

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**                    **CABINET**

**DATE:**                            **17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013**

**REPORT BY:**                    **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

**SUBJECT:**                        **CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT AND TRAFFIC  
MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN MOLD, TALACRE  
AND LOWER GRONANT**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To seek approval for the:

- retention of car park charges in Mold and
- the provision of new car parks and the introduction of charges in Talacre and Lower Gronant.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

**Mold**

2.01 At the Council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Members resolved to invite Cabinet to review its proposed Off Street Parking Policy as follows:-

1. No introduction of charges for car parks which are currently free or to implement any increase in current car parking charges later.
2. The withdrawal of car parking charges in Holywell from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.
3. A review of the car parking charging and management system in Mold in partnership with Mold Town Council to be completed and implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.
4. The introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, with the transfer of employees currently employed in car park management and control to the new service, in accordance with the Council's established Human Resources (HR) procedures.

2.02 A bid for CPE Powers was submitted to Welsh Government in April 2013 and was approved on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

## **Talacre and Lower Gronant**

- 2.03 As a separate issue to consideration of CPR and car parking charges, a Masterplan was produced for Talacre and Lower Gronant in 2010 which explored the issues, opportunities and trends affecting the area and made recommendations for its regeneration and sustainability. One of these was to introduce a dispersal strategy for visitors to help alleviate traffic congestion and parking issues primarily experienced within Talacre on the local road network. In addition, the Masterplan highlighted short term parking solutions to resolve the increased demand for parking in high season which far exceeds the current capacity. This has been a long standing issue which causes severe congestion problems on certain days of the year particularly for the local communities in these areas.
- 2.04 A longer term issue, which the Masterplan also acknowledged, is around planning for the replacement of the beach car park. The current beach car park in Talacre is a designated 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' and forms part of the significantly important sand dune habitat. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has previously closed a substantial section of the car park, reducing its capacity from 400 – 240 spaces. The agency is also in ongoing discussion with the Council over the future management of the remaining car park, including the temporary closure of further sections to allow these to recover from the impacts of seasonal vehicular usage.
- 2.05 External funding through the Rural Development Plan has been secured to help fund the proposals.

## **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Mold**

- 3.01 In accordance with point 2.01.3 above, a review has been undertaken jointly between Flintshire County Council and Mold Town Council on a partnership basis. The review has included consultation with the Town's traders and other businesses.
- 3.02 The review of Mold's car park charging regime was conducted within the following Terms of Reference:-
1. To further develop baseline data on the current On-Street and Off-Street parking management measures in Mold, including vehicle numbers, existing car park charges in the various car parks and current Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

2. To clarify the impacts of the proposed introduction of CPE on the current arrangements for On and Off-Street parking management in 1. above.
  3. To analyse the potential options for car park charges in Mold and their impact upon vehicle movements within them and through the town, noting that removal of charges could lead to inconsiderate parking by motorists which could create traffic management and health and safety issues.
  4. To identify and recommend whether changes should be made to the current On-Street and Off-Street parking management measures in Mold, based on 1. 2. and 3. above.
  5. To review the use of any income derived from charging, including subsidising CPE and the cost of car park management, as well as for local benefit.
- 3.03 Officers from the Council, together with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment have had a number of positive discussions with representatives from Mold Town Council. The following range of Options was discussed:-
- Option 1 – No charges
  - Option 2 – Status quo
  - Option 3 – Status quo with free after 3pm
  - Option 4 – Increase charges
  - Option 5 – Increase charges with free after 3pm.
- 3.04 On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2013, Mold Town Council considered the range of options available and decided upon Option 4. This is the Option which is recommended for approval. Appendix 1 sets out a Summary of the options appraisal that has been undertaken.
- 3.05 During the discussions, a number of key points have emerged:-
1. The implementation of CPE from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 will displace vehicles from the streets onto Mold's car parks. There is therefore a need to manage the use of the Town's car parks effectively, if Mold Towns' vibrancy and vitality is to be maintained. Charging for the use of the Town's car parks has historically been seen as a key means of achieving this objective.
  2. Mold's car parks and their surrounding environment would benefit from further substantial investment to make them more attractive to visitors, recognising that they are often the first impression of Mold's 'offer' to many people who have not been to the Town before.

