

CABINET MEETING

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 January 2016
Report Subject	Parking Provision in Talacre
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Talacre is an important element of the visitor economy in Flintshire for day visitors and in particular due to the concentration of caravan parks in the area. The beach in Talacre is popular with Flintshire residents and draws visitors from a wide catchment area. Parking provision in the village however is not adequate to cope with demand and this impacts on business vitality, the experience of visitors and the quality of life of local people.

The report provides a summary of the processes followed to date in tackling the parking problems in Talacre and recommends future actions to alleviate the parking pressure in the village, recognising that options for parking in the village are limited by the wildlife importance of most of the surrounding land.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet approves the proposed plan for providing improved parking in Talacre.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND ISSUES TO CAR PARKING IN TALACRE
1.01	<p>Talacre is an important contributor to the tourism economy in Flintshire. The 2009 Masterplan stated that “Talacre and Gronant occupy a unique position in the county’s tourism offer, being the only significant beach areas and close to the major conurbations of the North West.” (Hyder Consulting 2009). The tourism economy of Flintshire is dominated by the caravan park accommodation base which is predominantly located in the far north west of the County. The caravan parks in Gronant and Talacre have seen major investment over the years and offer a very high quality experience to visitors. The beach at Talacre draws visitors from a wide catchment area and is extensively used by local people. It is also a popular and iconic location for photography and filming.</p>
1.02	<p>The visitor experience in Talacre and Gronant, though, does not match the quality of the accommodation base. The 2009 Masterplan was commissioned to set out an ambitious long term vision for the area to improve its visitor appeal and to help to resolve the longstanding conflicts between the needs of visitors, businesses, local people and wildlife conservation.</p>
1.03	<p>Parking was identified by the stakeholders in Talacre as the most pressing issue in the village. The majority of visitors use the beach car park throughout the year but this is subject to flooding and when this coincides with peak visitor numbers parking demand massively outstrips supply. Visitors park in every available space in the village, causing considerable inconvenience to local people and choking the narrow roads so that vehicle flows are impeded. Visitors face long queues to enter the village to find no available parking and then again long waits to leave again. This has a major negative impact on the visitor perceptions of Flintshire, on local people and on the viability of the businesses in the village. Total parking provision in the village in 2009 was 429 spaces as 160 spaces had already been lost from the beach car park.</p>

1.04	<p>The 2009 Masterplan set out a wide range of suggested improvements in Talacre and Gronant to improve their appeal to visitors. The study gave particular emphasis to seeking solutions to the parking issues in the area. A wide range of parking options were considered but there were a number of constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council owns very little land in and around the village; the majority is privately owned, in particular by ENI. • Most of the land around the village is legally protected for wildlife by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and includes areas protected under international law. • The beach car park is managed by NRW and is subject to gradual reduction over time as natural processes regenerate the site and salt marsh and sand dunes re-colonise. <p>The Council, after securing external funding and after a lengthy period of negotiation with ENI and NRW, was able to develop a 150 space overspill car park in the village which is available for a period of ten years. This came into operation early in 2015.</p>
1.05	<p>To alleviate the pressures on the village on busy days it is proposed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Lighthouse car park is leased from its owners, extended to include the Council owned car park adjacent to the site and managed by the Council to maximise parking availability 2. Agreement is sought with the Talacre Community Centre Trust to use the land to the rear of the building for parking. 3. An agreement is made with NRW and ENI for the Council to manage the hardstanding area at the entrance to the beach car park 4. Small scale maintenance work is undertaken on the beach car park to maximise availability during the year. 5. That a Traffic Regulation Order is put in place to regulate on-street parking, reduce congestion on busy days, and alleviate problems for residents. The provision of such a traffic order cannot be accommodated without the providing some alternative off road parking facilities. In the event that the above agreements cannot be made, the Traffic Order will need to be reconsidered. <p>It is expected that subject to the various agreements that these measures will be put in place before the summer of 2016.</p>

1.06	<p>The proposed plan for parking provides 415 spaces as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overspill car park on Gamfa Wen (already in place) - 150 spaces. • Lighthouse Inn car park leased from owners and existing Council car park - 60 spaces. • Hard standing area at entrance to beach car park (subject to closure due to flooding) - 35 spaces. • Land to the rear of community centre - 70 spaces. • A portion of the beach car park is still available for visitor use although it is subject to closure due to flooding and will reduce in size over time as the natural habitat regenerates - 100 spaces <p>The parking situation in Talacre will continue to be monitored and an ongoing dialogue will be maintained with ENI and NRW to find further long-term alternative solutions as the beach car park reduces in size.</p>
1.07	<p>As the proposed charges for car parking in Talacre are above the levels charged in most other towns in Flintshire, the local community will share some of the financial benefit, in line with the Councils parking strategy. The contribution can be used to improve visitor infrastructure in the area.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>There are a number of costs associated with the parking proposals outlined above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Lighthouse Inn car park to maximise capacity and install parking ticket machines. • Improvements to the beach car park. • Improvements to the rear of the community centre (once agreement has been reached with organization operating the centre) • Installation of parking ticket machines. • Advertising of off street parking place order and on street TRO, including signing and lining works. • Cleaning and maintenance of car park areas and parking enforcement. <p>The costs will be offset by income from annual parking revenues.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Member, Ward Member, Natural Resources Wales, ENI.</p>
3.02	<p>Consultations are on-going with the group that hold the long term lease for the community centre to gain agreement to the proposals.</p>

3.03	A local publicity event will be held in the village in January to allow local businesses and the local community to comment on the proposals.
3.04	Further consultation will be required to take place when the Traffic Regulation Order for on-street parking is developed.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The sustainability of the proposed parking provision in Talacre is subject to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The beach car park remaining in operation for a number of further years. This is subject, though, to unpredictable natural processes such a major flooding event, which could render it permanently unavailable. 2. Levels of parking use matching the estimates used. The estimates of demand can fluctuate greatly and are very weather dependent. 3.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Talacre and Gronant Masterplan 2009, Hyder Consulting.</p> <p>Contact Officers: Ruth Cartwright Civil Parking and Environmental Enforcement Manager / Niall Waller Enterprise and Regeneration Manager Telephone: 01352 704796 / 01352 702137 E-mail: ruth.cartwright@flintshire.gov.uk / niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>ENI Liverpool Bay Operating Company Limited (ENI): the company operating the gas terminal at Point of Ayr in Talacre.</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales (NRW): a Welsh Assembly sponsored body, created in 2013, to safeguard the environment and natural resources of Wales</p>