

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment and Infrastructure Committee

28 October 2020

FREE FESTIVE PARKING 2020

Report by Head of Business and Resources (Report No. 20/201)

This report recommends that the Free Festive Parking initiative operates on each weekend in December, within Council owned car parks, from Saturday 5 December until Saturday 26 December 2020 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. Sunday parking is free of charge.
- 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) and again in 2019 (Report No 19/312 refers).
- 1.6 Feedback on the Free Festive Parking scheme in 2018 was requested from city centre businesses as well as businesses across Perthshire and Kinross-shire. 17 responses were received from businesses (13 within Perth and 4 outwith) ranging from St John’s Shopping Centre to smaller independent retailers.

1.7 A summary of the responses is provided below:

- 86% of businesses felt that the promotion encouraged people to stay longer
- 82% felt it was well advertised
- 83% said customers had mentioned using the free parking
- 80% felt it had a positive impact on their business
- 67% felt it brought additional footfall to their businesses
- 100% would be in favour of a similar promotion

1.8 Parking income from off street parking during November and December was 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

1.9 Feedback via social media has been overwhelmingly positive with a large number of comments welcoming the Council's support for businesses.

1.10 Feedback from other digital marketing with the Courier, STV and Smooth FM also showed good levels of engagement.

1.11 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 2020. **Appendix 1 details the participating car parks.**

1.12 The pandemic continues to impact significantly on public transport in terms of patronage and alleviation measures and this looks likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

1.13 Given officer commitment to the Covid 19 response and Scottish Government guidance regarding the use of public transport, no work has progressed on options for incentivising public transport during the 2020 festive period. The current Scottish Government guidance (as of 7 October 2020) is that public transport use should be minimised as much as possible, such as for education and work, where work cannot be done from home. Stagecoach East Scotland have advised that they will not be offering a 2020 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 2020 is free parking on each weekend in December from Saturday 5 December to Saturday 26 December 2020 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 2020 in terms of lost income is estimated at approximately £15,000. The shortfall in income will be added to the overall Parking Account shortfall for the financial year and funded initially from the Parking Reserve. The Council is awaiting an update from the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments regarding the Loss of Income fund as a potential contribution to the overall Parking Account shortfall.

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 8 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 agrees to offer free parking on each weekend in December from Saturday 5 December until Saturday 26 December 2020 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
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Housing & Environment)	19 October 2020

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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

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 2020 in terms of lost income is estimated at approximately £15,000. The shortfall in income will be added to the overall Parking Account shortfall for the financial year and funded initially from the Parking Reserve. The Council is awaiting an update from the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments regarding the Loss of Income fund as a potential contribution to the overall Parking Account shortfall.

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 sustainable economic development in Perth and Kinross.

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.

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.