

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.1

Report of:	Head of Housing and Waste Management & Head of Planning and Regeneration
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Portfolio Leaders:	Leader of the Council; Environment; and Town Centre Regeneration
Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet 19/09/13

**CABINET
19 SEPTEMBER 2013
WEEKDAY CAR PARKING AFTER 3.00 P.M.**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider weekday after 3.00 p.m. car parking charges on Council owned car parks.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That subject to consultation with Cannock and Rugeley Traders Associations, through the Town Centre Regeneration Policy Development Committee, a pilot scheme to provide after 3.00 p.m. weekday car parking at a 10 pence nominal charge is introduced on the Avon Road (Cannock) and Forge Road (Rugeley) car parks for the six month period 2 January to 30 June 2014.
- 2.2 That the Heads of Housing and Waste Management and Planning and Regeneration, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the relevant Portfolio Leaders are authorised to amend the pilot scheme to take into account comments received from the Cannock and Rugeley Traders Associations.
- 2.3 That Cabinet receive a further report on the evaluation of the pilot scheme.

- 2.4 That a supplementary estimate of £4,000 is requested from Council for the loss of car parking income during January to March 2014 of the pilot scheme with the implications for April to June 2014 to be addressed as part of the budget process for 2014-15.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 A question regarding the introduction of free after 3.00 p.m. weekday car parking was asked at the Council meeting on 22 May 2013. In response the Leader of the Council stated that following further examination of the implications, the proposal would be considered by Cabinet.
- 3.2 A total of £89,077 of car park income was generated from the Council's town centre car parks in Cannock and Rugeley after 3.00 p.m. on weekdays during 2012-13. This comprises 12.2% of the £732,254 which was generated.
- 3.3 The approved 2013-14 General Fund budget includes estimated car park income of £740,050. Income has, however, reduced during the first four months of the year and an estimated £30,000 shortfall is now projected. This shortfall would be further increased by the introduction of free weekday after 3.00 p.m. parking.
- 3.4 A range of car parking initiatives are offered by other Councils. Whilst none of the Councils contacted offer free car parking after 3.00 p.m. on weekdays only, two Councils (Braintree and Cheshire West) offer free or heavily discounted parking after 3.00 p.m. all week.
- 3.5 The impact of this initiative varies. Braintree report a 44,433 increase in usage, whilst Cheshire West report no increase in footfall as a result of shoppers delaying their visit until parking is free. No conclusions can therefore be drawn from the experience of other local authorities as it is considered likely that local circumstances account for these wide variations.
- 3.6 It is therefore considered that the impact can only be measured through a specific pilot scheme in Cannock Chase and a 6 month scheme (between 2 January to 30 June 2014) involving the Avon Road (Cannock) and Forge Road (Rugeley) car parks is proposed. The proposed scheme would provide "after 3.00 p.m. weekday" car parking for a "nominal flat rate charge of 10 pence" to enable the scheme to be fully evaluated (in accordance with the number of tickets issued) prior to a further Cabinet report.
- 3.7 It is also proposed that the pilot scheme is the subject of consultation with the Cannock and Rugeley Traders Associations and authority is sought to enable the pilot scheme to be amended in response to this.

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.3

- 3.8 The proposed pilot scheme would result in an estimated income loss of £8,000 during 2013-14 and 2014-15 in total. A supplementary estimate will be required for 2013-14 with the impact in 2014-15 to be addressed as part of the budget process for 2014-15.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The provision and management of town centre car parks contributes to the service aim “to improve town centres through regeneration and management” which forms part of the agreed 2013-14 “Prosperity” Priority Delivery Plan.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 A question regarding the introduction of free after 3.00 p.m. weekday car parking on the Council’s town centre car parks was asked at the Council meeting on 22 May 2013. As part of his response, the Leader of the Council stated that following further examination of the implications, the proposal would be considered by Cabinet.

Current Car Parking Charges and Income

- 5.2 The current hours of payment for the Council’s pay and display car parks in Cannock and Rugeley are 7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday, with parking charges suspended on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Parking charges are also suspended in both town centres for the two Saturdays before Christmas. Details of the car parks and current charges are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 There are no parking charges in Hednesford as a result of an agreement with Hednesford Town Council.
- 5.4 Details of the 2012-13 income and tickets in respect of the pay and display car parks is set out in Appendices 2 and 3. This analysis includes a division of income and tickets between the following periods:-
- (i) Before 3.00 p.m. on weekdays.
 - (ii) After 3.00 p.m. on weekdays.
 - (iii) All day Saturday.
- 5.5 It will be noted during 2012-13 income of £732,254 was generated from car park charges from 677,555 tickets. Of this:-

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.4

- (i) £466,923 (63.8%) was generated from 436,938 tickets before 3.00 p.m. on weekdays;
- (ii) £89,077 (12.2%) was generated from 97,830 tickets after 3.00 p.m. on weekdays;
- (iii) £176,254 (24.0%) was generated from 142,787 tickets on Saturdays.

