. The availability of adequate parking which meets community and customer needs is important but it is one element only in the economic vitality of a service/town centre; What an area, centre or town has to offer, as an overall product/attraction is of much more significance when it comes to consumer spending behaviour.
5. There has always been an ongoing risk that a community's trust in its parking management system, and in particular enforcement and revenue allocation, can become eroded. This is currently being experienced across Wales and the UK. Factors which can contribute to this may include poor communication ('pro-active transparency and engagement') on behalf of an authority, and vested interests being played out in public, for example, journalistic or political participants quick to leverage this potentially emotive area. Wider economic pressures, reduced Council budgets and the challenges experienced by the High Street, create fertile ground for such damaging responses and reactions.

**An opportunity exists for communities to work together to utilise parking demand in an informed and structured manner for the benefit of all.**



6. Actual impacts of parking management will depend on the status of the individual area, centre or town and its parking supply.
7. Gwynedd Council has always and continues to take a structured and considered approach in assessing both the opportunities and threats associated with parking demand throughout the County.
8. As such, the Council has recently undertaken a review of relevant parking research, including existing thinking and evidence with regard to parking management. It is considered that this is one important step in helping to maintain a clear view of the options available to decision makers, interest groups and the communities within Gwynedd
9. The overall message from the work undertaken is a positive one. If done properly, managing parking effectively would benefit an area or town centres. The advantages of a well managed parking system are potentially numerous and significant and include helping reduce the dominance of cars, while at the same time enhancing, not reducing, access. There is also real evidence to suggest that continuing to develop efficient and effective managed parking can benefit the overall quality of living and economy, and not damage them.
10. The following document aims to build upon the parking research review and provide a proposal framework for developing Gwynedd's parking strategy and policy making.

### **Gwynedd Parking Research Review**

11. The recent Gwynedd Parking Research Review has assessed evidence regarding the strategic and operational approaches to parking management and control in the UK and Wales. It also references various relevant national and regional strategic plans and associated objectives relating to travel, environment and economy.
12. In summary, the conclusions of the parking research review are:
  - Effective parking policy should exist within the wider and structured framework of existing national and local transport strategy.
  - Transport planning, whether on a national or local level should be suitably integrated and harmonised with associated environmental and business planning.
  - Transport strategy and parking policy therein will always exist to some extent within the context of 'tensions' between social, environmental and economic considerations.
  - Parking policy formulation, implementation and evaluation should adhere to a national and local area strategy approach, whilst also aim to understand and deliver as much as possible against differing specific community requirements and objectives.

- Parking policy should be formulated within the wider transport strategy approach of 'demand management' rather than merely responding to existing or predicted future demand.
- There is a responsibility on policy makers to utilise effective tools at their disposal to ensure that potential social, environmental and economic benefits are maximised. There is sufficient evidence to refute the suggestions that the impact of parking control and charging as a negative contributor to the economic vitality of a town centre.
- Parking charges should therefore be utilised as one of many important tools to enable a balanced and tailored approach to demand managed parking policy implementation.
- Creative and flexible parking policy development, including some degree of tailoring of policy implementation to differing needs is highly beneficial.
- There are significant advantages to ongoing strategy, policy development, implementation and evaluation being clearly communicated to all key stakeholders. Appropriate levels of consultation, transparency and community involvement within the decision making process can lead to more effective policy development, implementation and future evaluation.”

### **Overview of Aims & Objectives of Gwynedd’s parking strategy**

13. Gwynedd Council’s parking strategy aims to find a balance between supporting economic growth and being an effective demand management tool to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.
14. There is consensus that Gwynedd's parking strategy in dealing with the supply and management of car parking can be one of the most useful tools available to the local authority and community in helping it achieve economic, social and environmental objectives.
15. Examples of key aims and objectives for Gwynedd could be to:
  - I. Support the local economy (e.g. by making it easy for shoppers and tourists to visit Gwynedd's market towns) and facilitate development growth (e.g. by enabling the planned housing, redevelopment and employment growth in Gwynedd).
  - II. Meet residents’ needs for car parking near their homes (e.g. by introducing Residents’ Parking Zones if appropriate and requested).
  - III. Provide access to key services and facilities for special needs groups and the mobility impaired (e.g. by providing appropriate Blue Badge car parking spaces).

- IV. Improve access and journey time reliability for road users (e.g. by designing and managing on-street parking facilities to reduce traffic conflicts and delays).
- V. Encourage sustainable travel modes and help reduce reliance on the private car (e.g. by setting parking charges at appropriate levels).
- VI. Enhance the built and natural environment (e.g. by reducing the amount of land required for parking and by improving the look of street scenes through the enforcement of parking contraventions).
- VII. Make Gwynedd a safer place (e.g. by effectively enforcing parking policy).
- VIII. Raise revenue for the council to reinvest in transport services and measures (e.g. by using surplus parking revenues to subsidise expensive rural route bus services).

## **Overview of Opportunities**

16. It is considered that the review of parking in Gwynedd offers a series of opportunities for its town centres, villages and it can contribute towards achieving many of the authority's strategic objectives. It could also provide a clean future strategy which, if reviewed regularly, could provide clarity in terms of parking management and a basis for efficient working in the future including the process of reviewing fees and responding to and opportunities.
  - To create a proactive policy framework
  - To provide structure and impetus for integrated policy and decision making
  - To support wider social, economic and environmental initiatives and targets
  - To engage the community across Gwynedd and help change the perception of parking management from one of 'restrictions and penalties' to one of 'shared opportunities and rewards'.

