

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: Thursday 15 September 2016

15

Title: Car Parking Incentives Christmas and New Year 2016

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

Key decision: No

Summary

1. Great Dunmow Town Council and Town Team, the Saffron Walden Town Council and Town Team and the Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council and Economic Development Working Group have all submitted proposals for car parking incentives in their local centre for the Christmas 2016 / New Year period and other periods of time.
2. Each settlement proposed different incentives, all of which were considered and evaluated. Details of the Christmas / New Year proposals are included in the Appendix to this report.
3. Implementation challenges have necessitated a different interim approach be taken in 2016 with the intention of a strategic approach being developed to underpin future car parking incentives.
4. The proposal for Christmas / New Year 2016 is to provide free parking after 2p.m. in all car parks, except Fairycroft / Waitrose from 1/12 to 24/12 inclusive and free parking all day between 25/12 and 2/1 inclusive.
5. The concession will be implemented by the withdrawal of enforcement.
6. An advertising and marketing campaign for both inside and outside the district will be implemented, including the provision of signage within each of the car parks to promote the incentives.
7. Increasing the number of visitors to the three centres does not guarantee an improvement in the vitality in the centres. Through the Town Teams and other partners all businesses in the three centres will be encouraged to utilise their own marketing resources to attract additional customers into their businesses.

Recommendations

8. To agree the Christmas car parking proposals:
 - Introduce 'free after 2pm' on all Council managed car parks EXCEPT Fairycroft/Waitrose from Thursday 1st December 2016 to Saturday 24th December 2016 inclusive.
 - Introduce free parking on all Council managed car parks EXCEPT Fairycroft/Waitrose from Sunday 25 December 2016 to Monday 2nd January 2016 inclusive.
9. To approve a supporting marketing campaign at a cost of £2,750

10. To carry out a review of all options for car parking incentives that might operate throughout the calendar year for consideration by Cabinet to feed into the budget preparation for 2018/19.

Financial Implications

11. The estimated loss of revenue from “free after 2pm” in Great Dunmow would be in the region of £4,350 (based on 2015 ticket sales)
12. The estimated loss of revenue from “free after 2pm” in Saffron Walden would be in the region of £8,450 (based on 2014 ticket sales)
13. The estimated loss of revenue from “free after 2pm” in Stansted Mountfitchet would be in the region of £1,150 (based on 2015 ticket sales)
14. The estimated loss of revenue from the free parking between Christmas and New Year across the district would be in the region of £10,000 (based on 2015 estimates)
15. The estimated cost of the advertising campaign would be £2,750.
16. No budget allocation has been allowed for this and it will reduce the budgeted income for the financial year 2015/16 by £26,700, which will mean an outturn forecast of £467,550 compared to an original budget of £494,250.

Background Papers

17. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 18.

Communication/Consultation	As set out in the report and its appendix. Marketing campaign to widely publicise the car parking incentives programme is required.
Community Safety	Not affected.
Equalities	Affects all equally.
Health and Safety	Not affected.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Not affected.

Sustainability	Car parking incentives programme will be monitored to understand the impact. All parked cars will be required to display a ticket to ensure monitoring is possible.
Ward-specific impacts	All wards including location of car parks and where visitors live.
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Situation

19. The District Council owns and manages a number of car parks across the settlements of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. In addition, it manages a number of car parks on behalf of other organisations.
20. The day-to-day running of the car parks is contracted via a Partnership Agreement to the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) although pricing and hours of operation are set by the District Council.
21. The car parks are held and managed to provide suitable off-street parking places for vehicles to relieve and prevent congestion of traffic, and to support the viability and vitality of the various retail centres within the district.
22. Car parking in any area creates considerable concern and comment and proposed changes often raise objections from one sector of the community or another. The Council's role, both as land owner/manager and as steward for the community, is to consider all these issues and create a balanced proposal in the best interests of the community as a whole.
23. Cabinet received a Car Parking Review report in December 2015 which outlined a work programme for 2016. This included to "arrange annual meetings with Chairs of the Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Teams, Chair of the Stansted Economic Development Forum and Chairs of the relevant committees from Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Councils and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council to discuss the effectiveness of the car parking provision. These meetings to include discussion on the best way of using car park pricing to support the economic vitality of the centres."
24. The first meeting of this group was held in February 2016. Attendees agreed to meet more often than annually and additional meetings were held in early June and late July 2016. The group also agreed to submit proposals for a potential car parking incentives campaign for consideration by Cabinet in September 2016.
25. The following table shows the number of tickets purchased in all car parks across the District in the period January – October 2015 by hour of the day. November and December have not been included as the car parking incentives campaign was operational from 7th November 2015 and it would be expected that this would have had an impact on the sales data.

