

REPORT TO THE CABINET

19 FEBRUARY 2015

Cabinet Member: Cllr Dafydd Meurig

Subject: Parking Review

Contact officer: Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department

The decision sought/purpose of the report: To submit recommendations to change the parking management arrangements and the parking fees structure in Gwynedd to be implemented from 1 April 2015.

Local member's views The matter is relevant to all Members

Introduction

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Gwynedd Council's parking policies and procedures have remained more or less the same since 2007. It is therefore about time that they are reviewed in order to assess whether or not current parking arrangements meet with the needs of the Council and the Communities it represents.

1.2 There was also a need to review the propriety of the current fees structure as the fees have not changed since 2007, not even to reflect inflation rates or VAT changes. The fees would have increased by an average of 15% had they been adjusted regularly to reflect the impact of inflation and VAT changes during the time since 2007.

1.3 Current parking management arrangements and ideas and options for the future have been discussed informally at several meetings over the past two years. Those discussions were led by the Cabinet Member, in order to establish the priorities, the direction and to consider the research work that had been undertaken. The work also included an assessment of how parking is managed in other Counties.

1.4 The Communities Scrutiny Committee discussed the matter at its meeting on 10 December, 2013. Another report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on 1 October, 2014, where the potential impact of the recommendations on the residents and communities of the County was discussed. The Committee resolved;

to express satisfaction with the proposals of the review conditional on the following:

i) There is a need to encourage active collaboration with local communities on the management of car parks.

ii) The number of free car parks to be scrutinised locally after discussing the matter with local members.

iii) Although welcoming the idea of charging for parking in 'blue badge spaces', there is a need to ensure that any income derived is used to improve the facilities for users.

iv) The Cabinet should, when considering the proposals formally, receive comparative information especially from neighbouring councils

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to submit recommendations on how to manage parking in future. Recommendations are submitted for all of the aspects considered, along with the reasoning as to why the chosen option should be adopted. It outlines the potential financial and environmental effects and the potential impact on the local economy. Equality matters were also considered when preparing the report.
- 2.2 It must be acknowledged that parking can be a contentious issue and that proposals for parking management can prompt strong feelings from a personal and local perspective. However, we must look at the County as a whole and a review of the arrangements is inevitable in terms of financial sustainability in this challenging time for the authority's budgets and to ensure that our practical management arrangements are effective and efficient.
- 2.3 Not all of the proposals will be to everyone's liking, but I believe that what I am submitting will set a direction and context for balanced and effective parking management in Gwynedd for the future.
- 2.4 The recommendations are also being proposed in order to secure a fair balance in the Council's budget. The impact of inflation and VAT alone for the period since 2007 is around 15%. It must be ensured that the parking budget does not continue without responding to inflation which in turn adds to the financial pressures on other budgets and services.
- 2.5 The main points considered are as follows:
- Criteria for banding Cities, Towns and Villages
 - Criteria for Short Stay and Long Stay Designations, and free parking in the Council's off-street car parks.
 - Proposals for the car parking fees structure
 - Proposals for additional car parks to become pay and display car parks
 - Proposals / options for parking over the Christmas period.
 - Proposal / options for Blue Badge holders
 - Proposal for on-street parking fees
 - Proposal for Bus / Coach parking
 - Annual parking permits
 - Proposal for Resident parking
 - Management of private car parks
 - Proposed pilot schemes
 - Matters not taken forward and the reasons
 - Considerations for the future

3. CRITERIA FOR BANDING CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES

3.1 Banding the centres of Gwynedd is a sensible and fair way of determining car parking fees and research has been undertaken on the criteria used for this purpose by other authorities. The size of the retail area, whether it is a centre within a tourist area etc. will also be included in the consideration of the banding. The nature of the centres which provides the parking provision is also important in order to deliver good parking management.

