

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:	Thursday, 2 December 2021
Title:	Car Parking Christmas Incentives		
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Neil Reeve, Portfolio Holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy		
Report Author:	Angela Knight, Assistant Director - Resources aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk	Key decision:	No

Summary

1. The Council in previous years has put in place free parking all its Car Parks except for Fairycroft Car Park for the Christmas period.
2. The free parking incentive is to support the vitality and viability of the town and village centres, increasing footfall, during the quieter periods between Christmas and New Year.
3. In 2019 a consultant was commissioned to identify whether there was value in a Christmas car parking incentive. Appendix A contains their final report.

Recommendations

4. The Cabinet is requested to approve free parking in all car parks, with the exception of Fairycroft car park, between Saturday December 25th 2021 and Monday 3rd January 2022 inclusive.

Financial Implications

5. The loss of income across all Car Parks for the 9 day period is estimated at £10,000. This is based on the parking income data from 2019 (pre-pandemic).

Background Papers

6. None

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	CMT and JET
Community Safety	No specific implications
Equalities	No specific implications
Health and Safety	No specific implications
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No specific implications

Sustainability	No specific implications
Ward-specific impacts	No specific implications
Workforce/Workplace	No specific implications

Situation

8. For several years there has been a Christmas car parking promotion in all Council managed pay and display car parks, except for Fairycroft car park in Saffron Walden.
9. The length of the promotion and time of day it applies have changed from year to year. This year it is proposed that free car parking is offered in all car parks except for Fairycroft, for the period between Christmas and New Year (December 25th 2021 to January 3rd 2022 inclusive).
10. Due to the difficulties of reprogramming the car park ticket machines it has not been possible to monitor usage of the car parks during the promotional period to identify the exact amount of lost revenue to the Council or whether the promotion has increased footfall.
11. The lost income is estimated in the region of £10,000 and this compared against data from 2019 as this was the last year of normal car parking activity pre pandemic.
12. Anecdotal evidence from the Saffron Walden BID and Great Dunmow Town Team, and from many individual businesses, is that these promotional campaigns do not generate a significantly higher footfall in the town centres.
13. In 2019 a consultant was commissioned to identify whether there was value in a Christmas car parking incentive. Appendix A contains their final report and the key findings included:
 - Almost 90% of people parking in both Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow did not know that there was a parking incentive when they left home on that day.
 - Just over 50% reported that a free parking incentive would encourage them to visit the town centre
 - A parking promotion might encourage short stay parkers rather than long stay parkers.

14. Many different methods had been tried to ensure that residents were aware of the Christmas car parking incentive and a promotional campaign will be put in place again this year. The promotion will include the following:

- Stickers on every car park ticket machines
- Banners installed in each car park
- Newspaper adverts
- Social media posts
- Liaison with town and parish councils, Saffron Walden BID, Great Dunmow Town Team and Stansted Business Forum.

Risk Analysis

15.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the incentive does not generate extra footfall	2 – due to the pandemic 'normal' patterns are difficult to evaluate	1 – this will not have a direct negative impact but will show that the council is supporting the economy	This will be monitored, and business owners feedback sought in the new year

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.