

Free PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Strategic Policy & Resources Committee – 19 September 2012

‘FREE AFTER 3’ PARKING CAMPAIGN 2012**Report by Depute Director (Environment)****ABSTRACT**

The report provides feedback on the ‘Free after 3’ initiative which was put in place for December 2011. It also outlines recommendations for running a similar campaign for the 2012 Christmas period in Perth and other towns two days a week.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the findings from last year’s ‘Free after 3’ campaign
- (ii) Approves the recommendations for a ‘Free after 3’ campaign as contained in paragraph 2.6 of this report; and
- (iii) Requests the Executive Director (Environment) bring back a further report on the impact of the campaign.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Current research indicates that there are conflicting views about whether there is a correlation between access to free/reduced parking and increased shopping footfall. However, in autumn 2011, Perth & Kinross Economic Leadership Board (ELB) was asked to explore a parking promotion to support city centre businesses during the current difficult trading conditions. The aim of this promotion was to boost Christmas shopping and the wider “Winter in Perth” promotional campaign.

2.2. At the end of November 2011, a decision was taken to support a “Thursday only” initiative during December. The campaign allowed customers to park for free in Council operated car parks at Mill Street East and West, Speygate, Scott Street and Canal Street Multi-Storey from 3 pm to 6 pm on 8, 15, 22 and 29 December. The value of income lost to the parking account was approximately £7,000.

2.3 Perth City Centre Management promoted the campaign through a variety of media including websites, Facebook and pupil mail. Businesses also supported this initiative by advising customers of this promotion by distributing leaflets and posters, putting details on their websites and promoting via Social Media. McEwens of Perth also tied in a series of events around this initiative.

2.4 MEASUREMENT AND FEEDBACK ON THE 2011 CAMPAIGN

2.4.1 Springboard provides Perth City Centre Management with customer footfall counting data via a counter on the outside of the Marks & Spencer building on Perth High Street.

Day of the Week Footfall Figures	Week 5 Dec 2011	Week 12 Dec 2011	Week 19 Dec 2011	Week 26 Dec 2011
Monday	9,585	10,742	12,191	10,124
Tuesday	9,620	9,483	14,700	16,302
Wednesday	10,622	11,053	14,978	11,243
Thursday ¹	7,604 ²	12,592	18,438	14,714
Friday	14,430	12,391	22,055	13,497
Saturday	15,860	18,740	16,790	14,056
Sunday	8,533	8,663	781 ³	1,805 ⁴
Total 2011	76,254	83,664	99,933	81,741

- 2.4.2 Perth City Centre Management also asked Springboard to provide specific footfall data for between 3 pm and 6 pm for 2011 and to compare this with 2010 figures. The data below has to be used with caution as footfall is generally down compared with 2010.

3pm- 6pm Comparison Figures	08-Dec	15-Dec	22-Dec	29-Dec
2011	1172	2836	4362	4268
2010	3007	3574	4857	4212
% Difference	-61%⁵	-21%	-10%	1.30%

- 2.4.3 Actual car park usage figures are not collected which would have assisted in the analysis of this initiative. As such, it is hard to analyse the direct impact of the 'Free after 3' campaign. However, feedback from individual traders was generally positive and many were appreciative of the Council's offer. In addition, the decision to run the campaign was taken after both the publication of the Perth Winter Guide and stores making decisions about their Christmas opening hours. This may have reduced the potential effect of the initiative.
- 2.4.4 It should also be noted that following the decision to run the 'Free after 3' campaign in Perth, several other rural towns requested that the initiative be extended to them. As a result, some offered free parking in line with the Perth initiative. No figures are available for the loss of income arising from this decision, and no feedback from traders was provided.
- 2.4.5 Furthermore, there were potential legal issues about suspending parking orders and the impact on other parking 'suppliers', although no complaints were received from them regarding the Council's decision.

¹ Free after 3 days

² High winds/storm – people told to travel only if necessary

³ Christmas Day

⁴ New Year's Day

⁵ High winds/storm – people told to travel only if necessary

- 2.4.6 Operationally the initiative requires Parking Attendants to manually change the signage for all the car parks involved both before and after the agreed times.

2.5 PROPOSALS FOR CHRISTMAS 2012

- 2.5.1 Perth City Centre Management has received a request from McEwens and the St John's Centre Manager for a further campaign for Christmas 2012. Their request is for the initiative to be:

- Free after 3
- Weekdays if possible, with a minimum requirement for at least Thursdays and Fridays
- Launch (publicised within the Winter guide and other media) to coincide with the Christmas Light switch on (24 November 2012)
- Run from week beginning 26 November 2012 until 28 December 2012
- With specific car parks similar to last year's initiative.

- 2.5.2 On this basis, the approximate loss of income has been calculated as £21,500.

- 2.5.3 To extend the scheme outwith Perth using the same criteria would result in a loss of income of approximately £2,000.

2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.6.1 As a result of this request, it is recommended that:

- 2.6.2 A 'Free after 3' parking initiative is operated in 5 car parks in Perth and all paying car parks in Blairgowrie, Dunkeld, Pitlochry and Crieff each Thursday and Friday from 29 November until 28 December 2012.

- 2.6.3 The car parks in Perth included in the initiative will be Mill Street East and West, Speygate, Scott Street and Canal Street Multi-storey

- 2.6.4 Perth City Centre Management use Springboard to measure the footfall on these days, and liaise with traders in Perth, to measure the impact of the initiative in Perth

- 2.6.5 Planning & Regeneration staff liaise with traders in the other towns involved to measure the impact of the initiative

- 2.6.6 A report is submitted to a future Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to provide information on the outcome of the initiative. This will also be used in the review of parking provision as requested by the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The loss of income associated with this initiative is estimated at £23,500 which will be met from the Car Parking account.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Head of Legal Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Democratic Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

- 5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report impacts on the following:-

(iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.
- 6.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

7. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

8. CONCLUSION

While there is currently no conclusive evidence that free/cheaper parking encourages increased footfall, the Council is keen to support local shops and traders in their request for a parking initiative. This will run from Thursday 29 November until Friday 28 December 2012 in selected car parks in Perth, and all paying car parks in Blairgowrie, Pitlochry, Dunkeld and Crieff.

Statistical information on footfall will be investigated, along with feedback from traders in Perth and the towns identified, to examine the overall impact of the initiative, and a further report will be produced in due course.

BARBARA RENTON
DEPUTE DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENT)

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1971 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

Contact Officer: Hunter Hope, Performance & Support Manager Ext. 76450,
email: HunterHope@pkc.gov.uk
Address of Service: Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, PERTH, PH1 5GD
Date: 28 August 2012

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (On occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