3.2 The proposed banding criteria for the centres of Gwynedd are as follows:

Banding	Criteria
Band 1	More than 350 retail shops.
Band 2	Between 100 and 350 retail shops + main market towns.
Band 3	More than 50 retail shops and other businesses and towns and villages impacted by the holiday season, coastal, historic and leisure / entertainment centres.
Band 4	More than 20 retail shops and other businesses OR towns and villages impacted by the holiday season, coastal, historic and leisure / entertainment centres.
Band 5	Fewer than 20 retail shops and other businesses and no substantial seasonal impact.

Note: Other businesses include Pubs, Bed and Breakfast Establishments and Restaurants etc.

4. CRITERIA FOR SHORT STAY AND LONG STAY DESIGNATIONS, AND FREE PARKING IN THE COUNCIL'S OFF-STREET CAR PARKS

4.1 Currently, from the 114 car parks owned by the Council and managed by the Transportation Service, 17 have been designated as Short Stay car parks, 29 are Long Stay car parks and 68 car parks have free parking. The current situation is that there are no specific criteria to categorise these car parks to support short or long stay designations and very often it depends on historical circumstances. Generally however, the Short Stay car parks are those located nearer to town centres, and the Long Stay car parks are further away.

4.2 Research shows that setting criteria for designating car parks ensures consistency and fairness and offers clarity in terms of the Authority's objectives in providing short and long stay parking.

4.3 The following criterion is recommended in order to designate short and long stay car parks.

Car parks that are within approximately 100 metres of Town Centres will be designated as Short Stay car parks while others will be placed in the Long Stay category.

4.4 The majority of free car parks have been designated as such on the grounds that they fall into the Band 5 category, see 3.2.

5. PROPOSALS FOR THE CAR PARKING FEES STRUCTURE

5.1 Effective parking management can make a positive contribution to sustaining the local economy. Obviously, supporting the local economy is a primary aspiration for Gwynedd Council, and therefore, the parking fees structure has been designed with the following key aspects in mind:

- Short Stay facilities are for short stays only with a maximum stay time to encourage turnover. Long Stay facilities should be affordable for longer periods of time to encourage those who are not in any hurry to stay in the centre for longer periods of time.
- Fees structures that are easy for everyone to understand.
- Set fees that are reasonable and easy to pay
- Set fees for 24 hour periods in order to avoid confusion
- Offer opportunities for free on-street parking during quiet times to encourage trading on the street.
- Ensure free on-street parking for a limited time for people who have a few matters to deal with and need to do them quickly.

5.2 See below the fees structure table designed to satisfy these criteria [based on a £1 per hour fee]:

Band 1

Short Stay Car Parks: Maximum stay of three hours

1 hour	£1.00	Enforcement Hours: 08:00 – 18:00
2 hours	£2.00	
3 hours	£3.00	

Long Stay Car Parks: Also available to annual permit holders.

These proposed changes are no different to the current paying times and they do not affect the terms and conditions for annual permit holders in terms of the long stay provision.

No seasonal variations

Up to 4 hours	£2.00	Enforcement period: 24 hours a day
Up to 8 hours	£3.00	
Up to 12 hours	£4.00	
Up to 24 hours (carrying over from one day to the next)	£5.00	

Band 2

Short Stay Car Parks: Maximum stay of three hours

1 hours	£1.00	Enforcement Hours: 10:00 – 16:30
2 hours	£2.00	
3 hours	£3.00	

Long Stay Car Parks: Also available to annual permit holders.

These proposed changes are no different to the current paying times and they do not affect the terms and conditions for annual permit holders in terms of the long stay provision.

No seasonal variations

Up to 4 hours	£2.00	Enforcement period: 24 hours a day
Up to 8 hours	£3.00	
Up to 12 hours	£4.00	
Up to 24 hours (carrying over from one day to the next)	£5.00	

Band 3

Short Stay: Maximum stay of three hours

Summer		
1 hour	£1.00	Enforcement Hours: 8:00 – 18:00
2 hours	£2.00	
3 hours	£3.00	

Winter		
1 hour	£1.00	Enforcement Hours: 10:00 – 16:30:
2 hours	£2.00	
3 hours	£3.00	

Long Stay: Also available to annual permit holders and subject to 24 hour enforcement.

