To: Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

Petition Requesting Further Parking Prohibitions, Aberdare Road, Merthyr Tydfil

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To inform Cabinet about the outcome of the technical and road safety investigations carried out following the receipt of the above petition.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Cabinet will be aware that a petition requesting the removal of the current on-street parking near the veterinary surgery was reported to the Council meeting held on 27th April 2011.

1.2 The South Wales Police indicated their support for the removal of the current parking on the south side of Aberdare Road in a letter to Councillor Paul Brown, dated 8th November 2010 but also alluded to the potential for this to increase traffic speeds. A copy of this letter is attached under Appendix 1.

1.3 Subsequently traffic engineering and road safety investigations were carried out to establish the effects of the parking currently permitted on Aberdare Road and assess the implications of its removal.

1.4 The results of technical and road safety investigations were as follows:-

i) Sufficient road width is available throughout the length of Aberdare Road where parking is currently permitted to allow two vehicles to pass in safety providing drivers demonstrate the
normal levels of care required when passing through areas such as this. It is accepted that this is particularly pertinent when one vehicle is large, for example a bus, but no additional evidence to support the anecdotal reference in the Police letter to larger vehicles having to swerve or mount the kerb to avoid collisions, could be found.

ii) The personal injury accident records obtained from the Police database show that there have been only 3 incidents in the area where parking is permitted within the last 3 years and none of these were attributable to the on-street parking.

iii) During the investigations it was noticed that the presence of parked vehicles had the beneficial effect of reducing traffic speeds and it is felt that, because of the significant increased road width that would become available if these were removed, the potential for an increase in speed towards the junction at the east end of Aberdare Road is of great concern.

iv) In addition to the road safety issues touched upon in i to iii above, on a wider social/environmental basis previous experience has shown that vehicles displaced by new parking prohibitions usually seek alternative on-street parking in nearby areas and in the light of the residential nature of, and the current levels of parking in the other roads in the immediate vicinity, there is the prospect of a decantation or displacement of parking. The Police advice takes no cognisance of these wider implications. A separate petition to Council submitted by residents of Georgetown setting out concerns about present parking problems is already under investigation and may be impacted by the introduction of additional restrictions on Aberdare Road. Further impacts may be felt after the opening of the new Health Park but these remain conjecture at present.

1.5 Councillors should note that the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in accordance with the Road Traffic Act should, in general, be justifiable on clear road safety grounds, which is not the case for any additional restrictions on Aberdare Road. Therefore, any proposal for the introduction of further parking prohibitions on this road would be predicated on an amenity basis. It should also be noted that the parking restrictions would be difficult to defend in the case of an objection or legal challenge. In addition, all prohibition of waiting at any time restrictions contain a standard statutory exemption that allows disabled badge holders to park for up to three hours and therefore it is likely some parking will remain or be attracted to Aberdare Road.

1.6 A plan showing the extent of the requested prohibition of parking is attached at Appendix 2.
2.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no negative effects have been identified at this stage.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

3.1 The introduction of any new parking prohibitions on Aberdare Road would usually place increased financial demands upon the Council’s traffic management budget at a time when it is, in the main, being directed towards the implementation of the Civil Parking Enforcement regime however the Cyfarthfa Electoral Division Councillors have indicated that the costs arising from the proposed restriction could be met from their Biffa funds. These costs are estimated to be circa £2,750.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION(S) that

a. no further parking prohibitions be introduced on this road at this time.

b. The traffic management and parking situation on Aberdare Road be re-examined following the opening of the new Health Centre and once sufficient time has elapsed for any effects this might have on the traffic flows and parking patterns to become clear.

c. In the event that Cabinet resolves to make an Order, consideration be given to the offer of Biffa funding made by the Cyfarthfa Electoral Division Councillors.

GARY THOMAS
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

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Consultation has been undertaken with Executive Board in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.
Councillor Paul Brown  
C/O Gellideg Foundation  
Gellideg  
Merthyr Tydfil  

8th November 2010  

Dear Paul  

Re Double yellow lining Aberdare Road  

Following on from previous discussions in relation to the community concerns expressed over parked vehicles on Aberdare Road. Please receive my full support.  

It is quite clear that persons either working or visiting the town are making use of this section of road to park and avoid any payment at the designated car parks.  

Earlier this year the traffic management officer conducted a survey at an adjacent road namely Ynysfach Road due to similar concerns expressed, the circumstances on Aberdare Road are not too dissimilar and frequently I receive and hear anecdotal evidence of vehicles and in particular local buses either having to swerve to avoid a collision or having to mount the pavement to allow vehicles travelling in the opposite direction right of passage.  

Whilst there is evidence to support the fact that parked vehicles act as a natural speed reducer, I am of the opinion that the views expressed in the earlier traffic management officers report are equally as valid for this section of road and South Wales Police would support local members in their efforts to have parking restrictions along this section of road on the south side of Aberdare Road as you traverse the hill towards Heolgerrig.  

Yours sincerely  

Max Davies  
Chief Inspector  
Merthyr Tydfil Area commander
PROPOSED ADDITIONAL PROHIBITION OF WAITING AT ANY TIME RESTRICTION ABERDARE ROAD