## **Enforcement - “Keeping traffic moving and people safe”**

17. Following the successful introduction of CPE throughout Gwynedd since 2007, this proposed framework for strategy and policy making is being developed in the knowledge that any restrictions introduced will be effectively enforced.
18. This process also involves investigating requests received for parking controls from residents, town councils and other interested organisations, and the

formulation of proposals to deal with safety or obstruction problems, which are progressed through the traffic regulation order process.

19. Communication of the purpose of enforcement is important and is probably an area where more could be done.
20. Effective 'enforcement' should be given the proper public context as representing **only one vital element** of parking management. Both the benefits of CPE and the Council's 'light touch' approach need to be reiterated and properly communicated to ensure high confidence levels are maintained. In addition, the distinctions between the source and allocation of revenues raised via parking charges and the revenues derived from enforcement need to be clearly communicated and transparent in nature.

### **Overview of the regional policy context for parking management in Gwynedd:**

21. There are numerous references in National Transport Strategy to the need for parking management policy making and its implementation as part of achieving wider transport objectives.
22. The regional transport plans relevant to Gwynedd only have limited references specific to parking management. They do appear to fully recognise that this is an important element to an integrated demand management approach to achieving transport objectives.
23. It is recognised at both national, regional and local level that parking management can have a significant impact on wider social, economic and environmental initiatives. In particular with regard to maintaining and developing the access to and confidence in town centres.

### **Gwynedd Parking Policies**

24. Any future Gwynedd Car Parking Strategy will need to balance a range of economic, social and environmental objectives and exist within the wider demand management approach to transport. Any proposed policies will have to seek to strike such a balance and aim to recognise Gwynedd's particular circumstances.
25. The public parking stock both on and off road is an important existing community asset. The demand for use of this asset represents both a threat and an opportunity to the community. It is the Council's responsibility to properly manage the impact of this parking demand by minimising threats and maximising opportunities. In terms of maximising benefits, it is imperative to take a customer service perspective towards the communication and provision of the 'parking offer'.

### **Proposed Parking Strategy 1 – General Principle:**

26. The overall parking stock will be efficiently and effectively managed through the implementation of appropriate supply, maintenance, charging and enforcement measures to help achieve relevant local objectives.

## Consistency and Tailoring

27. In order to facilitate efficient and effective parking management, a balanced approach is needed. This should reflect the range of economic, social and environmental differences found in Gwynedd, but has to provide a workable and consistent framework. Given this, the management of car parking will probably need to be focused on a number of aggregated 'spatial areas' and 'land-use zones'.
28. It is proposed that the settlements of Gwynedd be divided into four spatial areas (see Table below) based on a hierarchy which considers the role and function of settlements, their level of facilities and services, population levels, the availability of sustainable transport alternatives and operational parking issues. A model could be:
29. **Table 3.1 Spatial Areas**

BAND	SPATIAL AREA
1	City of Bangor
2	Major Market Towns
3	Seasonally Impacted Towns &Centres
4	Smaller Towns & Villages

30. The 'Market Towns' (Band 2) could be: Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli
31. The 'Seasonally Impacted Towns & Centres' could be: Barmouth, Dolgellau, Llanberis, Abersoch, Bala, Tywyn, Aberdyfi, Harlech.
32. Within these settlements, each car park could be categorised in accordance to the uses of primary services:
33. **Table 3.2 Land- Use Zones**

BAND	LAND-USE ZONE
A	Regional Shopping & Commercial Zone
B	Employment Centre / Area
C	Residential Area
D	Seasonally Impacted / Tourism Area

## Benefits:

34. A standardised approach across towns can provide consistency, greater understanding and confidence from users.
35. It can also provide scope for flexibility and partial tailoring to specific needs of centres and towns, whilst remaining workable, manageable and cost effective.

36. This balanced solution allows flexibility to reflect different needs or different places at different times of the day, week or year. Regular review will allow this tailoring to develop and change over time.



**Communities Scrutiny Work Programme September 2013 – August 2014**

	Title	Brief Description
1.	<b>Post 16 Transport</b>	<b>Scrutiny Investigation to be held</b>
2.	<b>Control of caravans parking without permission on Council property and other areas</b>	<b>Issues which could be scrutinised have been considered and steps being taken to contact Natural Resources Wales, Snowdonia National Park along with the Council's Environmental Health with the intention of considering the matter again in the future.</b>
3.	<b>The effect of planning policies on community viability</b>	<b>There is a need to look at the impact of planning policies on the viability of our communities and the obstacles young people face in obtaining planning permission</b>
4.	<b>Parking fees</b>	<b>Cabinet Member – Environment to attend the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 10 December, 2013.</b>
5.	<b>Apprenticeship Plan</b>	
6.	Caravan monitoring arrangements and enforcement	Consider the efficiency of the Regulatory Department in relation to monitoring if people are living in caravan parks or if they are on holiday
7.	Attract and retain businesses in the County	How effective is the Council in attracting businesses and employment to the County?
8.	Improve the one – bedroom housing stock	The benefits system penalises people with spare bedrooms. There is a need to encourage housing associations to build a one-bedroom housing stock.
9.	Management of Hafan Pwllheli	Consider the possibility of returning the management to a private company.
10.	Use of bike and walking paths	
11..	Parc Glynllifon and Parc Padarn	
12.	Tourism	To consider the effect of the tourist industry on the economy of Gwynedd.
13.	Homelessness – Noddfa Hostel, Deiniolen	Preparatory notes for Scrutiny Investigation have been prepared



