

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 17 September 2015

**12**

**Title:** Christmas car parking

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Barker, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

Key decision: **No**

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## Summary

1. It is proposed to instigate a waiving of the parking charges within all District Council managed car parks to aid traders and town centre vitality in the run up and over the Christmas and New Year periods.
2. This would involve a number of different changes and would also involve advertising and the provision of signage within the car parks.

## Recommendations

3. To agree the Christmas car parking proposals:
  - Introduce 'free after 3pm' on all Council managed car parks EXCEPT Fairycroft/Waitrose from Saturday 7 November 2015 to 23 December 2015 inclusive.
  - Introduce free parking on all Council managed car parks EXCEPT Fairycroft/Waitrose from 24 December 2015 to Sunday 4 January 2015 inclusive.
  - Introduce free parking all day on Saturday 5 December 2015 at Lower Street car park (to note that the Crafton Green car park will be closed to host the Fayre) due to the Frost Fayre.

## Financial Implications

4. The lost income from 'free after 3pm' as set out in 3 above would be in the region of £8,500. In addition we may need to compensate the owners of the Rose and Crown car park. Stansted Parish Council as owners of Crafton Green car park have agreed to the proposal with no financial compensation
5. The lost income from 24 December to Sunday 4 January would be in the region of £10,000.

## Background Papers

6. None

## Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	The changes to parking charges will be advertised widely.
Community Safety	No impact.
Equalities	The requirement will affect all equally.
Health and Safety	No impact.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No impact.
Sustainability	No impact.
Ward-specific impacts	Affects all wards.
Workforce/Workplace	No impact.

## Situation

8. The Council owns and manages a number of car parks across the District. It sets charges and collects income from the car parks. The charges are set for traffic management reasons and to influence driver behaviour e.g. keep traffic flowing, turnover of shoppers etc.
9. As a result Members have requested that Officers consider the car parking charging situation in the run up to Christmas and over the New Year period with the aim of boosting the number of shoppers and the vibrancy of our centres.
10. Consultation with interested parties has been undertaken (e.g. Gt Dunmow Town Team, Saffron Walden Town Team, Waitrose, Stansted Parish Council) to put together a workable and robust proposal.
11. General support has been received although a number of additional/alternative proposals were made. Specifically these are:
12. Great Dunmow Town Team:
13. *Free after 3pm is really a non-starter, pupils are being picked up from school, various after school activities will be taking place and most shopping is done at the week end. To increase visits to Dunmow we suggest the following:*
  - 1) *Either three hours free from 10am to 1pm or 11am to 2pm, this gives time to shop and eat and also stops workers parking for free.*
  - 2) *All day free Saturday 12th and Saturday 19th December.*
  - 3) *Or the whole month old December free.*
14. Saffron Walden Town Team

15. Generally support the proposal but wish to ensure that the biggest results in terms of increased trade are gained from the least loss of revenue. Need to ensure that the promotion is advertised widely (Cambridge, Bishops Stortford, Braintree, Royston etc) to ensure people are aware. Suggested that free after three is considered for the whole period of 28 November – 4 January.

16. Saffron Walden Town Council

17. The Council supports the proposal of free parking after 3pm but would request that this is extended to include the Fairycroft/Waitrose car park. That the “Free after 3pm” proposal be implemented with immediate effect and not just over the Christmas period. Perhaps a trial period could be started now until at least after the Christmas period. It will provide a better measure of success if the free after 3pm is started now, recognising that there will be a peak in traffic over the Christmas period anyway. If this is introduced now, it will allow a more accurate measure of success.

18. Officers have considered these comments and balanced them against the objectives of the concession.

- a. The ‘free after 3pm’ proposal is not a trial but a promotional offer to support town centre shops and businesses in the busy Christmas period.
- b. Advertising of the promotion will be arranged and consideration will be given to how wide the advertising should be – this needs to be balanced against the cost of the adverts.
- c. The promotion is to attract people to the town in the quieter periods. It is not considered that there is a need to attract people during the middle of the day. Ticket sales drop off (and therefore so do customers) in the afternoon which is why the promotion has been tailored as such.

## Conclusion

19. The Council has the ability to make the suggested changes and it is considered that the changes will have a beneficial impact on the vibrancy of the centres over this key trading period.

20. The resulting loss to expected budget is not significant.

## Risk Analysis

21.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Loss of income has a detrimental impact on Council finances	1 – Careful assessment has been undertaken to identify the likely loss of income and based	1 – Some reduction in income expected but this is not considered to be	May need to balance loss of income from reserves.

	on experience from last year.	significant.	
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.