

Cherwell District Council

Executive

2 November 2015

<p>Notification of Urgent Action – Free Christmas Parking After 3.00pm</p>

Report of Director of Community and Environment

This report is public

Purpose of report

To notify Members of urgent action taken by the Director of Community and Environment as set out below.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the urgent action taken by the Director of Community and Environment.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council has in the past considered different means of assisting traders in its urban centres. One of these measures has been incentivising use of town centres by offering free car parking over the Christmas and New Year trading period. Free use at certain times such as the week end has been offered previously in some years but this needs to be balanced against the effectiveness of this when compared to other free car parking promotions and the Council's ability to fund the loss of income.
- 2.2 Consideration of the different options has concluded that offering free car parking every day after 3.00pm over the Christmas/New Year trading period for approximately six weeks would be the best balance of costs and benefits. However, even with this proposal, there is difficulty estimating with a reasonable degree of accuracy the actual loss of income as changes to residents' use of the urban centres and parking habits are so uncertain. In this respect, it is intended to undertake a pilot of a 'free after three' offer in 2015/16.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Two factors affect the start and finish dates of this proposed offer. If the whole of December was considered, the first day would be Tuesday 1 December and the last day on Monday 11 January. This would work in relation to the second factor which is to minimise the cost of overtime, to have the start and finish days during midweek, thereby avoiding additional and more costly week end working whilst still covering the main Christmas and New Year shopping period.
- 3.2 However, the Christmas Lights Switch on Event is on 29 November after 3.00pm. Therefore to minimise additional costs of implementation and to include this event in the offer, a different start date of Saturday 28 November to finish on Sunday 10 January are proposed. The preparation for the introduction could take place late on the Friday 27 November and the removal of the notices etc early Monday. This offer period would also be one of the means by which the Council supports the Small Business Day promotion in Banbury on 5 December.
- 3.3 The estimated loss of income is very much estimated as the ticket machines cannot provide any accurate data for tickets sold after 3.00pm nor parts of ticket which are bought before 3.00pm but extend beyond it. The loss of income is estimated to be c£60,000.
- 3.4 In addition, will be additional costs for signs etc. The use of signs will be signs on car park entry (where possible), large signs on the notice boards above each machines saying Free Parking After 3.00pm, Start and Finish Dates and No Refunds For Excess Payments plus detailed inserts on the face of the ticket machines to make the small print clearer. The total additional cost for procuring signs, advertising, erection and dismantling of signs in 22 car parks is estimated to be c£6,000. There is a four week lead in time to procure the new signs so there is a degree of urgency over the decision to ensure the Council is in a position to implement in time.
- 3.5 The legal process can be effected by simply publishing a Notice of Variation at least once in a newspaper circulating in the area at least 21 days before it is due to come into force. A copy of the notice must also be displayed in each off-street car park from the date of publication until the date on which it comes into force.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Director of Community and Environment therefore took urgent action in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve the proposed Free after Three Christmas parking pilot.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 The Leader of the Council only due to the urgency

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 As this report is for the information of Members there are no alternative options to consider.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 The combined cost of loss of income plus estimated additional implementation costs are £66,000. This can be funded from the current projected year end underspend on car parks.

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement, 030000 30106,
paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

7.2 None as long as the Notice of Variation is published as per the details in the report.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 0030107,
kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All Banbury and Bicester wards

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

A District of Opportunity

Lead Councillor

Councillor George Reynolds, Deputy Leader

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Contact Information	0300 003 0101 Ian.Davies@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk