

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	11 th November 2014
Report of:	Steph Cordon, Head of Communities
Subject/Title:	Responding to the Views of Local People and Businesses about Car Parking in Cheshire East (Ref CE 14/15-23)
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr David Topping, Service Commissioning

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Cheshire East Council as a Resident and Business First Council has listened to the views of local residents, businesses and Town Councils who have taken the time to either complete the survey asking for views on car parking or spoken to us face to face.
- 1.2 The overwhelming response was that 95% respondents want us as a Council to have a parking strategy that is conducive to supporting the needs of local businesses. At this point, it's important that we listen and act on this and develop a strategy which would set the scene for any more radical solutions in the future.
- 1.3 However, we also want to make sure that we can respond where possible to the issues raised in the survey in a short timeframe to recognise the depth of feeling about investing in our town centres. The key themes from consultation are set out in para 11.1 of the report.
- 1.4 There are some immediate incentives that we can implement in the run up to Christmas which we feel will support our residents and businesses. These are set out below:
 - **All Council owned car parks with charges in Cheshire East used predominantly by shoppers will be free from 10am onwards on 13 and 20 December 2014.**
 - **“Free after Three” will continue in our existing identified car parks. We will pro-actively promote this offer in the media and in our car parks.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet agree to

- thank those residents, businesses, Town Councils and visitors who took the time to give us their views;
- further work being undertaken to produce a car parking strategy which is conducive to supporting businesses in town centres by July 2015 including further public engagement and consultation; and
- the immediate actions identified in paragraph 1.4 to help boost our town centres before Christmas, and the actions be evaluated for impact as part of the work to develop a car parking strategy.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To develop a forward thinking car parking strategy which recognises the unique differences in our town centres and provides enabling support for their ongoing regeneration.

3.2 To implement those measures identified through the consultation which are immediate and to review them as part of the development of a car parking strategy.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Ward Members have been encouraged to report in on views from local stakeholders to inform the outcomes of the consultation.

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 Carbon Reduction – Parking facilities should assist with reducing carbon emissions through reduced congestion in town centres and encourage public transport use.

6.2 Health- As above, effective parking services can help improve air quality by reducing vehicle emissions

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

7.1 A car parking strategy and immediate actions to encourage footfall and spend in our town centres will have a positive impact on our local rural communities. They will also be able to take advantage of the free parking after 10.00 a.m. on 13 and 20 December 2014.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 As noted above, a fresh car parking strategy is to be developed which recognises the unique differences in our town centres and provides enabling support for their ongoing regeneration. The strategy will seek to balance the needs of our local businesses with those of our residents, as tax payers and as motorists, including a comprehensive review of pricing policy.
- 8.2 With regard to the specific recommendations contained in this report relating to implementing initiatives in the run-up to Christmas, it is estimated that these would mean some loss in income in the order of £33,000, in the year.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The variations to the car park charges, for the Christmas period, can be achieved by way of issuing a notice in accordance with s35C of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1994 and Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 9.2 The regulations prescribe that notice of the variation must be given by publishing it at least once in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the parking place is situated at least 21 days before it is due to come into force. Copies of the notice must also be displayed in the parking place on the date on which the notice is given and must remain on display until it comes into force. Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the notice remains in place during this time.
- 9.3 The notice must:
- (a) specify the date when it is due to come into force;
 - (b) identify every parking place to which the notice relates;
 - (c) specify in respect of each such parking place-
 - (i) the charges payable for the use of the parking place at the date the notice is given; and
 - (ii) the charges that will be payable when the notice comes into force.
- 9.4 Following the production of the car park strategy, should any changes be required to the pricing policy of the car parks in the Borough, the Council will need to either amend the parking charges by way of a further notice or alternatively by way of a new traffic regulation order(s). The process for both a notice or a new traffic regulation are set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 As a Residents and Business First Council we have listened and taken into account the views of local residents, businesses and Town Councils. This has meant that any reputational risks are taken into

account and mitigated where possible. There is a further financial risk in that free parking on some of the busiest days of the year will mean a drop in income.

- 10.2 All practical measures to implement the changes so that residents and businesses can benefit and be aware will be done as soon as Cabinet reach an agreement on the way forward.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The consultation has produced the following key themes which are shown below. These encompass the views of residents, Businesses, ward members, Town Councils and visitors.

You Said	We Listened
Parking is too expensive.	We will, as part of the wider strategy, review our prices to ensure that they reflect customer need and are benchmarked against similar areas. We have an ambition to reduce in areas of need of regeneration.
Car parking pricing and quality isn't the main issue preventing you from visiting town centres, it was the fact that the offer in some of our town centres needed to be better and more support given to local businesses and retailers.	We have already begun some regeneration master planning to make our town centres more attractive and also provide some better sustainable travel options. Your suggestions for improvements will be incorporated within that and our car parking strategy.
You Said	We Listened
The public realm is of poor quality in some of our areas particularly in Nantwich.	We will invest in public realm and already have planned investment in Nantwich, Congleton and Knutsford.
We need more pay by phone options as people often didn't have the right change and have to hurry to leave if their ticket was running out.	We will roll out our pay by phone method (Ringo) to more car parks.
There are mixed views on harmonisation of charges.	We will incorporate these views into our wider parking strategy. It's fair to say, harmonisation of charges is not something that we are keen on as each of our areas are unique.
Can we have free car parking on events days?	We think this is a great idea and we will look at the impact that this would have.
You would like to see car parking pay and display tickets being transferable from one car park to another.	This is something we will consider within our parking strategy.

"Free after Three" was a great idea and we should continue with this. However, it wasn't well publicised.	We will continue with "Free after Three" in the identified car parks and promote this more effectively.
There should be more advertising in our car parks to promote what is happening in our town centres and special offers, etc.	We will use space in our car parks for advertising.
A shorter stay option for car parks to allow people to nip to the bank was something needed in the car parks closest to the centre.	We will consider this within our wider parking strategy and review of pricing.
There should be a give back option whereby for example, if you spend £10 in Crewe market the car park fee would be refunded.	We will consider this for any group of businesses who are interested as part of our parking strategy.

12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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