Summer		
Up to 4 hours	£3.00	Enforcement Hours: 24 hours
Up to 8 hours	£4.50	
Up to 12 hours	£6.00	
Up to 24 hours	£7.50	

Winter		
Up to 4 hours	£2.00	Enforcement Hours: 24 hours
Up to 8 hours	£3.00	
Up to 12 hours	£4.00	
Up to 24 hours	£5.00	

Band 4

Short Stay: No provision

Long Stay: Also available to annual permit holders.

Up to 4 hours	£1.00	Enforcement period: 24 hours
Up to 8 hours	£2.00	
Up to 12 hours	£3.00	
Up to 24 hours (carrying over from one day to the next)	£4.00	

Band 5

Free Parking

- 5.3 We emphasise that the proposed fees noted for each band in paragraph 5.2 above are indicative figures. Specific consideration must be given to the fee to be set in the context of the need to catch up with the impact of inflation and VAT since 2007 and the challenging financial context faced by the Council.
- 5.4 Work has been done jointly between the officers of the Regulatory Department and the Finance Department to model the likely income based on various fees. This is no mean feat as the income levels are influenced by several factors and many of those are beyond the control of the Council and the extent of their influence cannot be presumed. Nevertheless, based on the available information, the officers of both Departments are relatively confident that the changes to the fees structure and the parking management procedure can generate additional income of approximately £52,000 for the Council from the existing pay and display car parks.

Table 1

Table showing the estimated income from existing pay and display car parks based on the new fees structure.

Rate (based on the price of an hour in short stay)	Projected Income (net)	Difference between Current Income and the New Structure Projection	Observations
Current parking fees structure	£1,136,817.50	none	
£0.80	£1,003,082.18	-£133,735.32	
£1.00	£1,188,976.34	£52,158.84	Recommended scenario
£1.20	£1,411,972.34	£275,154.84	
£1.40	£1,548,866.35	£412,048.85	

5.5 The Scrutiny Committee was eager to offer the option for communities to either reduce local parking fees by subsidising the core fees that are approved or to add a higher premium to the fees in order to raise money for community use. For example, a Town Council could decide to increase fees by 20% say in addition to the basic fees and the additional revenue that would arise from this would be transferred to the Town Council by Gwynedd Council at the end of the financial year. It would be the Town Council's decision in terms of how to use this additional funding.

6. PROPOSAL FOR PARKING OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

6.1 A number of options have been considered for dealing with parking during the Christmas period, which varies from doing nothing at all to offering a free parking scheme that would cost the Council approximately £100,000 every year. The important point in considering this matter is that the original proposal must satisfy what we are seeking to achieve, namely to attract shoppers to Gwynedd's City and Towns during the time leading up to Christmas.

6.2 Again, the proposal must be clear and easy to understand. Following the arrangements implemented during Christmas 2013, questionnaires were handed out and most of the businesses and shoppers who responded noted that they believed that the arrangements had been beneficial, and therefore successful. It is therefore proposed that the arrangements for free parking during the lead up to Christmas are made permanent. The exact nature of the Scheme could vary from year to year. The decision on the operational arrangements will be agreed between the Head of Department and the Cabinet Member. The arrangements will be monitored from year to year. The basic arrangement offered for the free parking scheme during the lead up to Christmas is as follows:

Proposal	Estimated cost (£)
Free from the weekend before the first full week leading to the Christmas week. Fees to be charged again from 27 December onwards.	Up to £40,000.00

7. PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL CAR PARKS TO BECOME PAY AND DISPLAY CAR PARKS

7.1 By using the recommended criteria for designating Short Stay , Long Stay and free car parks (Section 4) and the criteria recommended for banding (Section 3), 1,163 of additional parking facilities would become pay and display car parks. This should generate additional revenue for the Council every year.

