

Equality Impact Assessment

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

I Details

I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Parking Review Report 2021

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Details of the Options and Proposals:

The main headings considered were as follows:

➤ Main changes since the previous review in 2015

It was identified that the main changes since the last review were more electric vehicles on the roads, a reduction in the use of cash, events held in the County, an increase in the use of houses and second homes for holiday accommodation and an increase in the use of motorhomes. Here are the details of the relevant options or proposals:

Electric Vehicles - set a fees structure for charging points that enable effective turnover and use.

Use of Cash - introduce more machines where payment can be made with a debit or credit card in the Council's car parks.

Events - Clearly communicate to event organisers that they are responsible for ensuring that the size of the event corresponds to the parking capacity and that it is not acceptable to use residential parking spaces.

Second Homes and Holiday Accommodation - Research will be conducted in relation to the impact

of holiday accommodation on communities; this research will be carried out in the form of a residents' questionnaire, with parking being a specific matter that will be addressed.

Motorhomes - Continue to monitor the success of the 'no overnight parking' signs that have been installed in our car parks. The Department to re-establish bye-laws that existed on lay-bys adjacent to the road, to enable them to take enforcement steps against those who use them to park their motorhomes overnight.

- **Proposal to change the structure of Parking Fees** – To adopt a new pay and display fees structure from 1 April 2021 onwards to apply to Long Stay car parks within Band 2 (Retail and Local Service Centres) and the car parks within Band 3 (Seasonal Car Parks). The structure has been designed to keep the fees affordable for the people of Gwynedd and address the financial gap facing the Department.
- **Proposals / options for parking over the Christmas period** – There is a desire to consider offering free parking in January, and possibly to reduce the period prior to Christmas so that there would be no financial impact. As a Task Group we will continue to discuss and weigh up the suitability of the alternative schemes before we come to a firm decision for Christmas 2021.
- **Proposal / options for Blue Badge holders** – The Blue Badge scheme allows disabled badge holders to park for free in any Gwynedd Council Pay and Display Car Park, and to park on double yellow lines for up to three hours (without creating an obstruction). We propose that the best option for the time being is to retain the scheme as it is.
- **A proposal for Resident parking** - It is proposed that this policy should be retained in its current form as it continues to be fit for purpose. There is a proposal to review the annual fees and increase these to meet with inflation only.
- **Proposal / options to strengthen the Parking Enforcement Team** - It is proposed to use £28,000 (per annum - including pension and tax) from the income that is generated from fines to employ an additional full time officer.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Ceri Hughes Thomas, Parking and Streetworks Manager

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

January 2021

Version 1

2) Action

2.1 Who are the partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

In accordance with the request made by the Communities Scrutiny Committee, a Parking Task Group was established to undertake the review. The Task Group consists of four local members, namely, Councillor Angela Russell; Councillor Annwen Hughes; Councillor Kevin Morris Jones and Councillor Gethin Glyn Williams, who have collaborated constructively with Dafydd Wyn Williams, Head of Environment Department and other officers from the Department.

Of course, it is hugely beneficial to have four local members as part of the group as they represent, and are in close contact with the public. With this crucial link in place, the Parking Task Group proceeded to hold a review in a considerate and cautious way and every effort was made to reach an appropriate balance between generating adequate income levels and keeping the Parking fees affordable for Gwynedd's residents.

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics?

Naturally, as part of the review, the blue badge scheme had to be reviewed, to weigh up its validity in its current form. There was a strong feeling among members that the scheme continued to be fit for purpose and that it was not the right time to introduce changes. It was emphasised that the lives of blue badge holders were difficult enough without having to fetch a pay and display ticket from a machine. In addition, on the grounds of road safety, there is an argument in favour of retaining the free parking for blue badge holders in our car parks as they are entitled to park on double yellow lines for a period of up to three hours. This could possibly undermine road safety for other users.

It was agreed to retain the scheme in its current form for the time being.

Of course, if it was intended to introduce changes to the scheme in the future, we would undertake a full consultation with the affected groups before deciding on any changes.