TICKET SALES BY HOUR OF DAY IN ALL UDC MANAGED CAR PARKS FROM JANUARY – OCTOBER 2015		
HOUR OF THE DAY	NO. TICKETS PURCHASED	% OF TOTAL TICKETS PURCHASED
8 a.m. – 9 a.m.	39,393	6.83
9 a.m. – 10 a.m.	78,870	13.68
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.	84,414	14.64
11 a.m. – 12 noon	80,711	14.00
12 noon – 1 p.m.	72,172	12.52
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	61,826	10.72
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.	59,835	10.38
3 p.m. – 4 p.m.	52,956	9.19
4 p.m. – 5 p.m.	34,825	6.04
From 5 pm – 8 a.m.	11,518	2.00

26. The car park ticket data may be subject to some changes but it is the most reliable set of data that is currently available. To ascertain the potential loss of revenue associated with these proposals the ticket sales data from 2014 – 2016 has been utilised.
27. In recent years the District Council has provided free car parking after 3pm (the quietest period of the day when retailers are open) in the weeks before Christmas to encourage shoppers to visit the retail areas in the run-up to Christmas, which is an important time for the year-long vitality of the town centres.
28. In addition to the “free after 3” incentive all parking has been free between 24/12 and the New Year. Sundays and Bank Holidays are free in all UDC car parks throughout the year.
29. No data is available to evidence the impact of the “free after 3” car parking incentive in the three centres. Parked cars were not required to display a ticket and therefore there is no evidence to support the assertion that the incentive achieved its goal or not. Representatives from the three settlements had varying opinions about the benefit of the “free after 3” car parking incentive to their local area.
30. The representatives from Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet have submitted proposals for car parking incentives for the Christmas and New Year period in 2016, which they believe will encourage people to shop in their local centre. They believe that these will benefit both the shoppers, with reduced parking fees and the retailers and local businesses who will benefit from higher footfall.

31. Unfortunately, these proposals could not be implemented in the district for the the Christmas 2016 / New Year period. A number of challenges were identified including:

- The ticket machines are old and unable to cope with complex programmes.
- The cost of reprogramming the 22 ticket machines across the district.
- The available timescale for reprogramming the ticket machines.

Further detail of the implementation challenges is also included in the Appendix.

Options

32. The submitted proposals have been considered in light of the identified challenges and it is proposed that a programme of incentives similar to those in 2015/16 be implemented this year. In addition, a full and comprehensive review will take place to ensure that a strategic approach is developed to underpin any future car parking incentives. This approach to be developed in consultation with the Town Teams and Town Councils of Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden, and the Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council and Economic Development Working Group.

Marketing Campaign

33. In 2015/16 an advertising campaign supported the car parking incentives programme including the “free after 3” and the free parking between Christmas and New Year. The total cost of the advertising campaign in 2015 was £2,000. It is estimated that the marketing campaign in 2016 would cost £2,250. The estimated cost of a banner in each of the 10 car parks promoting the car parking incentives would be £500.

Risk Analysis

34.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Displacement of parking from a paid slot to a free slot would mean that revenue foregone is greater than anticipated and no benefit of greater number of visitors for town	2 – unknown impact of incentives. No baseline available.	2 - Greater revenues foregone although it is not possible to predict levels as unknown how many people may change their behaviour.	An alternative option would be to provide the equivalent budget to the retail centres to use to attract additional visitors.

centre vitality.			
As per the goal of the incentive, more people visit and park in the retail centres. This would increase the revenues lost. The anticipated costs are based on actual figures from previous years, and are not adjusted by footfall changes to retail centres or predictions of the additional visitors.	2 – unknown impact of incentives. No baseline available.	2 - It is not possible to predict how many additional visitors may arrive due to car parking incentives. No baseline available.	An alternative option would be to provide the equivalent budget to the retail centres to use to attract additional visitors.

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.

Appendix

The following details relate to the proposals for Christmas 2016 and the New Year period only.

Great Dunmow

Great Dunmow car parks and their current refund schemes.

35. The four car parks in Great Dunmow are:

- Angel Lane with 31 marked bays. This is a short stay car park with available ticket tariffs of 30 minutes, 1 hour and 3 hours. The car park is closed on Tuesday mornings as the Great Dunmow market operates in the car park.
- Chequers Lane with 67 marked bays. This is also a short stay car park with available tariffs of 30 minutes, 1 hour and 3 hours. Season tickets are available for 6 or 12 months and currently there are 15 active season tickets. There are also approximately 40 season tickets for parents of students at a local school that enable them to park for free from 8.30am to 9.15am, and 3.00pm to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, term time only.
- New Street with 11 marked bays split over car park A and car park B, with car park B only available on Saturdays. A short stay car park with available tariffs for 30 mins, 1 hour and 3 hours.
- White Street with 172 marked bays. This is a long stay car park and has available ticket tariffs for 30 mins, 1, 3, 4, 5 hours and all day tickets.
- Season tickets are available for 6 or 12 months and an area is set aside for season ticket holders.

36. There are currently two car parking refund schemes operating in Great Dunmow. The first applies only in the Co-operative foodstore, which is adjacent to White Street car park and only applies to that car park. Shoppers at the Co-operative who spend £10 or more and show their ticket stub receive a refund of 60p, the cost of one hour's parking. The second refund scheme was set up by the Town Team and refunds £1 to shoppers spending £10 or more (and handing over their ticket stub) at most of the retailers in the town centre.

Car Parking Incentives Proposals

37. The Great Dunmow Town Team has a detailed and comprehensive action plan for 2016/17 focused on strengthening the vitality of the town centre. In early September 2016 they are launching an exciting Shop Local campaign, which involves many of the businesses in the town centre.

38. Two major events are planned for Christmas 2016. The Town Team will be organising their fourth annual Christmas Lights Switch-on event, which has proved to be very successful in previous years, on Saturday 3rd December

2016. The event will run from 1pm. The Great Dunmow Chamber of Trade will be organising their very popular annual event, a Victorian Christmas Market, on Sunday 11th December.

39. The Great Dunmow Town Council have proposed that car parking incentives be linked to events in the town, namely the two events outlined in the above paragraph, and that parking is free all day for those events. Free parking is available in all UDC car parks on Sundays including Sunday 11th December.
40. The estimated loss of revenue of free parking all day on Saturday 3rd December is £855.
41. The Great Dunmow Town Team has proposed that parking be free in all four car parks between 10a.m. – 1p.m. from 1/10/2016 – 31/12/2016. The Town Team believe that it would be better to encourage more people to visit the town at the time that is the most popular for visitors. Proposals outside the Christmas and New Year period will be considered in a future report to Cabinet in early 2017.
42. The estimated loss of revenue for implementation of free car parking from 10a.m. – 1p.m. in all four car parks in December is £7,250.

Cost of proposals in Great Dunmow

<u>Details of incentive</u>	<u>Estimated Loss of Revenue</u>
<u>Saturday 3rd December 2016 – Christmas Lights Switch-on event – all day free car parking in all four car parks</u>	<u>£855</u>
<u>Free parking all car parks - 10a.m. – 1p.m. – December 2016</u>	<u>£7,250</u>
<u>Free car parking all day on Sat 3rd Dec. and between 10a.m. – 1p.m. December</u>	<u>£7,700</u>

Saffron Walden

Saffron Walden car parks and their current refund scheme

43. The four car parks in Saffron Walden are:
- Fairycroft / Waitrose, a short stay car park with 294 marked bays. Available tariffs include 30 minutes, 1, 2 and 3 hours.
 - Rose and Crown with 27 marked bays. This is a short stay car park with available tariffs for stays of 30 minutes, 1 or 2 hours. Some marked bays are reserved for local businesses. The owners of the Rose and Crown car park may need to be reimbursed for lost revenue during the car parking incentive period.