7.2 Income estimates based on a sensitivity analysis to establish the most likely additional revenue that could be generated from these car parks have been used in developing the business case:

Arfon	Des.	Banding	Number
Shell Site, Caernarfon	Long	2	160
Two car parks on Beach Road, Hirael, Bangor	Long	4	20 + 50
Cae Star, Bethesda	Long	4	55
Pant Dreiniog, Bethesda	Long	4	70
Dwyfor	Des.	Banding	Number
Car park near the Black Lion, Pwllheli	Long	2	63
Penmount, Pwllheli	Long	2	59
South Beach, Pwllheli	Long	2	15
Behind Lombard Street, Porthmadog	Short	2	30
Borth y Gest, Porthmadog	Long	2	60
Cei Bach, Porthmadog	Short	2	18
Aberistedd, Cricieth	Long	3	20
Car Park, Porth Neigwl	Long	4	25
Afonfawr, Penllech, Pen Llŷn	Long	4	40
Glan Pwll, Nefyn	Long	4	50
Y Ddôl, Nefyn	Long	4	50
Colwyn Banc, Beddgelert	Long	4	50
Meirionnydd	Des.	Banding	Number
Talbot Square, Barmouth	Short	3	40
Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi	Long	3	30
Castle Hotel, Harlech	Short	3	25
Rhodfa'r Môr, Tywyn	Long	3	114
Cae Bach, Tywyn	Long	3	60
Main Car Park, Penrhyndeudraeth	Long	4	40
Main Car Park, Trawsfynydd	Long	4	19

- 7.3 It should be noted that capital investment is needed to introduce pay and display facilities in these additional car parks in order to install the necessary electricity supply, machines and signs. Existing budgets and any revenue raised will have to be used to fund this investment. The estimated cost of individual items for modifying car parks is as follows:

Description	£
Supply and installation of one pay and display machine (per 50 locations)	3,200
Signage and lines	1,700
Legal Costs (Traffic Orders, Consultation and Advertising)	1,500

- 7.4 The cost of modifying individual car parks could be up to £20,000. The initial estimate of the capital needed to undertake all these modifications is approximately £300,000. Annual maintenance and management revenue is also a consideration in this business case and the budget will have to be revised to reflect this. If this is implemented, the work would be programmed over two or three financial years. It is anticipated that the work would be to bring all car parks on the list to an appropriate standard to make them a pay and display car park.

- 7.5 Based on the modelling work undertaken by the Regulatory Department and the Finance Department, it is assumed that the additional car parks noted in 7.2 of the pay and display car parks list should generate additional income of approximately £179,000 for the Council.

Table 2

Table showing the estimated income from additional pay and display car parks based on the new fees structure.

Rate (based on the price of an hour in short stay)	Projected Income (net)	Observations
£0.80	£158,971	
£1.00	£179,267	Recommended Scenario
£1.20	£207,154	
£1.40	£224,325	

8. PROPOSAL / OPTIONS FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

- 8.1 An initial consultation on the options available to deal with parking provision for blue badge holders was held around three years ago. The options are as follows:

- Free parking for blue badge holders in pay and display car parks (as existing)
- Free parking in Long Stay facilities only
- Free parking for a limited period
- Introduction of an annual ticketing system
- Charge the same fee for blue badge holders as other users

- 8.2 The recommendation of the initial consultation was to adopt an annual ticketing system. This was reliant on the fact that the revenue represented by the tickets introduced should be 'safeguarded' and used to access facilities in general within car parks and on the streets of the County's towns and villages. It is believed that this is a fair aspiration which addresses the needs of blue badge holders.

- 8.3 It has been estimated that it would take six months to develop such a scheme and the annual revenue generated (based on a ticket costing £30 per annum at that time) would be approximately £30,000 per annum. The price of an annual ticket would have to be examined again if it is decided to proceed with this option.

- 8.4 As part of the work in developing the detailed plan, it should be noted that a full equality impact assessment clause and full consultation would be needed before making a final decision on the details of implementing such a plan. This could take between 9 and 12 months to complete for the entire County. It is anticipated that the earliest point at which this proposal could be implemented would be 1 April 2016.

8.5 Gwynedd Council's current arrangements mean that Blue Badge holders are not financially penalised for their first offence if they breach the Council's parking procedures. This means a loss in income of approximately £22,000.00 which is shouldered by the Authority.