Second Homes and Holiday Accommodation

In order to justify and strengthen any recommendations, further research will be conducted in relation to the impact of holiday accommodation on communities; this research will be carried out in the form of a residents' questionnaire, with parking being a specific matter that will be addressed.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

There has been no recent engagement with people and protected characteristics due to the above.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

Electric Vehicles

The Council is committed to undertake appropriate measures towards making the County carbon neutral by 2030, following the Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. Of course, one of the measures is to invest and install charging points in our car parks. It is proposed to install charging points in 23 locations during 2020/21.

A significant increase is predicted in the number of electric vehicles on our roads between now and 2030. See graph 1 for forecasts from SP Energy. A copy of SP Energy's full report is as follows:

https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Electric_Vehicle_Uptake_Forecasts.pdf

Also, an additional income target of £50,000 has been set for the Environment Department to meet by collecting income from charging points installed in our car parks.

Reduction in the use of cash

With information technology developing rapidly and offering alternative methods of payment to people in the modern world, the vision is to introduce more machines where payment can be made with a debit or credit card at the Council's car parks. This method could be in addition to the traditional method of paying with cash.

During summer 2020, an additional scheme was submitted enabling users to pay for parking using a mobile phone. The alternative method has proven popular thus far and we have received very positive feedback about the service's ease of use. We will continue to monitor the use of the additional method.

There are significant costs facing the Department in paying for companies to collect cash from the pay and display machines. These costs are approximately £60,000 per year. There are also risks of course that cash is sitting in our machines and from time to time people damage them and steal the money.

Our aim in the long term is to monitor the use of the new method and conduct a review of the Council's current agreement to collect and bank money by identifying opportunities to reduce the frequency of collection, save money and in turn have a positive impact on the environment.

In-depth research was carried out during 2020 on this topic - refer to **Appendix A** for full details.

Events

Staging outdoor events and competitions is very popular by now and it is pleasing to see people descending into Gwynedd in order to participate and support. However, the Task Group had concerns that such events create huge disruption in some areas and parking specifically is a problematic matter.

The Task Group acknowledges that there are positive economic elements to holding events. The Task Group has also concluded that event organisers should be given a clear message that they are responsible for ensuring that the size of the event corresponds to the parking capacity available at the destination where their event is being held.

Please refer to **Appendix B** for an overview of how the number of events has increased over the last 5 years.

Second homes and Holiday Accommodation

During the last few years, there has been a change in trends in terms of how people travel. There has been a general increase in the number of people who decide to stay in this country for their holidays, rather than go abroad, due to the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the cost associated with overseas travel.

Statistics from a company called AirDNA (a company that collects information about holiday accommodation from companies advertising on platforms such as AirBNB and Home and Away) show that there has been a significant increase in the number of holiday accommodation over recent years. The statistics show that there is a 915% increase in the total inventories available between January 2017 and September 2019 in Gwynedd.

In order to justify and strengthen any recommendations, further research will be conducted in relation to the impact of holiday accommodation on communities; this research will be carried out in the form of a residents' questionnaire, with parking being a specific matter that will be addressed.

Motorhomes

There has been a substantial increase over the past five years in those who travel around in their own or a hired motorhome. We recognise that the vast majority of motorhome owners are responsible and plan their routes and purposeful staying places before they commence their journey, it is obvious that many choose to stay overnight on streets, roads or in car parks.

The Environment Department and the Economy Department have already installed 'no overnight stay' signs in a number of locations where Complaints have been received, and this has been largely successful. The Task Group is happy with these arrangements as long as departments continue to monitor.

The Task Group is keen for the Department to re-establish existing byelaws on staying adjacent to the road to enable it to impose on overnight occupants of holiday vehicles. A summary of the options is set out in **Appendix C**.

Parking Fee Structure

The Pay and Display fees have not changed since 2015, not even to reflect inflation rates. The fees would have increased by an average of 12.5% if had they been adjusted regularly to reflect the impact of inflation.

It is inevitable that we will review the fees to ensure that there is sufficient income to meet the financial gap in the Council budget, which by 2022/23 is £ 400,000.

Parking over the Christmas period

The Task Group acknowledges the importance of the principles associated with permitting free parking over the Christmas period, but it appears that there is room to improve the arrangements.

The current arrangements mean a loss in income of approximately £45,000 annually. However, the Council is not eager to do away with the scheme as local businesses consider it to be beneficial and therefore the Task Group proceeded and discussed alternative options.

As a Task Group we will continue to discuss and evaluate the suitability of the alternative plans before reaching a firm decision for Christmas 2021.

Blue Badge Scheme

As I mentioned above, we believe that it is not appropriate to make any modifications to this scheme at this time. We will revisit the topic in the future.

Resident Parking Scheme

The Task Group is satisfied that the policy remains fit for purpose, so we will not be proposing modifications to the scheme at this time. It is intended to review the annual fees and increase to meet

inflation only to ensure that the scheme remains self-sufficient.

Strengthening of the Parking Enforcement Team

In accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004, it is expected that the income collected from fines will go towards funding the enforcement team and the support it requires. The existing cost of the enforcement team is £196,000 (18/19) and £380,000 (18/19) income from fines is collected annually by us. Annual overtime costs are approximately £9,000 and this due to the availability of officers to ensure core presence on occasions.

It is intended to use £28,000 (per annum - including pension and tax) from the income that emanates from fines to employ an additional full-time officer. Certainly, this additional resource would reduce the need for overtime payments and would make a valuable contribution towards the strategic objectives of the team, e.g. raise customer service standards by addressing problematic locations urgently, increased attendance during events in order to ensure safety and the like.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

Second Homes and Holiday Accommodation

Further research will be conducted in relation to the impact of holiday accommodation on communities; this research will be carried out in the form of a residents' questionnaire, with parking being a specific matter that will be addressed.

Motorhomes

We will actively gather evidence about the use of holiday vehicles and the true scale of the problem they create.

Parking over the Christmas Period

Further research will be undertaken before deciding on a suitable alternative plan for the 2021 Christmas period. Every effort will be made to work with the Economy department and consult with local businesses.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council has to give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to any other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Negative / Too premature to report	<p>Any changes brought about by the use of second homes and holiday accommodation as well as holiday vehicles can create a bad feeling between visitors and the local people. However, every effort will be made to ensure fairness and consistency before any changes are decided.</p> <p>Most of the changes to the proposed fee structure also affect the car parks that greet visitors. Visitors may think this is unfair. However, the new structure has been streamlined to be more customer friendly and by comparison with neighboring Local Authorities, the fees remain affordable.</p>
The Welsh language	Too premature to report	<p>We will continue to ensure that all signage any any new software are bilingual.</p> <p>We will give full consideration to the language whilst dealing with issues surrounding second homes and holiday accommodation to ensure there is no negative impact on the Welsh language.</p>
Disability	Positive	<p>No changes are proposed to the blue badge scheme, therefore we do not anticipate a specific impact for disabled people.</p> <p>A small percentage of disabled people have larger vehicles than usual (adapted to meet their needs). We will need to keep this in mind before installing height barriers in the future.</p> <p>When installing any charging points for electric vehicles, we must ensure that the equipment is suitable for a disabled person to use. Any signs offering instructions will need to be located in a place that is accessible to all Car Park users, including disabled people in wheelchairs.</p> <p>It is proposed we employ an additional officer within the Parking team. This means that the additional resource could</p>

		facilitate the team to respond to more complaints where disabled bays are being misused or vehicles parking with disregard which impede wheelchair users to use pavements or cross roads safely due to illegally parked vehicles.
Sex	None	We do not anticipate any impact in terms of sex
Age	Positive	It seems that more elderly people tend to be disabled so a higher percentage of older people will not pay for parking. A higher percentage of older people tend to favor paying by cash so we will introduce a credit or mobile phone payment method in addition to the traditional cash payment method. We will monitor trends and take appropriate action.
Sexual orientation	None	We do not anticipate any impact in terms of sexual orientation
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	We do not anticipate any impact in terms of religion or belief (or non belief)
Gender reassignment	None	We do not anticipate any impact in terms of gender reassignment
Pregnancy and maternity	None	We do not anticipate any impact in terms of pregnancy and maternity
Marriage and civil partnership	None	We do not anticipate any impact in terms of marriage and civil partnership

* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?

Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	<p>It is true to say that families with a disabled person in the family tend to be poorer.</p> <p>As a Council we will continue not to charge disabled people for parking so that they can access the shops and other services as usual.</p>
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	<p>An increase in the parking structure can make things more difficult for those on low incomes. Therefore, we have tried to shape the new structure so that the majority of the impact will apply to car parks that are effected on a seasonal basis.</p> <p>It must also be kept in mind that the Council offers an Annual Parking Ticket. The pass enables holders to park in any long stay car park throughout the County without time restriction. In line with this review, there is a recommendation to increase the cost of this ticket from £ 125 to £ 140 per annum (in accordance with inflation). Ticket holders who use a car park on a daily basis would pay £ 11.67 a month, equivalent to 39p a day. The Task Group was of the view that the ticket continued to offer value for money.</p> <p>This can be a suitable solution for people on low incomes.</p> <p>The Council also offer residents a parking ticket for £60 per year. We appreciate that the lack of parking spaces outside homes is an issue due to an increase in the number of vehicles. This ticket allows residents to park in the Long Stay car park closest to their home.</p> <p>By appointing an additional resource in the parking team, more attention will be given to enforcing misuse within disabled bays and dealing with cars parked at bus stops. This means that disabled people will have more opportunity to use the disabled parking bays and access the low floor buses. Of course, this helps parents who have babies or toddlers in prams as well.</p>
Encouraging good relationships	Yes / No	<p>By keeping the blue badge scheme the same, parking remains free for disabled people and they are still able to get out and socialize within the community.</p> <p>Issues associated with second homes and holiday</p>

		accommodation can be a sensitive topic in some areas so we need to be mindful not to create ill feeling between visitors and locals.
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* to be deleted as appropriate

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?

The recommendation certainly will make a positive impact in terms of disabled and elderly people.

No changes are proposed to the blue badge scheme as members of the Task Group felt that the scheme was still fit for purpose and that it was not timely to introduce changes at this stage. Blue badge holders continue to receive free parking in our car parks and are allowed to park on double yellow lines for up to 3 hours.

By keeping the blue badge scheme the same, disabled people are still able to go out and socialize with the community without having to worry about extra costs or rushing back to the car before the pay and display ticket expires.

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?

We do not envisage any significant negative impact deriving from the recommendations in terms of equality.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

4.4 What steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

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4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

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5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

Electric Vehicles

Once a fee structure has been devised and adopted, ongoing monitoring will be key to gauging

whether the fees are sufficient to cover the electricity costs. The usage will also need to be closely monitored and other suitable locations identified if necessary to install more charging points.

Use of cash

Our long-term intention is to monitor the use of alternative methods and to undertake a review of the Council's current agreement for the collection and banking of funds identifying opportunities to reduce the frequency of collections, save money and in turn have a positive impact on the environment.

Events

After clear consultation and communication with organizers that it is their responsibility to ensure that the size of the event matches the Parking capacity, we will endeavor to monitor the Parking situation during events.

Second Homes and Holiday Accommodation

Research will be undertaken in relation to the impact of holiday accommodation on communities, this research will be undertaken in the form of a residents' questionnaire, with parking being a specific issue to be addressed.

Holiday Vehicles

We will Continue to monitor the success of the 'no overnight parking' signs that have been installed in our car parks. The Department to re-establish bye-laws that existed on lay-bys adjacent to the road, to enable them to take enforcement steps against those who use them to park their motorhomes overnight.

Parking Fee Structure

To adopt a new pay and display fee structure from 1st April 2021 onwards and constantly monitor income to ensure we address the financial gap.

Parking during the Christmas period

As a Task Group we will continue to discuss and evaluate the suitability of the alternative plans before reaching a firm decision for Christmas 2021.

Blue Badge Scheme

We propose to leave the scheme the same, with no changes for the time being.

Resident Parking Scheme

It is proposed to keep this policy as it is because the current scheme remains fit for purpose. There is a Proposal to review the annual fees and increase only to meet inflation.

Strengthen the Parking Enforcement Team

Should the parking team be strengthened with an additional enforcement officer, I would certainly see a positive difference immediately by being able to respond to complaints promptly. We will also monitor the positive impact by reducing the costs of overtime in appointing an additional officer.

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