- Swan Meadow, the largest car park in Saffron Walden with 394 marked bays. This is a long stay car park and tariffs are available for stays of 1, 2, 4, 6 hours and all day. Season tickets are available for 6 months and 12 months. Discounts are available for companies purchasing multiple season tickets. Residents with on-street parking permits who are unable to find a parking space in their street are also entitled to park in the Swan Meadow car park.
- The Common with 109 marked bays. Currently available tariffs include 30 minutes, 1 or 2 hours. Currently if visitors purchase a 2 hour ticket then they are able to stay for a third hour for free. Amendments are currently being made to the Car Parking Order to include a tariff of three hours to be available.

44. Waitrose refund the first hour of parking to shoppers who spend more than £10 in the store. Any car parking incentives will not apply to the Fairycroft / Waitrose car park due to their own incentive scheme.

Car Parking Incentives Proposals

45. The Saffron Walden Town Team has a detailed action plan and is working with a wide range of partners in the town on events and activities to increase the vitality of the town centre.
46. The Town Team has been involved with the delivery of a ‘Summer of Arts and Culture’ events in the town. They also have a weekend of activities planned for Christmas, which will take place on the weekend of Friday 3rd – Sunday 5th December. Car parking is free on Sundays throughout the District.
47. The Saffron Walden Town Council has made the following proposals for car parking incentives. They have also confirmed that they support the proposals from the Saffron Walden Town Team.
- Reinstatement of a 4 hours parking tariff at The Common car park.
 - Premium priced parking bays for long stay parking at The Common car park.
48. In 2015, the District Council commissioned consultants to conduct a review of car parking in the district. The review suggested that the maximum tariff for The Common car park should be reduced from 4 hours to 2 hours. This was intended to ensure a frequent turnover of cars and lead to increased footfall in the town. Representations were received from the retail and business sector who felt that this change had been counterproductive and the Leader of the District Council announced that a 3 hours maximum stay would be introduced as an appropriate compromise. The changes are currently going through a statutory process before implementation. From 1/8/2016 visitors purchasing a 2 hours ticket can park for three hours at The Common car park. This is a short term measure while the statutory process is being completed.
49. The Car Parking Review also considered the issue of premium priced parking bays at the Common car park. The review stated that pricing regimes need to be modelled to consider both the effects on revenue and on ‘dwell time’ by shoppers. Achieving the right balance between cost and duration was key to

balancing supply and demand through turnover of parking spaces. The recommendations in the report sought to ensure the most rapid turnover in already busy central parking areas. The report suggested that greater flexibility and incentives be applied to more remote, quieter car parking locations to encourage usage.

