

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 20TH MARCH, 2017

REFERENCE FROM HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 13TH FEBRUARY, 2017

“ REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF MATTER – BARRY HOSPITAL CAR
PARK FINES (COUNCILLOR DR. I.J. JOHNSON) –

Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson presented his Request for Consideration and advised that recently the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board had introduced car parking fines at Barry Hospital for inappropriate use of parking facilities or being parked in incorrect bays. The reason given by the Local Health Board for this was that it would manage the car parking availability more effectively and discourage individuals using hospital car parks for non-hospital business.

He added that a number of concerned local residents in the Barry area had contacted him following receipt of fines for what they considered to be routine visits to the hospital, and they were worried by the implications of the charging policy. He stated that he was concerned by their treatment and that others may not attend hospital appointments as a result of this policy.

He also stated that it would have been helpful to have a representative of the local Health Board at the Scrutiny Committee to explain the evidence base for this proposal and to answer two key questions. Firstly, in 2008, hospital car parking charges were ended and he wondered whether this was a way of reintroducing them. Secondly, Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson stated that he wanted to hear the evidence base and for the Committee to have the opportunity to consider the parking policy. He added that he had been provided with an opportunity to meet with the Health Board officers but felt that, for the purpose of transparency, it was better for his concerns to be discussed in public.

Following this, the Chairman read out a statement provided by Councillor R.J. Bertin. In his representations, Councillor Bertin stated that he did not believe the motive for the changes was to stop parking by non-users; it was another way of generating income. Several residents had been in touch with him to express concerns over this NHS policy and he had to agree that the idea was morally wrong. Be it a parking fee or a fine, he felt that this was just a tax on sick people and that the practice must stop. The NHS was clearly underfunded, but the onus on meeting funding shortfalls should most certainly not be shouldered by the sick, the injured and the vulnerable as it was plainly wrong. He therefore fully supported any review that would take place to look at the finer issues and the wider implications.

In response to the Request for Consideration, the Director of Social Services stated that it was not for officers from the Council to justify policy adopted by the Health Board. He stated that the policy was adopted across the whole of the Health Board area. Further to these comments, the Head of Adult Services stated that, as Locality Manager, he had been consulted on these proposals beforehand and he had noticed that, since Parking Eye had been put into place, ample parking spaces were now available. He stated that signs were in place at the hospital to inform service users and that it may be possible for a Health Board report on this to be shared with Members.

A Committee Member, as representative of a local ward, stated that he could not understand the need for the change of the car parking policy at Barry Hospital as the only people using the car park would be hospital patients / visitors. He added that he felt that there were always spaces available and that we were on the edge of a 'slippery slope' if this was adopted as a blanket policy for no reason.

Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson stated that a key aspect for him related to the principle and the evidence base for the new parking policy. He added that he would be happy to see sight of the Health Board's report if this evidenced the justification for the policy.

The Committee agreed that it was unsatisfactory for the Health Board not to have sent an officer to discuss this item and Members agreed for this to be referred to Cabinet in order to request that the Cabinet Member or Leader write to the Health Board.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson's Request for Consideration in respect of parking fines at Barry Hospital be noted.

(2) T H A T the request for consideration be referred to Cabinet.

(3) THAT Cabinet notes the grave concerns of the Committee regarding the failure of the Cardiff and University Health Board to provide a representative to explain the rationale and evidence base behind the new parking policy to Members of the Committee.

(4) THAT the Leader or the Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Care and Health be requested to write to the Chair of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board expressing the Council's grave concerns regarding the lack of engagement and the unwillingness to provide a representative to set out the Health Board's case in respect of this item.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To note the concerns of Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson.

(2,3 and 4) In order to raise the Committee’s concerns with the Cabinet and the Chair of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.”

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 13th February, 2017](#)