Projected Car Park Income

- 5.6 The approved 2013-14 General Fund budget includes estimated car park income of £740,050. However, as at 31 July 2013 income had decreased by some £20,000 when compared to the corresponding period in 2012. If this trend continues a shortfall of some £30,000 in respect of the original estimate is projected for 2013-14.
- 5.7 The proposal to offer free weekday after 3.00 p.m. parking would further increase the projected 2013-14 shortfall by at least £45,000 if it were introduced in October 2013, or £90,000 for the full year. However, these figures are likely to be higher as people could change their shopping habits to correspond with the free parking period.

Car Parking Initiatives offered by Other Councils

- 5.8 Two to three hour free parking is offered by most out of town and edge of town shopping centres and supermarkets. In order to compete with this out of town free parking incentive and try to increase the number of shoppers visiting town centres, a number of Councils have introduced a variety of "free" or discounted parking initiatives.
- 5.9 These range from 20 minutes all day free parking (Harrow and Havant) to two hours all day free parking in Oldham. Other Councils (for example Ruthin) have reduced car parking charges overall, whilst Torridge offer free parking on one car park on Saturday afternoons. The impact of these initiatives varies, with some Councils reporting little additional usage, whilst others report an increase in footfall.
- 5.10 None of the Councils contacted offer free car parking after 3.00 p.m. on weekdays only. However, a number including Braintree and Cheshire West offer free or heavily discounted after 3.00 p.m. parking all week. As with the other parking fee initiatives outlined above the impact varies, i.e.
- (i) Braintree offers a 10 pence concession after 3.00 p.m. Monday to Saturday and all day Sunday. Usage has increased by 44,433 visits (when compared to the previous 12 months), although income has decreased by £67,000.
 - (ii) Cheshire West offers free car parking after 3.00 p.m. all week (including Sundays) in Chester and Ellesmere Port town centres. Whilst no usage figures are available, the Council report that the initiative has not

increased footfall but results in shoppers delaying their visit until parking is free. This has increased congestion particularly as the free parking timeframe coincides with the “school to home run”.

A Proposed Pilot Scheme

- 5.11 The impact of “free” or discounted parking initiatives (including free parking after 3.00 p.m.) varies with some Councils reporting little additional usage and others reporting increased footfall. It is considered that local circumstances are likely to account for wide variations and that no conclusions can therefore be drawn from the experience of other local authorities regarding the potential impact of free after 3.00 p.m. weekday parking on the Cannock and Rugeley town centres.
- 5.12 It is therefore considered that the impact can only be effectively measured through a specific pilot scheme in both Cannock and Rugeley. Whilst there are a number of “out of town” retail centres in the proximity of Cannock town centre, this is not the case for Rugeley. As a result the impact of any town centre parking initiatives may vary between the two town centres.
- 5.13 A 6 month pilot scheme involving two car parks in Cannock and Rugeley is therefore proposed which would:-
- (i) Provide “after 3.00 p.m. weekday car parking” for a “nominal flat rate charge of 10 pence”. (Note - this would enable the scheme to be fully evaluated in accordance with the number of tickets issued, although other evaluation methods including footfall figures will also be explored).
 - (ii) Operate for the 6 month period 2 January to 30 June 2014. (Note – this would provide a potential stimulus to the Cannock and Rugeley town centres during the “post Christmas shopping lull”).
 - (iii) Be undertaken in respect of the Avon Road car park in Cannock and the Forge Road car park in Rugeley. (Note – these car parks are located closest to the Asda and Tesco supermarkets which provide/will provide time limited free parking during the day).
- 5.14 It is further suggested that this proposed pilot scheme is subject to consultation with Cannock and Rugeley Traders Associations through the Town Centre Regeneration Policy Development Committee. Authority is sought to enable the pilot scheme to be amended in response to the consultation.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The proposed pilot scheme would result in an estimated income loss of £8,000 in total during 2013-14 and 2014-15. This shortfall would need to be addressed

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.6

with a supplementary estimate in relation to 2013-14 and as part of the budget process for its impact in 2014-15.

The proposed pilot scheme will also necessitate the reprogramming of six ticket machines at an estimated cost of £750. This can be met from existing budgets.

It is currently estimated that the offer of free parking after 15:00 hrs would lead to a loss of income of around £90,000 per year if it were extended to all Council car parks. However, the figure could be potentially higher as many people could change their shopping habits to correspond with free parking at certain times. Again, any reduction in income would need to be addressed as part of the overall budget process and the funding available to the Council.

The Council in line with all authorities will see a marked reduction in Revenue Support Grant as part of overall Government funding in 2014-15 and 2015-16. A great deal of uncertainty still exists in relation to 2015-16 and future years and the findings of the pilot scheme will enable "free weekdays parking after 3.00 p.m." to be evaluated as part of the Delivering Change process whereby changes to service provision are assessed against their contribution to Council priorities.

6.2 Legal

Charges on public off-street car parks can be varied by giving at least 21 days notice under the procedure set out in Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

There are risks associated with the introduction of free after 3.00 p.m. weekday parking as the impact of this is unknown. The proposed pilot scheme would enable the impacts on usage and footfall to be fully evaluated and any consequent risks assessed.

