Cyngor Tref Trallwng Welshpool Town Council

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Title	Car Parking at Maes y Dre - Sept 26
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OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

1. **To authorise officers to prepare a detailed business case and options appraisal for charging at both parking areas at Maes y Dre Recreation Ground, including proposed tariffs and free-parking periods, forecast gross and net income, non-domestic rates and other liabilities, enforcement options, legal and data protection requirements, displacement risks and the effect on existing users.**
2. **To authorise officers to engage with sports clubs, the nearby nursery, the school and other affected users as part of that assessment.**
3. **To receive a further report before any decision is made to introduce parking charges or enter into an enforcement contract.**

1. Purpose

1. To consider whether officers should undertake a detailed assessment of introducing parking charges at the Maes y Dre Recreation Ground car parks.

2. Background

1. There are 41 marked parking spaces at Maes y Dre Recreation Ground along with several more unmarked areas. A new CCTV camera was installed in July, providing further evidence of how the parking areas are being used.
2. Use is not limited to visitors taking part in recreational activities. Evidence indicates that users include people working in the town, sports club members and visitors, users of the nearby nursery, and parents or carers undertaking school drop-off and collection.
3. The Operations & Development Committee considered charging for parking in May 2025 and decided not to proceed. At that time, average occupancy was approximately 17 spaces. Average daily occupancy has since increased to around 30 spaces.
4. The proposed byelaws being considered by the Council would allow the Council to charge for parking and use the byelaw fixed penalty notice arrangements to support enforcement. An

alternative would be to contract enforcement to a third-party provider, potentially at no direct cost to the Council. If charging were introduced, automated number plate recognition enforcement linked to our existing payment systems is considered the most likely approach.

5. Any scheme would need to cover both the main car park and the parking area in front of the bowling club. Charging in only one area would be likely to displace vehicles to the other area and reduce the effectiveness of the scheme.

3. Advice

1. The increase in occupancy since May 2025 provides a reasonable basis for reviewing the Committee's previous decision. The principal issue for Members is whether charging would improve the management and availability of parking spaces while generating sufficient net income to justify the operational and reputational implications.

2. A charging arrangement could discourage long-stay parking by people working in the town and make spaces more readily available for recreation ground users. However, charging could also affect sports clubs, the nearby nursery, school-related users and other established users of the site.

3. If the Council wishes to proceed, officers consider that a substantial initial free-parking period should be assessed. A period of up to two hours, followed by a single whole-day charge, could reduce the effect on many sports and community users while discouraging unrestricted all-day parking. The appropriate period and charge would need to be supported by further usage and financial analysis.

4. Before a final decision is made, a business case should establish the anticipated gross and net income, proposed tariff, enforcement model, installation and signage requirements, contractual terms, non-domestic rates implications and any other liabilities. It should also assess whether exemptions or other arrangements are practical without making enforcement unduly complex.

5. Third-party enforcement using automated number plate recognition may reduce the direct administrative burden on the Council. Any proposed arrangement would nevertheless require careful examination of the provider's terms, data protection arrangements, appeals process, signage, service standards and treatment of users.

6. There is a reputational risk if the Council introduces charges at a recreation ground used by sports clubs, families and nearby community facilities. This must be balanced against improved parking management and the net income available to support the site and other Council services. Clear communication and engagement with affected organisations would be required before implementation.

7. It is therefore proposed that officers obtain further information and prepare a detailed options and business case report. This would allow Members to consider the likely benefits, costs and effects before deciding whether to introduce charges.

4. Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan

1. The proposal relates directly to the Open Spaces action OS1, which requires the Council to audit its play areas, pitches, open spaces and income generation. It also supports the action FS4, which provides for the development of a three-year budget balancing savings with new income generation.

5. Resource & Legal Implications

1. The precise financial implications have not yet been confirmed. A business case would need to identify anticipated income and any costs or liabilities arising from signage, equipment, administration, enforcement, maintenance, contractual arrangements and non-domestic rates. Although third-party enforcement may be available at no direct cost, the full commercial terms

and effect on parking income would require assessment. Officer time would also be required to procure or establish the scheme, engage with users and monitor its operation.

2. Charging and enforcement could not commence unless the Council has the necessary legal authority and the proposed byelaws have been properly made, confirmed where required and brought into force. Any scheme would need clear terms, appropriate signage and a lawful enforcement and appeals process. An automated number plate recognition scheme would also involve the processing of personal data and would require compliance with applicable data protection requirements. Procurement and contractual requirements would apply if a third-party provider were appointed.

6. Specific Implications

1. **Crime and Disorder** - The new CCTV provision and any future automated enforcement system may assist with oversight of the parking areas and deter some unauthorised or antisocial activity. The design of the scheme should avoid creating additional parking disputes or displacement to nearby roads and land.

2. **Biodiversity** - N/A

3. **Well-being** - Effective parking management could improve access to recreation and sporting facilities. Conversely, charges could discourage some users or transfer parking to surrounding areas. A suitable free-parking period and engagement with sports clubs and other affected users would help to manage these effects.

4. **Risk Management** - The principal risks are adverse public reaction, displacement of vehicles, insufficient net income, legal or data protection non-compliance, unsuitable contractual terms and unintended effects on sports and community users. These risks should be addressed through a full business case, legal and procurement checks, engagement with affected organisations, clear signage and an appropriate review mechanism.

7. Recommendation

1. To authorise officers to prepare a detailed business case and options appraisal for charging at both parking areas at Maes y Dre Recreation Ground, including proposed tariffs and free-parking periods, forecast gross and net income, non-domestic rates and other liabilities, enforcement options, legal and data protection requirements, displacement risks and the effect on existing users.

2. To authorise officers to engage with sports clubs, the nearby nursery, the school and other affected users as part of that assessment.

3. To receive a further report before any decision is made to introduce parking charges or enter into an enforcement contract.

8. Decision

1. To resolve to approve the recommendations as above.