

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

## Environment and Infrastructure Committee

27 October 2021

### Free Festive Parking 2021

#### Report by Head of Business and Resources

(Report 21/198)

This report recommends that the Free Festive Parking initiative operates on each weekend in December, within Council owned car parks, from Saturday 4 December until Saturday 25 December 2021 inclusive. This is to support local business during the Christmas period, as the Covid -19 pandemic continues.

#### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On and off street parking charges apply 6 days a week, Monday to Saturday, 8am to 6pm across the Council area. Parking is free on-street and in Council car parks, every Sunday as well as on 25 and 26 December and 1 and 2 January.
- 1.2 A free festive parking offering has been in place since 2012/13, initially as a “Free After 2pm” campaign.
- 1.3 Following a review of the impact of the Free After 2pm programme in 2016/17, feedback from the Perth Traders Association (PTA) was that, while a discounted parking scheme was welcome, the economic benefit of the Free After 2 scheme was difficult to quantify and was fairly limited. It was also perceived as a difficult offer to promote.
- 1.4 The PTA asked the Council to consider changing the Free After 2pm scheme to a Free Saturday Scheme during December 2017, for all Council operated car parks in Perth and Kinross. The primary reason for this was that changing trading patterns show that December is no longer the prime trading month for Christmas. In addition, patterns are changing so that Saturday is no longer necessarily the key trading day. Therefore, additional support to boost trade on Saturdays in December was requested.
- 1.5 This request for free Saturday parking during December 2017 was approved by the Council’s Environment, Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 8 November 2017 (Report No.17/370 refers). The offer was repeated in December 2018 (Report No 18/365 refers) December 2019 (Report No 19/312 refers) and December 2020 (Report No 20/201 refers).
- 1.6 Feedback taken in January 2021 on the ‘Love Local Perth – Where Christmas Is Made’ 2020 campaign from 85 businesses was that the most popular feature of the campaign was the free festive parking offer.

- 1.7 Parking income from off street parking during November and December has been as follows:

Year	November (£)	December (£)
2013/14	131,196	141,452
2014/15	131,914	146,204
2015/16	139,968	136,049
2016/17	110,335	108,776
2017/18	146,074	116,522
2018/19	141,259	107,879
2019/20	143,768	109,936
2020/21	96,345	70,616

- 1.8 Feedback via social media has been overwhelmingly positive with a large number of comments welcoming the Council's support for businesses.
- 1.9 Feedback from other marketing with the Courier, STV and Smooth FM also showed good levels of engagement.
- 1.10 Key learning from previous promotions was related to taking all steps possible, through communication and engagement, to make it clear what the parking offer is, and which locations are included and excluded. To aid motorists, all parking meters in the free car parks will again be shrouded each weekend in December 2021. **Appendix 1 details the participating car parks.**
- 1.11 The pandemic continues to impact significantly on public transport in terms of patronage and alleviation measures with usage now at around 75% of pre pandemic levels.
- 1.12 Given officer commitment to the Covid 19 response and Scottish Government guidance regarding the use of public transport, it has not been possible to progress work on options for incentivising public transport during the 2021 festive period. The current Scottish Government guidance (updated on 4 October 2021) is to reduce the need to travel and to work from home or near home if you can. Stagecoach East Scotland have advised that they are unable to provide a 2021 incentivised public transport offer, similar to the one which they operated in December 2019, due to the challenges they face as a result of the ongoing pandemic.

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The specific proposal for 2021 is free parking on each weekend in December from Saturday 4 December to Saturday 25 December 2021 in all Council operated car parks across the whole Perth and Kinross area. (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 It is proposed to use media and advertising to promote the offer, with an initial press release following Committee approval.

2.3 Based on current income levels from the car parks concerned, the cost of operating a “Free on Weekends” promotion in December 2021 in terms of lost income is estimated at approximately £15,000. The shortfall in income will be managed within the overall Parking Account for the financial year.

### 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The offer of free festive parking has been, in general, well received by residents, visitors and businesses over the last 9 years. It has provided a tangible demonstration of the Council’s commitment to supporting retailers and the local economy during the festive season. This year, it will also support businesses dealing with the trading environment arising from the Covid -19 pandemic.

3.2 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) agrees to offer free parking on each weekend in December from Saturday 4 December until Saturday 25 December 2021 inclusive in all Council operated car parks across the whole Perth and Kinross area. (Appendix 1).

#### Author

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#### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Clare Mailer	Depute Director (Communities)	14 October 2021

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement /Perth City Plan	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>Yes</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>None</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>None</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>None</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>None</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>None</b>
Risk	<b>None</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>None</b>
External	<b>None</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>Yes</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan

- 1.1 The activities contribute to the Community Plan's strategic objectives of 'Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy', and a 'Safe Welcoming Environment' and the outcomes of 'a thriving, expanding economy' and 'employment opportunities for all'.

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2018/2022 sets out five strategic objectives:
- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
  - (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
  - (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
  - (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
  - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.
- 1.3 This report relates to Objective No (iii) 'Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy' and the outcome of 'Thriving, expanding economy' by encouraging and supporting retail businesses.

## 2. Resource Implications

### Financial

- 2.1 Based on current income levels from the car parks concerned, the cost of operating a “Free on Weekends” promotion in December 2021 in terms of lost income is estimated at approximately £15,000. The shortfall in income will be managed within the overall Parking Account for the financial year.

### Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications as a result of this report.

### Asset Management

- 2.3 There are no asset management implications arising as a result of this report.

## 3. Assessments

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. No further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

### Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions. The activities in this report will contribute towards economic development in Perth and Kinross however the proposals may not fully align with the broader environmental objectives of the Council.

## Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The consideration of the report is in line with the Council's Scheme of Administration and specifically the role of the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee in developing measures to support and promote economic activity and to plan key infrastructure. Legal Services has been consulted on these proposals.

## Risk

- 3.6 Risks and the controls required to mitigate any risks will be reported through the Council's risk management process.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

- 4.1 Heads of Finance and Legal and Governance.

### External

- 4.2 Perth Traders Association have been consulted and are supportive of the approach to festive parking.

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 Communication will be undertaken by the Council and businesses.

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 2.1 None.

## **3. APPENDICES**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – List of car parks included in the scheme.