

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Community Services
DATE	12 November 2013
REPORT TITLE	Free Parking Initiative
Report of	Chairman of Community Services Committee
WARDS AFFECTED	All

Summary of report:

This urgent report requests that Members consider allowing free parking in Borough Council Car Parks, in support of the Forum of Private Businesses, on Saturday 7 December 2013.

This report is considered urgent in light of the need for a decision to be made before the next scheduled Community Services Committee meeting.

Financial implications:

The anticipated loss of income from Borough Council car parks is £4,960.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Committee consider the request and the options outlined in the report to allow free parking in Borough Council Car Parks on 7 December 2013.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Forum of Private Business is, this year, supporting the inaugural Small Business Saturday in the UK on 7 December 2013. It is, therefore, requesting that local authorities offer free parking in their Car Parks on this day. The organisation believes that "parking charges discourage many consumers from shopping on the high street, consequently diminishing small businesses' customer base".
- 1.2 As a result of this request, officers have asked other local authorities in Devon if they are intending to participate in this initiative and, at the time of writing this report, four had reported that they are not (Plymouth, Torridge, Teignbridge and

Mid Devon), in addition to South Hams. Exeter had responded to say that they are considering offering additional parking time on top of the paid-for time.

2. CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Officers have concerns that offering free parking all day will allow traders, workers and other commuters to park, leaving little parking available for shoppers and visitors and therefore negating the spirit of the offer.
- 2.2 On that basis, if Members are minded to support the initiative, the Committee may wish to consider limiting the free parking period to, for example, between 11.00am and 3.00pm. Such a proposal will help in minimising the impact of traders, workers and other commuters utilising the offer.
- 2.3 Another option Members may wish to consider is to follow the Exeter City approach and provide free parking time in addition to paid-for time (e.g. allowing a free two hour period in addition to a paid one hour ticket).

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council has power to provide off-street parking under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).
- 3.2 This Committee has the power to deal with the provision, management and control of car parks.
- 3.3 West Devon Borough Council has legal powers to carry out enforcement both on and off-street under the Devon County Designation Order made under the Traffic Management Act 2004.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If free parking is provided all day, the anticipated loss of income for the Council from Borough Council car parks is £4,960.
- 4.2 If free parking were to be offered from 11am to 3pm only, the loss in income, although difficult to forecast, is more likely to be in the region of £3,800.
- 4.3 If free parking were to be offered in addition to paid-for time, the loss of income is further reduced, possibly to approximately £1,000 - £2,000.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Risk Management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks Template.

6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate priorities engaged:	Economy and Community Life
Statutory powers:	
Considerations of equality and human rights:	Not applicable

Biodiversity considerations:	Not applicable
Sustainability considerations:	Not applicable
Crime and disorder implications:	Not applicable
Background papers:	None
Appendices attached:	None

STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1.	Loss of income	Should Members agree to free parking all day for all motorists, this will have an impact on the Council's income.	3	4	12	↓	Members may agree to one of the alternative solutions, which will reduce the lost income or may not proceed with the initiative.	Community Services Committee

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ⇄