

Council
14 October 2021

Report of the Director of Community and Environmental Services

PARKING OFFER IN DECEMBER 2021

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

In light of another difficult year for residents and businesses due to the Covid-19 pandemic to recommend the offer 'Free Parking after 2pm' in the District Council pay and display car parks

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council approves from 1st December to 31st December between 2pm and midnight each day in all District Council pay and display car parks to be free of charge.
2. That Council agrees that future decisions on whether to run the 'Free after 2pm' in December, is delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

'Prosperity' is highlighted in the Corporate Plan 2020-24 as a District Council priority due to low local wages and high local house prices. With regard to the recommendations in this report, the District Council specifically aims to: *Support businesses to encourage productivity, growth, and higher wage jobs in rural and urban locations; and to promote investment to stimulate the economy of our market towns.*

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A free parking offer has been running for 13 years and was originally introduced to help promote businesses and encourage people to shop local in the run-up to Christmas.
- 1.2 The offer has developed over the years, providing free parking for all in the District Council car parks after 2pm for part or all of December. Recently, in recognition of the on-going challenges the high street has faced due to the pandemic, Members at the Extraordinary Meeting of Council on 27th July 2021 approved for the same offer to run throughout September in the four market towns Ashbourne, Bakewell, Matlock, Wirksworth plus Matlock Bath with a view to help extend the holiday season.

- 1.3 With people moving towards on-line shopping and home delivery during the pandemic and potentially not returning to high street retailers, businesses need this additional 'incentive' to try to encourage people back to the high street.
- 1.4 As the 'Free After 2pm' parking promotion in December has been running for 13 years, is it not possible to indicate what the potential loss of income would be and there is no comparable month within the last year to use as a guide.

2 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered; prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

2.2 Legal

The Council has the power to set its fees and charges and thus has the power to waive such charges as they deem appropriate. Therefore the legal risk is low

2.3 Financial

The budget for income from pay & display charges for 2021/22 is £2,432,201. As this was prepared with reference to income received in previous financial years when a similar free parking offer applied, no income has been anticipated for the period after 2pm each day in December. The financial risk of this report is therefore assessed as low.

3 CONTACT INFORMATION

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