50. The Saffron Walden Town Team have submitted the following proposals:

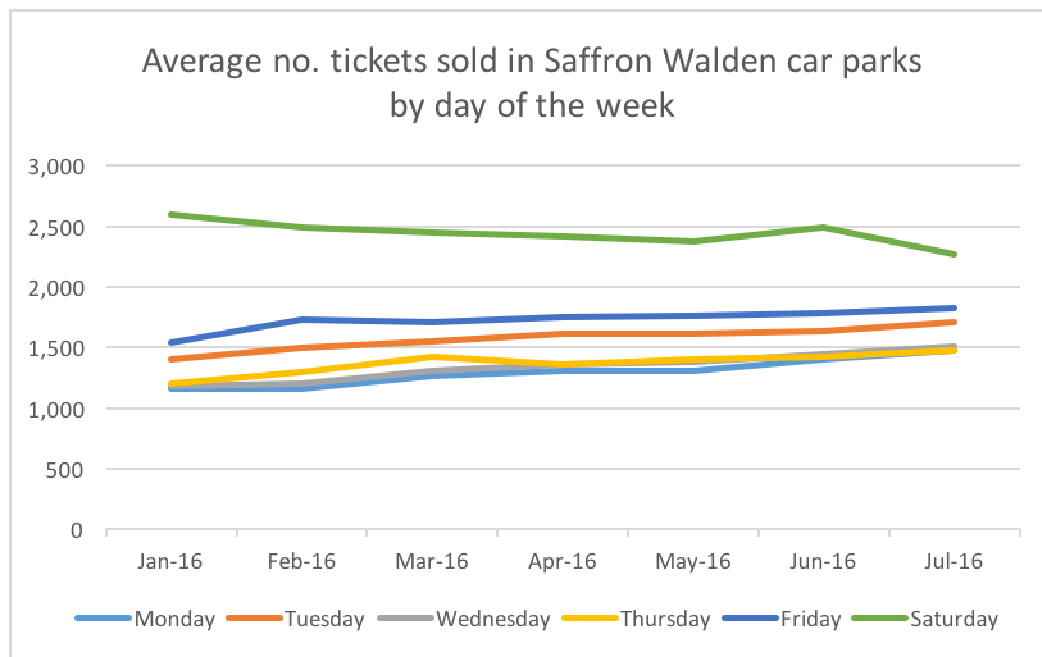
- Free after 2pm on Friday 2nd and Sat 3rd December - to support the "Saffron Walden Christmas Weekend".
- Support for winter Wednesdays from November – March to encourage more visitors to the town on quiet days of the week.
- Free between 24/12 and Wed 4 Jan 2017

51. The proposals outside the Christmas and New Year period will be considered in a future report to Cabinet in early 2017.

52. The estimated loss of revenue for free parking from 2p.m. on Friday 2nd December in the Rose and Crown, Swan Meadow and The Common car parks is £440

53. The estimated cost of implementing free parking from 2p.m. on Saturday 3rd December in the Rose and Crown, Swan Meadow and The Common car parks is £660

54. The following chart shows the average number of car park tickets purchased in Saffron Walden by day of the week to date in 2016. Generally, Mondays and Wednesdays are the quietest days of the week according to car park ticket sales.



55. The estimated loss of revenue for implementation of free car parking on Wednesdays in December in the Rose and Crown, Swan Meadow and The Common car parks is £5,500.

Costs of proposals in Saffron Walden

<u>Details of incentive</u>	<u>Estimated Loss of Revenue</u>
<u>Friday 2nd December – Christmas weekend – free in Rose and crown, Swan Meadow and The Common from 2p.m.</u>	<u>£440</u>
<u>Saturday 3rd December 2016 – Christmas Weekend – free in Rose and Crown, Swan Meadow and The Common from 2p.m.</u>	<u>£660</u>
<u>Free parking all day on Wednesdays in Rose and Crown, Swan Meadow and The Common car park – December 2016</u>	<u>£5,550</u>
<u>TOTAL COST</u>	<u>£6,650</u>

Stansted Mountfitchet

Stansted Mountfitchet Car Parks

56. The two car parks in Stansted Mountfitchet are:

- Crafton Green with 52 marked bays. This is a long stay car park with available tariffs for 30 minutes, 1 and 3 hours and all day tickets. Season tickets for 6 and 12 months are available with different prices for those employed locally and those employed elsewhere. Any car parking incentive that impacts on the revenues in Crafton Green must be agreed with the Stansted Parish Council.
- Lower Street, currently with 109 marked bays. This is also a long stay car park which is currently being extended and revamped alongside a neighbouring development. Available tariffs include 30 minutes 1, 3, 4, 6 hours and all day tickets. Season tickets for 6 and 12 months are available with different prices for those employed locally and those employed elsewhere. It is planned to include a complex package of tariffs and restrictions in the Car Park Order which is being amended at the moment. The Parish Council is concerned about the demand for car parking spaces by commuters trying to find cheaper car parking than that available at the railway station where an annual season ticket costs £840.

Car Parking Incentives Proposals

57. The Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council have confirmed that there are no Christmas events planned for 2016.

58. The Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council has submitted the following proposals:

- First 30 minutes free parking in any car park.
- An increase in the price of an annual season ticket for Lower Street for people who are employed elsewhere from £420 to £620. Any changes to prices of season tickets will be dealt with in the review of the Car Parking Order.

59. Proposals outside the Christmas and New Year period will be considered in a future report to Cabinet in early 2017. This report will consider the first 30 minutes free parking in any car park over November and December. A two month period will enable the impact on the congestion on Cambridge Road to be assessed.

60. The estimated lost revenue if the first 30 minutes is free for all tickets in Crafton Green car park during November and December is £1,480.

61. The estimated lost revenue if the first 30 minutes is free for all tickets in the Lower Street car park during November and December is £1,500.

62. Lower Street car park is currently being refurbished as part of a neighbouring development. Changes to the car park are being included in the Uttlesford Off-Street Car Park Order which is currently being amended. Any changes to the season tickets can be included in the revised Car Park Order

63. Cost of proposals in Stansted Mountfitchet

Details of incentive	ESTIMATED LOSS OF REVENUE
Free parking for first 30 minutes in Crafton Green car park during November and December	£1,480
Free parking for first 30 minutes in Lower Street car park during November and December	£1,500
TOTAL COST	£2,980

Implementation

1. Enforcement

NEPP have confirmed that it is possible to enforce the above proposals.

2. Re-programming the car park ticket machines

NEPP have raised several issues relating to the car park ticket machines which will need to be reprogrammed by the machine manufacturers. There is no possible alternative as the manufacturers are the only company who can programme at the required level.

3. Age of machines – There are some quite complicated changes involved in the proposals and most of the stock in the Uttlesford District (with the exception of Fairycroft) is getting old and does not have as much capacity as the new generation machines. NEPP are unable to confirm that the changes are even possible at this time and there are specific issues relating to the proposals in Great Dunmow.
4. The age of the machines also leads to concerns that the more programmes that are added to the machine increases the risk that the machine will break down.
5. Complexity of the proposals - Great Dunmow will need to run two tariff programmes at the same time between 10a.m. and 1p.m. with one programme issuing free tickets up to 1p.m. and the second programme for customers who want to buy a ticket that expires after 1p.m. NEPP do not think that this is possible with the current machines without an upgrade.
6. NEPP believe that it will be possible to change the tariffs to free parking in Great Dunmow on Saturday 3rd December but are waiting for the manufacturers to confirm.
7. NEPP believe that it will be possible to change the tariffs to free parking after 2p.m. in Saffron Walden on Friday 2nd December and Saturday 3rd December but are waiting for the manufacturers to confirm.
8. NEPP believe that the addition of 30 minutes on to every tariff, except for the whole day ticket, in Stansted Mountfitchet will be achievable.
9. Cost of reprogramming – NEPP anticipate a cost of £60-80 per machine for the new programming. There are 22 machines in the district, excluding the machines in the Fairycroft car park. The anticipated cost would be in the range of £1,320 - £1,760.
10. Signage - The signs need to be very clear as unlike previous years all cars will be required to display a ticket or may get a Penalty Charge Notice. NEPP have reported that temporary signs have been removed in previous years.
11. NEPP have expressed concern as their previous experience in other areas suggests that customers will just see “Free Parking” on the notices and will not get a parking ticket to display on their vehicles.
12. Other customers, no matter how many notices are erected, will still try to pay even when the car park is free. If they do manage to get a ticket out of the machine they will often then want a refund.

13. MiPermit - In addition to reprogramming the machines, customers can also pay by MiPermit so that company will need to be contacted to implement the changes and websites will also need to be altered to ensure customers are given the correct information.
14. Timing of decision-making - NEPP have confirmed that to initiate the changes outlined in this report in time for a November start will be very difficult. In the future they will require more notice of changes.