8.6 To coincide with many other authorities and given that the parking procedures have been in place for 8 years, it is proposed that such an arrangement should cease, and that cases when blue badge holders breach parking procedures should be dealt with in the same manner as other cases.

9. PROPOSAL FOR ON-STREET PARKING FEES

9.1 There is definitely scope for charging for on-street parking in cities, towns and other centres. This can generate revenue, however in some cases, it can also cause detrimental impact to the local economy, especially for those who wish to call by a shop when passing in order to deal with one or two matters e.g. to call at the bank, to buy a newspaper or loaf of bread.

9.2 The research undertaken clearly outlines that effective parking management includes a good mix of free short term parking along with facilities that are managed for those who wish to spend longer periods in the centres i.e. by means of pay and display car parks. Therefore, restricted stay bays that provide free car parking for short periods in centres is an essential provision for people who wish to call by quickly to shop or on business, and it supports the local economy. The parking fees structure which offers free parking in long stay car parks before 10am and after 11.30pm also contributes to this.

9.3 However, some areas would benefit from fees for on-street parking or parking on the highway as a way of managing the street/road effectively. Gwynedd already has such provisions on the Promenade in Barmouth and in Pen-y-gwryd. Such areas supplement the off-street parking facilities that are available and help to secure a good balance of on and off-street parking where there is no need for short term parking. It can also make an important contribution to the safety of road users.

9.4 The table below outlines locations recommended for providing on-street pay and display parking facilities along with the number of parking spaces, number of bays and the estimated revenue. There will be a need to adjust the revenue budget on an annual basis in order to reflect any additional maintenance costs deriving from these changes.

Location	Spaces	Capital Cost
Embankment Road, Pwllheli [Band	37	£10k
Promenade, Pwllheli [Band 4]	168	£15k
Promenede, Tywyn [Band 4]	102	£10k
Y Fach Scheme Abersoch [Band 4]	40	£80k

Total Spaces
347

10. PROPOSAL FOR BUS / COACH PARKING

- 10.1 Attracting Holiday Tour Coaches to Gwynedd's tourism centres is very important to the local economy. It is also important to support those coaches by providing sufficient parking provision, with adequate signage, and providing specific parking spaces for holiday coaches would ensure there are spaces available for those wishing to visit key tourist destinations.
- 10.2 Providing and allocating spaces for holiday coaches in car parks means that there would be a need to sacrifice some car parking spaces, and therefore would lead to some loss of income. It is believed that it is reasonable to charge a parking fee for coaches that visit the area's towns.
- 10.3 The following table outlines the recommended fees for parking holiday coaches in Long Stay facilities only within the four recommended bands:

Fees
£3.00 Half Day - £4.00 Full Day

Location	Spaces
Shell Site, Caernarfon	8
Y Maes Car Park, Cricieth	2
Station Yard, Porthmadog	7
Y Grin, Bala	9
Black Patch Car Park, Barmouth	10
Diffwys Square, Blaenau Ffestiniog	2
Min y Don Car Park, Harlech	6
Marian Car Park, Dolgellau	2

Total Spaces
46

- 10.4 It is estimated that the revenue generated from this arrangement could be as much as £8,500 per annum.

11. PROPOSAL FOR ANNUAL PARKING TICKETS

- 11.1 The current policy and fees for annual parking permits have been in place since the parking review in 2007. The numbers who purchase an annual permit is surprisingly low given the value for money the permit offers, with some 1200 residents in Gwynedd purchasing a permit annually for £100 (£2 a week). The price for a permit for those living outside Gwynedd is £200 (£4 a week), and the numbers are extremely low, around 29 permits annually. It seems that the different fee for those living outside Gwynedd does not encourage people to purchase an annual permit, and perhaps it is perceived as being parochial.

11.2 The low number of annual permits purchased is not a problem in terms of parking operation and management in Gwynedd. Nevertheless, it is a good offer, but the offer could benefit from improved marketing as an option that offers value for money. Perhaps this would increase its appeal for the county's residents and for those who work in Gwynedd or who visit the county often.