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.7

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The proposed after 3.00 p.m. weekday car parking pilot scheme has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and no negative implications in respect of the protected characteristics have been identified.

6.9 Best Value

None

7 Appendices to the Report

- Appendix 1: Cannock Chase District Council Car Parking Charges
- Appendix 2: Car Park Income Generation 2012-13
- Appendix 3: Car Park Tickets Issued 2012-13

Previous Consideration

Recommendation from the Town Centre Regeneration Policy Development Committee 5 March 2013 (Town Centre Traders Association Issues – Minute 31)	Cabinet	21 March 2013
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Background Papers

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.8

APPENDIX 1**CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARKING CHARGES**(Current charges applicable until 31 March 2014)**Charges apply Monday to Saturday inclusive 07.30 hrs – 18.30 hrs
Sundays and Bank Holidays – No Charge**

<u>Cannock Car Parks</u>	
Beecroft Road	Up to 2 hours £1.10 2-3 hours £2.70 3-4 hours £3.60 4-5 hours £9.00 5-6 hours £11.50
Civic Centre Visitors (front)	Up to 1 hour £0.90 1-2 hours £1.80 2-3 hours £2.70 3-4 hours £3.60
Civic Centre (rear) Saturdays Only	Up to 1 hour £0.90 1-2 hours £1.80 2-3 hours £2.70 3-4 hours £3.60 4-5 hours £9.00 5-6 hours £11.50
Backcrofts	Up to ½ hour £0.60 ½ - 1 hour £0.90 1-2 hours £1.80 2-3 hours £2.70 3-4 hours £3.60 4-5 hours £9.00 5-6 hours £11.50
Avon Road	Up to 1 hour £0.90 1-2 hours £1.80 2-3 hours £2.70 3-4 hours £3.60 over 4 hours £4.50
Danilo Road	All Day £3.60
Railway Station	Daily £1.80 Weekly £6.00
<u>Rugeley Car Parks</u>	
Market Street	Up to ½ hour £0.60 ½ to 1 hour £0.80 1-2 hours £1.60 2-3 hours £2.40 3-4 hours £3.20 over 4 hours £4.00
Market Hall Rooftop St Joseph's Church	Up to 2 hours £1.10 2-3 hours £2.40 3-4 hours £3.20 over 4 hours £4.00
Forge Road Taylors Lane St. Pauls Road	Up to 1 hour £0.80 1-2 hours £1.60 2-3 hours £2.40 3-4 hours £3.20 over 4 hours £4.00

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.9

APPENDIX 2**CAR PARK INCOME GENERATION 2012-13**

CAR PARK	INCOME			
	Before 3.00 p.m. Weekdays	After 3.00 p.m. Weekdays	Saturdays	Total
	Amount £	Amount £	Amount £	Amount £
<u>Cannock</u>				
Beecroft Road	202,028	38,765	76,040	316,833
Avon Road	48,190	6,283	17,201	71,674
Backcrofts	54,922	14,172	21,819	90,913
Danilo Road	20,260	2,245	7,106	29,611
Station	17,443	833	5,771	24,047
Civic Front	12,558	3,143	4,958	20,659
Civic Rear	-	-	679	679
Sub-Total (Cannock)	355,401	65,441	133,574	554,416
<u>Rugeley</u>				
Forge Road	66,287	15,306	25,765	107,358
St. Pauls Road	8,876	2,447	3,575	14,898
Market Hall	8,116	839	2,827	11,782
Taylors Lane	9,567	1,538	3,507	14,612
Market Street	13,975	3,105	5,394	22,474
St. Josephs Church	4,701	401	1,612	6,714
Sub-Total (Rugeley)	111,522	23,636	42,680	177,838
TOTAL:	466,923	89,077	176,254	732,254

ITEM 6

ITEM NO. 11.10

APPENDIX 3**CAR PARK TICKETS ISSUED 2012-13**

CAR PARK	TICKETS			
	Before 3.00 p.m. Weekdays	After 3.00 p.m. Weekdays	Saturdays	Total
	Number	Number	Number	Number
<u>Cannock</u>				
Beecroft Road	198,434	40,287	63,457	302,178
Avon Road	38,046	6,180	11,756	55,982
Backcrofts	53,515	15,843	18,436	87,794
Danilo Road	6,943	766	2,048	9,757
Station	9,200	513	2,582	12,295
Civic Front	12,186	3,598	4,196	19,980
Civic Rear	-	-	638	638
Sub-Total (Cannock)	318,324	67,187	103,113	488,624
<u>Rugeley</u>				
Forge Road	73,596	20,396	24,985	118,977
St. Pauls Road	7,553	2,563	2,689	12,805
Market Hall	7,709	894	2,287	10,890
Taylors Lane	9,104	1,886	2,921	13,911
Market Street	16,144	4,469	5,479	26,092
St. Josephs Church	4,508	435	1,313	6,256
Sub-Total (Rugeley)	118,614	30,643	39,674	188,931
TOTAL:	436,938	97,830	142,787	677,555