

Cabinet Member Decision Note

Temporary Change to Car Parking Tariff

To: Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills

Date: 8th October 2015

Author: Head of StreetSmart Service

Wards: Central

Locality Affected: Town Centre

Parishes Affected: None

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The purpose of this Cabinet Member Decision Note is to explain the reasons for providing free parking in the Swindon Town Centre during the build-up to the Christmas period and January 2016.
- 1.2 This Decision Note will give Officers the authority to implement the temporary car parking tariff reduction.
- 1.3 As part of the Growing Economy programme the Cabinet Member is seeking to encourage residents and visitors to spend more time in the strategically important Swindon Town Centre during the Christmas build up with a view to increasing expenditure in the local economy.

2. Recommended Action to be Authorised by a Cabinet Member Under Delegated Powers

Recommended that:

- 2.1 The car parking tariff for certain Swindon Town Centre Car Parks be temporarily reduced starting from Thursday 5th November 2015. The tariff reduction to provide free parking will apply to two car parks in the Town Centre, namely Brunel North Car Park and Fleming Way Car Park. The tariff reduction will only be applicable on a Thursday during November, December and January 2016, during the times 3pm to 9pm.

3. Detail

Background and reason for the reduction

- 3.1 The Christmas period is one of the most important periods for small and medium retailers. Representations by shop owners to Councillor Perkins, whether personally or through InSwindon and the Brunel Centre indicate that the revenue raised at this time may determine whether a shop is viable in the forthcoming year.

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- 3.2 InSwindon and the Brunel Centre have also suggested that greater economic activity will assist in letting empty premises, therefore providing a revenue benefit to the Borough through additional business rates. In addition, greater footfall may sustain existing jobs or stimulate additional employment.
- 3.3 Both InSwindon and the Brunel Centre are willing to work in partnership with the Council by offering to fund part of the costs and lost revenue. This partnership working elaborates on the Council's recently adopted Vision (Cabinet Minute 24, 2015/16 refers).
- 3.4 The detail of the tariff reduction is as follows. The Swindon Town Centre car parks identified for a tariff reduction are Brunel North Car Park and Fleming Way Car Park. These two have been identified on the basis of their close proximity to the Town Centre and easy access into the shops.
- 3.5 The free car parking will be offered every Thursday during the build-up to Christmas and January 2016, between the times 3pm to 9pm, the dates include:
 - 3.5.1 Thursday 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th November 2015;
 - 3.5.2 Thursday 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st December 2015; and
 - 3.5.3 Thursday 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th January 2016;
- 3.6 The implementation of this change will cost circa £2,000 and it is proposed this is covered in full by InSwindon and the Brunel Centre. The implementation costs include new tariff boards, software changes for the parking machines and communication of the change that includes publication of a 21 day Legal Notice. In order to enable implementation by the 5th November, the Head of StreetSmart will publish the statutory Notice under his delegated powers in Article 14.06 of the Constitution, in advance of the signing of this Decision Note.
- 3.7 The financial impact of the lost parking income is difficult to predict, but working in partnership with InSwindon and the Brunel Centre, it is proposed they contribute a total £6,000 towards the lost income with the remaining balance being absorbed by the Council.
- 3.8 The projected loss of parking income has been based on transaction totals during Christmas 2014 as detailed in figure 1 below.

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Car Park	Transaction Totals			Ave. Charge	Income
	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015		
Fleming Way	497	728	450	£2.00	£3,350
Brunel North	2,529	2,654	1,648	£2.00	£13,662
				Total	£17,012

Figure 1 – Car Park Transaction Totals in 2014/15

- 3.9 However, it is important to note two key points when projecting the lost income:
- 3.9.1 Recent usage of the two car parks concerned have been lower than levels in December 2014, so the financial impact to the Council may be lower.
- 3.9.2 We are unable to project accurately behavioural change if people switch from using a car park that continues to charge, to a car park that is free between 3pm and 9pm on a Thursday during the November to January period. Therefore, it is possible the financial effect on the Council may be greater.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could determine to maintain existing tariffs over the Christmas Period 2015. However, this would not support the Council's wish to support a thriving Town Centre economy.
- 4.2 All car parks in the Town Centre were considered for inclusion within this initiative, but having taken into account location, operational times and which car parks have residential/business permit use, it was deemed Fleming Way and Brunel North were the two that were most suitable for increasing footfall in the Town Centre.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The following Opposition Spokespersons have been consulted on the recommendations of the report and their responses are also summarised below:

Councillor Jim Robbins (Opposition Group spokesperson) - No Comment received.

Councillor Dave Wood (Minority Group spokesperson) - No Comment received.

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6. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 There are no procurement implications. The financial impact is described in paragraph 3. The latest financial report for the 2015/16 financial year shows a projected overspend of around £1.5m. Work is on-going to identify and deliver in-year savings with the objective of securing a balanced position by the year end.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 6.2 All legal and Human Rights implications have been taken into account in preparing this Decision Note. It is considered that the recommendations are consistent with Convention Rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 6.3 None specifically were identified in the preparation of this Decision Note.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 6.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed. This temporary reduction in parking charges is of a relatively limited extent as it is proposed to take place in two car parks over seven Thursday evenings prior to Christmas. No adverse or other significant issues were found. A copy of the DIA can be obtained from the author.
- 6.5 Currently Blue Badge holders do not benefit from free parking in barrier controlled car parks. Such users tend to park in surface car parks or on-street. This proposal will include Blue Badge holders and will allow them to benefit from the direct level access from Brunel North into the Brunel Centre and from Fleming Way into Debenhams without the need to pay for parking.
- 6.6 Any potential extension to the scheme into January should include a review of any diversity impacts that emerge during the initial period.

Risk Management

- 6.7 Risk that the lost parking income is greater than projected due to significant behavioural change with people switching from a charging car park to the free parking during the periods concerned.

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7. Consultees

- 7.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.

10. Declarations of Interest

- 10.1 (Include in Report sent for Consultation ONLY): Opposition spokespersons / Ward Members are reminded to consider whether they have any known interests in any of the matters referred to in this Decision Note. If such an interest exists this should be declared to the Monitoring Officer (or Committee and Member Services Manager), and they should take no part in the consideration of the Briefing Note and should refer the Briefing Note to their Group Leader.
- 10.2 (Include in Final Report ONLY): Cabinet Members are reminded to consider whether they have any known interests in any of the matters referred to in this Decision Note. If such an interest exists this should be declared to the Monitoring Officer (or Committee and Member Services Manager), and they should take no part in the consideration of the Decision Note and should refer the Decision Note to the Leader of the Council instead for consideration.

11. Sign-off

- 11.1 The Cabinet Member is requested to respond with 5 days of the date of this report (by 15 October 2015).
- 11.2 The Cabinet Member is requested to indicate one of the following responses to the Recommendations set out in Section 2 of this report:

Note and support the proposed action to be taken under delegated authority –

☒ Yes / ☐ No

Note and request the proposed action be reconsidered – Yes ☒ / ☐ No

Reasons for Reconsideration:

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Request Report be Referred to Cabinet - Yes/No

NB To protect against identity theft, Cabinet Member's signatures will be redacted. Briefing Note.

Date

Cabinet Member

11.3

has
"called-in" the
only be implemented
objection is forthcoming the ...

published in the Members' Bulletin. The
such time that a five-day "Call-in" period
ed in the Members Bulletin. If a Decision is
utiny Committee for consideration. It must
Committee has raised no objection. If an
will be referred back to the Decision-Maker.