3. The County Council is not likely to have the level of funding for any substantial investment in upgrading any of its car parks throughout Flintshire from its core budgets – either capital or revenue for the foreseeable future. The financial constraints on the Council are such that any maintenance that will be undertaken is likely to be reactive and, in the main, undertaken to address health and safety requirements. This is likely to lead to a further gradual reduction in the condition of our car parks and their surroundings.
4. On the basis of current analysis and assumptions of likely numbers, retaining car park charges in Mold would mean two extra employees would be required to undertake Off-street enforcement in the Town. These will be added to the complement of staff required to deliver On-Street enforcement in Mold. All staff would be flexible and will undertake enforcement of both On and Off-Street parking infringements.
5. In the future, it is anticipated that the enforcement officers will become more flexible and be able to enforce against other environmental infringements.
6. All extra costs associated with retaining car park charges in Mold could be funded through the income generated, as a first call on it. These costs, which are anticipated to be £133k pa, are for: Warden Provision; Management; Cash Collection; Ticket Machines, including their upgrade; PCN Charges; Welfare Facilities; Sundries; Stationery.
7. The cost to the Council associated with the implementation and management of CPE will be greater than the off-street income generated in Mold. However, it is recognised that the Council needs to invest in measures aimed at improving the standard of our car parks and on measures aimed at relieving or preventing traffic congestion. A priority should be given to the Mold area if changes are introduced there.
8. It is important to note that income from off-street car park charges will vary and can not be guaranteed. The combined income from on and off street parking will be required to cover the cost incurred by Council from these activities. Any modest surplus that is made over and above the costs of providing CPE and off-street parking management could be utilised for investment in car parks in the town. This could either be on the basis of an annual programme related to the annual trading position or could provide the potential for using a proportion of the anticipated surplus income to fund capital work through a considered financing option which could lever in and generate an initial substantial capital sum to invest in a programme of works.

9. If approved, it will be important that we develop a monitoring arrangement between the County Council and Mold Town Council to ensure that the introduction of the new Traffic Management arrangements is managed transparently.
- 3.06 If Cabinet approve the continuation of charging in Mold, the opportunity will be taken to simplify the ticket machines throughout the Town.

### **Talacre and Lower Gronant**

- 3.07 After securing funding from the Rural Development Plan, numerous sites have been explored and assessed for suitability to provide additional car parking capacity; see Appendix 2 for the locations of all sites explored.
- 3.08 During the sites appraisal process officers encountered a number of conflicting challenges in terms of land ownership, implementation constraints, management agreements, community preferences, environmental and wildlife protections, permissions, cost and conditions applied to such parking facilities.
- 3.09 Approval is now being sought to deliver these proposals through to implementation stage. The schemes are still subject to obtaining permissions and consents (where applicable) and full negotiation on the terms and conditions with the landowners; these stages may result in amendments to the proposals.
- 3.10 Appendix 3 sets out an options appraisal of the sites. All schemes are proposed to be low impact, informal and seasonal parking areas which are sympathetic to the environment, noting that the Crofts Club car park is an existing tarmac car park.
- 3.11 For both the Bridlewood Riding Centre and Crofts Club car parks schemes it is proposed that the landowners take full operational, management and liability responsibilities. Therefore, no income will be generated off these two schemes as ownership and control will remain with the businesses.
- 3.12 In order to take forward the package of schemes, Flintshire County Council is likely to have to make a financial contribution towards the works.
- 3.13 A piece of land, outside the settlement boundary has become available for purchase in Talacre (Site 12 in Appendix 2). This is an excellent opportunity for Flintshire County Council to acquire a piece of land which would be suitable for off street parking. The District Valuer has given a valuation of the land but this is still subject to negotiation with the landowner. If Flintshire County Council is successful in acquiring this land, the Council will take on the full operational, management and liability responsibilities for the site.

- 3.14 The largest proposed site is located within the Warren at the end of Gamfa Wen, Talacre (Site 7b in Appendix 2). This is an ideal location for visitors due to its close proximity to the beach and it will prove to be a very attractive and rural informal car park. Whilst this location is less favoured by the Gamfa Wen residents and businesses on Station Road, recognition has been given by them that the current congestion and parking issues cannot continue.
- 3.15 A further proposed site is located along Station Road, Talacre (site 9 in Appendix 2) and would form off-road parking on the current highway verge. This would provide parking throughout the year, rather than seasonally and would be available on a permanent basis. This is the option most favoured by residents and businesses. However, the construction costs per parking space delivered are high and alternative engineering options are being investigated. This option is being held in reserve should agreement not be reached with landowners and regulatory bodies during the detailed negotiation phase on sites 7b and 12.
- 3.16 The total costs of the purchase and construction of the Talacre and Lower Gronant schemes is up to £243,100. Funding of £175,000 is available from the Rural Development Programme (RDP). This would require the Council identifying funding of up to £68,100 to complete the schemes. There is currently no allocation for such works within the Capital programme. Options to address this include re prioritising expenditure within the existing capital programme to provide the funding or consideration of an appropriate financing option which may be funded from the income to be generated from parking charges (see 3.17 below).
- 3.17 It is proposed that the Council charge for parking on site numbers 7b and 12 (or 9 if implemented) in Appendix 2 during the tourism season (April – September). It is common for parking charges to be adopted at seaside car parks and the average daily rates appears to be in the region of £2.00-£7.00 across the United Kingdom. It is proposed that £4.00 is charged as a flat rate for the day in both of the overspill car parks.
- 3.18 If approved, the new arrangements will provide 293 extra spaces, which will make a significant and positive difference to the current congestion issues faced during the summer season.
- 3.19 As part of the wider streetscape improvements for Talacre, it is proposed that the existing toilets are up-graded and disabled access and an outside wash facility are incorporated. The works are planned to be in place ready for next season (starting April 2014) and the toilets will be available to the general public on a seasonal basis. Outside the tourism season it is proposed that arrangements will be made with a local business to provide a public convenience.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members approve the retention of car park charges in Mold, as set out in Option 4 of Appendix 1 to the report.
- 4.02 That Members approve the proposals for expanding the number of car parking spaces in Talacre and Lower Gronant, together with the introduction of off street car parking charges on the car parks, shown in Appendix 2, sites 7b and 12 (or 9 if implemented), as set out in the report.
- 4.03 That Members grant delegated authority to the Director of Environment, following consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment to amend the charges in 4.01 and 4.02, as deemed appropriate to meet local circumstances. For Mold, any changes will be introduced in consultation with Mold Town Council.
- 4.04 That Members grant delegated authority to the Director of Environment and Head of Finance following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Environment to review the funding options for progressing investment in Mold and Talacre and Gronant and agree the future approach.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Mold**