11.3 There are three elements to the proposal in respect of annual permits:

11.3.1 Improve the marketing of the annual permits to encourage more people to purchase them;

11.3.2 Abolish the differential fees for the residents of Gwynedd and people who are not Gwynedd residents;

11.3.3 Establish an annual fee of £125 [£2.50 a week] for everyone.

12. A PROPOSAL FOR RESIDENT PARKING

12.1 The current resident parking policy was essential so that the Council could recover its costs when adopting a resident parking scheme in any location. Briefly, this scheme allows a resident to have a permit for up to two cars. The current cost of this is £50 for the first car and £80 for the second car. There have been some successful resident parking schemes in Gwynedd, whilst other areas have refused to introduce the scheme after consulting locally.

12.2 It is proposed to keep this policy in its current form because the balance seems right at present between the numbers and the fees. The fee has not been increased since establishing the schemes and although there is no proposal to increase the fee at present, the fee must be reviewed regularly in accordance with the Council's standing regulations.

13. MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE CAR PARKS

13.1 The Transportation Service has been successful in attracting and undertaking management activities including enforcement, inspections, maintenance and collecting money from a number of private car parks. Details of the current sites that are managed together with the number of bays are as follows:

Location	Commission	Spaces
Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor	Management and Enforcement	1,867
Galeri, Caernarfon	Management and Enforcement	20
Ysbyty Alltwen, Tremadog	Enforcement	140
Lôn y Felin, Felinheli	Enforcement	41
CADW car park, Harlech	Enforcement	25
The Clinic, Pwllheli	Enforcement	25

- 13.2 There are variations in the scope of the activities and the financial arrangements of the bodies that have commissioned Gwynedd Council to provide these services. This is unavoidable for meeting enforcement and administrative costs to respond to the needs of the landowners in question in individual contracts.
- 13.3 Contracting with private / public bodies to manage car parks is obviously an opportunity to generate income, but the arrangements and fees should be reviewed regularly and monitored against the actual costs of managing the assets. This will ensure that providing activities does not cost more to the Authority than what the management fee generates.
- 13.4 The proposal is to continue with the current arrangements but to monitor the actual costs to the Council of undertaking these activities on behalf of external bodies/companies and to take action on any situation creating a financial loss by renegotiating or ending the agreement.

14. PROPOSED PILOT SCHEME

Cashless payment

- 14.1 The Authority's pay and display machines make it necessary for those using them to pay with coins, and they do not give change unless the correct amount is put into the machine. This has received negative coverage in the press. There have also been a small number of complaints from the public. The procedure of paying with cash also restricts the Council in terms of allowing further gradual increase in parking fees in the future in accordance with inflation etc.
- 14.2 There are annual costs of around £36,450 for a private company to empty the small change in pay and display machines every year.
- 14.3 There have been cases where people have broken into pay and display machines and stolen the money, thus creating a direct financial loss, and a loss of revenue for some time afterwards because the machines have broken and are therefore out of service.
- 14.4 The proposal is to trial some cashless options by introducing pay and display machines where people can pay with credit / debit cards or even pay by using their mobile phones. After trialling and completing further research into the technology and the associated costs, the new machines could be introduced gradually over a period of time as the current pay and display machines near the end of their operational lives.

15. MATTERS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN DEVELOPED FURTHER

Pay on exit

- 15.1 It is accepted that a system of pay on exit can provide flexibility for those parking to stay in centres for longer periods than expected without fear of receiving a parking penalty ticket.
- 15.2 There are substantial installation and maintenance (on demand) costs associated with pay on exit arrangements, and because of the demand on staff time and financial resources, this option has been disregarded and has not been developed further as part of this review. Also, installing and operating a pay on exit system would have an effect on vehicles entering and exiting car parks where the turnover of parking spaces is substantial. We would also lose parking spaces to make room for installing and operating such a system.

Automatic number plate recognition

- 15.3 This technology enables Civil Enforcement Officers to use camera technology to establish whether specific vehicles have paid and displayed in the Council's off-street car parks.
- 15.4 Substantial investment would be needed in order to ensure that such a system was operated successfully. The pay and display machines would have to be changed to a type where the vehicle's registration plate has to be entered. There would also be a need to keep a central database to verify the data collected in car parks.
- 15.5 Because of the substantial capital costs associated with establishing this complex system, this option was disregarded and was not developed further as part of this review.

