

Delegated Portfolio Holder Decision

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made via this function?

Yes

Sunday Parking Concessions

Final Decision-Maker	Delegated Portfolio Holder Decision
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Alan McDermott – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation
Lead Director	Lee Colyer – Director of Finance, Policy and Development
Head of Service	Jane Fineman – Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer/Author	Robert Perrin – Parking Manager
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	Culverden, Park, Pantiles & St. Mark's

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the all-day parking charge in Royal Victoria Place, Meadow Rd, Crescent Rd, Great Hall and Linden Park car parks is reduced to £2 on Sundays in October, November and December (13 Sundays).
2. That the Strategic Plan reserve is used to underwrite the Council's potential loss of car park revenue, which is forecast to be £12,000.

Explain how this report relates to the Corporate Priorities in the Five Year Plan:

- A Prosperous Borough – supporting local businesses by offering reduced parking charges on Sundays to increase footfall.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Discussion with Portfolio Holder	6 June 2019
Discussions with Ward Members	12 September 2019
Report published	16 September 2019
Decision due not before	24 September 2019

Sunday Parking Concessions

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has been working with the Business Improvement District (BID) to explore ways of attracting footfall into Tunbridge Wells to support local businesses. Businesses are strongly of the view that Parking is one of the barriers to their success, so we have been considering opportunities to provide some affordable parking concessions.
 - 1.2 Sunday is the quietest business day of the week in Tunbridge Wells, so has the potential for the greatest change. This year, the BID team have also been promoting events in the town, a number of which fall on a Sunday. It was therefore felt that providing parking concessions on Sundays until Christmas (October, November and December), would be an additional incentive for people to visit the town, to visit our shops and attend events.
 - 1.3 Using parking data from 2018/19 we have modelled different price points and established that a concessionary price of £2 per day, would be affordable for both the BID and the Council. This report outlines the reasoning behind the recommendation.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In preparation for the introduction of the BID levy, local businesses were asked to raise the key issues they would like the BID to address. Parking arose as a common theme. Since then, the refurbishment of Crescent Road and the disruption resulting from the Public Realm 2 project has caused business owners in the vicinity to express their concerns about the negative impact upon their businesses. Parking has been a major worry for them. Whilst Crescent Road car park is now fully functional again, they are saying that they need to rebuild their footfall and the Council would like to support them in doing so.
- 2.2 During discovery meetings, Officers have discussed how the Council can help support the pledges made in the BID's business plan, which included to 'explore free parking in certain car parks'.
- 2.3 Tunbridge Wells is relatively quiet on Sundays, with many of the businesses closed and occupancy rates in our car parks much lower than on other days of the week. Sunday therefore presents the best opportunity to grow footfall, to support businesses and events.
- 2.4 Using the parking data from 2018/19, revenue was modelled using different price points. Free parking was explored for October, November and December, as suggested by the BID business plan, but this would have resulted in an estimated loss of £121,000 of income. Although the BID does have funds available to support parking initiatives, they do not have sufficient budget for this option.

- 2.5 An “all day” charge of £2 has been identified as an affordable concession for both the BID and Council whilst still offering a significant discount on existing tariffs (£10.40 per day for all car parks except Crescent Road which is £6.30 per day). This is providing the existing concession of free parking on a Thursday evening after 6pm and free parking for one Sunday in November (previously the welcoming of “Father Christmas” to the town) are both rescinded. The additional income from these concessions will partially fund the £2 Sunday. Motorists will still be able to park for an hour at the lower charge of £1.60 if they wish.
- 2.6 The £2 Sunday concession will also be a useful exercise to see how sensitive parking volumes are to price change and the data can be used to inform our future pricing decisions.
- 2.7 Officers have been keen to stress that reducing the parking charge in isolation may not be enough to encourage the public to come into town on Sundays. The BID team have agreed to ensure that the reduced parking charge is widely promoted with a particular emphasis on events happening in the town that coincide with the concessions.
- 2.8 Businesses that currently close on Sundays have also been canvassed for their opinion and there are a significant number who have said that they would consider opening if parking concessions were introduced and there was an associated increase in footfall.

3. REVENUE IMPLICATION

- 3.1 The estimated loss of revenue associated with free parking is £121,000. This is based upon the actual revenue from 2018/19.
- 3.2 The potential revenue loss from reducing the all day parking charge to £2, assuming the same occupancy rates as 2018/19 and that those who paid for just 1 hour, would do so again is £45,807. The reinstatement of parking charges after 6pm on Thursdays for the 3 months would raise £7,878 in revenue and the day in November that will no longer be free, will raise another £8,785. The remainder to be underwritten is therefore £29,144.
- 3.3 The Council would like to support this project and can underwrite £12,000 from the Strategic Plan reserve. The BID team have agreed to underwrite the remaining £17,144 from their BID funds.
- 3.4 The financial risk to the Council is therefore some £12,000, however if the concession is successful in driving up the number of visitors, this could be reduced. Although it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of transactions, it is unlikely that there will be an increase of 35%, which is the breakeven point.
- 3.5 All amounts quoted are inclusive of VAT.
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4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Free Parking – While it may have been desirable to offer free parking, neither the BID nor the Council have the budget to fund the potential revenue loss of £121,000. There would also be no mechanism through which to measure the success of the promotion as there would be no transaction records.
 - 4.2 £2 Parking Charge – Offer an “all day” parking charge of £2 for RVP, Meadow Rd, Crescent Rd, Great Hall and Linden Park car parks, while still allowing motorists wishing to park for an hour or less to pay the current rate of £1.60.
 - 4.3 Do nothing – not offer any parking concessions in our car parks. Given the recent disruption to businesses, and a desire to support the aims of the BID, this is not thought to be an appropriate outcome.
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5. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 An “all day” parking charge of £2 on Sundays in October, November and December in RVP, Meadow Rd, Crescent Rd, Great Hall and Linden Park car parks for the reasons outlined above.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Businesses have been canvassed informally by the BID team and are in support of Sunday parking concessions being introduced.
 - 6.2 Officers do not intend to carry out any further consultation before implementing the concession.
 - 6.3 All Council Members of Park, Culverden and Pantiles & St Marks Wards (the Wards in which the car parks are situated) have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposal.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Council will support the promotion of the parking concessions through a social media campaign and the BID team will advertise more widely through paid for adverts focussing on audiences both inside and outside the town.
 - 7.2 Officers will work with our car park payment machine provider, Flowbird to ensure the car park tariffs are updated.
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8. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	There are considered to be no cross-cutting issues	Keith Trowell, Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Finance and other resources	There is a risk to revenue of £12,000 which will be funded from the Strategic Plan reserve.	Jane Fineman, Head of Finance and Procurement
Staffing establishment	There are no staffing implications	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Risk management	No risks have been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Data Protection	No issues have been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Environment and sustainability	No issues have been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Community safety	No issues have been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Health and Safety	No issues have been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Health and wellbeing	No issues have been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager
Equalities	No equality impact has been identified	Robert Perrin, Parking Manager

9. REPORT APPENDICES

None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None