- 5.01 The budget process for 2013/14 provided for no car parking charges after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. Therefore, the Council can meet all of its fixed cost obligations in relation to car parks from the existing and future budget provision.
- 5.02 Implementing off street charges proposed in Option 4 of Appendix 1, will enable any funds generated which are in excess of the costs to be re-invested in Mold, to relieve or prevent congestion in the town.
- 5.03 The figures take account of the ground rent payable for King Street Car Park as a percentage of all income generated within this car park goes to the landlord. All other ongoing cost items are in 3.04.6 above. In addition, it is estimated that the existing level of car park permits generating £7k per income annum will be maintained.
- 5.04 Some of the potential capital re-investment required to provide suitable and adequate parking facilities in Mold could be major, for example, resurfacing and re-lining the car parks and upgrading their street lighting provision and drainage.
- 5.05 Flintshire County Council are operating under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act and as such any off street pay and display income is

not ring fenced under the Act and the residue can be used by the Council as it sees fit.

### **Talacre and Lower Gronant**

- 5.06 The total estimated costs of the purchase and construction of the Talacre and Lower Gronant schemes is up to £243,100. It is anticipated that this cost will be jointly funded by Rural Development Programme (RDP) of £175,000 with the balance being met directly by the Council. If this for example were to be through say Prudential Borrowing over 10 years, it could be funded as follows. Income at £4 per vehicle per day is estimated at £27,600 based on 230 chargeable spaces and these being used 50% of time during the 59 day peak summer season. It is necessary for an enforcement provision at an estimated 0.5 FTE totalling £9,850. Prudential Borrowing is estimated to cost £8,513 per annum for 10 years plus ongoing annual maintenance costs of £4,000. This is estimated to leave an annual surplus of £5,238 which can then be utilised towards cash collection costs and/or any un-planned maintenance. It should also be noted that projected income will depend on seasonal demand and churn on the car parks.
- 5.07 The upgraded toilets are to be financed using RDP monies, supplemented by Council funding from existing budgets for the disabled access works.

### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 None as a direct result of this report.

### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 Should be positive in terms of parking controls and general street/traffic improvement.
- 7.02 For the Talacre and Gronant proposals, officers have undertaken the necessary assessments and consultation with regulators to ensure that the designs are sympathetic to the environment and will have minimal impact on wildlife and the habitat. The schemes will also include small scale environmental enhancements as mitigation for the parking areas.

### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 Positive in creating increased access opportunities for those with disabilities.

### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 The retention of car park charges in Mold, introduction of charges in Talacre and Lower Gronant and enforcement of drivers' parking

outside the lines of bays, or unauthorised in disabled bays across the County, means that the current team of 6.5 FTE's will need to grow to 8 employees. These extra costs are included in the financial assumptions outlined in Section 5.

- 9.02 North Wales Police have confirmed that the traffic warden they employ on a part time basis and funded through local Town Councils is subject to TUPE regulations. They have agreed to assist in managing his transfer to FCC and he has been included in ongoing consultations with the existing Parking Services staff on the proposed new structure and operational requirements from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

## **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 Key stakeholders including the Town and Community Council, Local Members, staff, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

### **Mold**

- 11.01 Initial report to Executive, March 2010.
- 11.02 Update report to Environment Scrutiny Committee: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013.
- 11.03 Meetings with staff and other key stakeholders, such as Town & Community Councils.
- 11.04 Mold County Council Members, Mold Town Council, Businesses in Mold.

### **Talacre and Lower Gronant**

- 11.05 We have undertaken thorough consultation with the key stakeholders and the wider community of Talacre and Lower Gronant.
- 11.06 The local Ward Members, who are supportive of the proposals.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

- 12.01 Appendix 1 – Summary of Options Appraisal  
Appendix 2 – Map – Potential Car Parking Sites in Talacre and Lower Gronant  
Appendix 3 – Options Appraisal

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

### **Background Documents:**

Full Report from Mold Town Council

**Contact Officer:** Carl Longland  
**Telephone:** 01352 704500  
**E-mail:** [carl.longland@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:carl.longland@flintshire.gov.uk)