CCTV Enforcement

- 15.6 CCTV can be used to enforce parking offences in areas where CCTV is operational e.g. a High Street environment. Those contravening the parking order would receive a penalty charge notice through the post.
- 15.7 This system has been adopted in some centres but it is perceived as an impersonal system. There are also high costs associated with establishing the system, and complexities with the quality of the CCTV cameras that would be required.
- 15.8 Because of the costs, the complexity and the negative and impersonal image, this option was disregarded and was not developed further as part of this review.

16. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

Car park assets in other departments:

- 16.1 The Council evidently owns a number of car parks in Rural Parks, Leisure Centres etc. Obviously the management procedures of Council Departments differ from each other in terms of how they deal with the assets.
- 16.2 As the Council is seen by the public as one uniform body, it is considered that it would be worth adopting the proposals outlined in this review for all the parking assets that are owned by the Council.
- 16.3 After this review, it is proposed that a business plan is prepared to identify other parking assets in the County and to establish what revenue could be generated from these assets should the proposals outlined in this review be adopted.

17. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 17.1 As part of the review, consideration has been given to the effect that some of the options for changing the parking arrangements could have. This work has included a survey of business owners and members of the public by means of a questionnaire. Whilst it is accepted that an increase in parking fees is not popular, there is recognition that they are an appropriate and a necessary way of managing traffic and supporting the local economy.
- 17.2 Also, consideration was given to the relevance of the proposals to the general equality duties and to all of the equality groups [protected characteristics]. It is considered that the main matter to assess is the possible effect of the changes on blue badge holders. The recommendation that could have the greatest effect is to establish a procedure where a parking fee is charged on blue badge holders, but that a procedure of a reasonably priced annual permit is adopted. The income from the annual permits would be reinvested in improvements to car parks [designated wide bays, accessible machines, convenient access to the street].
- 17.3 It is not intended to establish the scheme until a programme of consultation with groups that could be affected has been followed, and until a full impact assessment has been undertaken.
- 17.4 It is not considered that this proposal to restructure parking fees in Gwynedd is detrimental or that it has a disproportionate effect on any group of residents.

18. RECOMMENDATION

- 18.1 That the Cabinet gives its approval to the recommendations of the report.
- 18.2 That the new fees structure becomes operational from 1 April 2015.

- 18.3 That an annual permit scheme where the income is reinvested in improvements to facilitate access for blue badge holders is developed over the next 12 months and that a consultation and an impact assessment on the scheme are undertaken during that time.
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Views of the statutory officers

The Chief Executive:

"The rationale behind the report's recommendations are clear, and as noted in the report the matter has been addressed by the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

The Monitoring Officer:

Statutory arrangements need to be followed to adapt the relevant orders identified in the report, the intention to conduct equality impact assessments, where appropriate, on individual elements before making a final decision regarding implementation.

The Head of Finance Department:

I support the effort to review the parking management arrangements; as the report acknowledges, there is some time since this was last done so the current review is timely. I can confirm that officers from the Finance Department have assisted the author to prepare the report and I am satisfied with the accuracy of the figures.

As the report notes, if the impact of inflation and changes in the rate of VAT had been fully implemented, parking costs would be about 15% higher than they are currently. Budgeting conventions - and the Council's Financial Procedure Rules - expect that inflation is applied annually to our budgets, and when the increase in actual income is not consistent with the increase in the budget there is a deficit. The service has received assistance in the past to deal with this.

Increasing parking fees to those outlined in the report would go some of the way to achieving the levels of income that would have been received had inflation been applied annually in accordance with usual budgeting arrangements. It is a matter for the Cabinet to decide where income level should be set within this context and also in view of its aspiration to support the economy of the centres of our city, towns and villages. Although this is, therefore, a matter that requires a political decision, members should take the decision with all the financial information to hand."

Appendices