

Subject:	Christmas Parking & Roadworks Suspension		
Date of Meeting:	14th November 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Austen Hunter	Tel: 29-2245
	Email:	austen.hunter@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	Regency, St Peter's & North Laine, Queens Park, Central Hove		

Note: By reason of the following special circumstances, which shall be recorded in the minutes, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that this item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. In order to comply with the Council resolution on the 23rd October 2014, an Urgency Sub-Committee has been called to consider a report on the provision of free parking on Sundays during December and in order to enable officers to meet the requirement to advertise a notice of intention 21 days in advance of any such provision be agreed, the sub-committee has been set for Wednesday 12th November 2014. The agenda and associated papers were published as soon as they could be finalised.

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report refers to the "Christmas Parking & Roadworks Suspension" Notice of Motion passed at the Council meeting of 23rd October 2014 with respect to parking tariffs in December 2014.
- 1.2 The Notice of Motion proposed free parking on "Small Business Saturday" (6th December) and the 3 Sundays before Christmas (7th, 14th and 21st December) at the following city centre car parks:
 - Norton Road
 - London Road
 - Regency Square
 - High Street
 - Trafalgar Street
- 1.3 This report covers the known impacts (based upon last year's experience) and potential impacts of these changes.
- 1.4 Two options related to free parking are presented:
 - 1) Free parking at the car parks and on the dates identified in the 23rd October Notice of Motion.

2) No change to parking tariffs

1.5 This report also responds to the proposal for a roadworks suspension, specifically *“Request that the Executive Director of Environment, Development & Housing seeks the suspension of all non-urgent roadworks in the city centre during December.”*

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Committee approve Option 2 – no change to parking tariffs.

2.2 That the Committee note that an embargo of works on the Brighton & Hove network during the period of 01 December to 02 January 2015 inclusive was instructed by the city’s Traffic Manager on 14th October 2014.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 On 23rd October 2014 a Notice of Motion (“Christmas Parking & Roadworks Suspension”) was passed at Full Council. Option 1 reflects the proposal to provide free parking on “Small Business Saturday” (6th December) and the 3 Sundays before Christmas (7th, 14th and 21st December) at the following city centre car parks:

- Norton Road
- London Road
- Regency Square
- High Street
- Trafalgar Street

3.2 Potential economic, traffic management, environmental and reputational implications are associated with Option 1. These are discussed in Section 4, below.

3.3 Option 2 is to make no change to parking tariffs.

3.4 On 17th October, the city’s Traffic Manager instructed an embargo of works on the Brighton & Hove network during the period of 01 December to 02 January 2015 inclusive.

3.5 The following will apply during the whole period:

- a) No planned works would be allowed in town shopping centre areas and footways with high amenity
- b) Works activities would be required to be scaled down or restricted on Traffic Sensitive Roads and locations within the network
- c) Planned Works would be restricted on any Main arterial routes into and out of the city. ie A23, A259 A270 etc

- d) Planned work would not be allowed in the immediate vicinity of the Emergency Services entry/exits points
- 3.6 All planned works in other locations would be allowed subject to them being notified through the Streetworks management system. All such requests would be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- 3.7 All immediate works can go ahead, however they will need to be monitored daily to ensure that they are not being left idle unnecessarily.
- 3.8 The Traffic Manager expects that by the 19th of December 2014 all open sites will be closed down or made safe for the Christmas week of 22 December to 01 January 2015 inclusive.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Option 1

- 4.1 In 2013, free parking was provided on Saturday 7th and Sundays 8th, 15th and 22nd December at Trafalgar Street, High Street, Regency Square, London Road, Norton Road car parks.
- 4.2 The overall financial impact has been assessed as approximately **£64k**
- 4.3 The income impact across the 5 car parks, on the 4 free parking days, was approximately **£47k**. This was based on available usage data from the preceding weeks at those car parks, prior to the free parking days
- 4.4 The on-street impact from the streets around the free parking car parks including The Lanes & Carlton Hill car parks which were not free on those days, has been assessed to be approximately **£17k**.
- 4.5 There is no measurable evidence to show that the free parking introduced in December last year had a beneficial impact upon local business.
- 4.6 **Economic impact** – In general, parking charges can benefit businesses by encouraging turnover of spaces, which helps to increase footfall and spend. Charging can also help to reduce congestion making it easier for people to access businesses and reduce pollution, making the city a more attractive place to visit. The European research group, COST, has produced a detailed report ["Parking Policies and the Effects on Economy and Mobility"](#), which states:

"Evidence brought together clearly indicates that proper parking policy measures support the economy rather than hamper it. Paid parking results in a higher turnover, creating space for more customers. Free parking changes visitors (short term) parking into long term places occupied by workers instead of residents. Introduction of a free starting period at paid parking locations results in more traffic movements, more costs and not more customers."

- 4.7 **Traffic management / environmental impact** – the proposed days are some of the busiest of the year with 50,000 to 100,000 visitors to the city centre each day. In recent years, congestion caused by traffic queuing for car parks during busy periods has caused major delays to bus services with some services being threatened with cancellation as a result. Free parking could attract additional car journeys leading to more congestion and air pollution.
- 4.8 **Reputational impact** – if unsuccessful, the city risks reputational damage due to congestion and poor visitor experience. There is a risk that people with car park season tickets and hotel guests may find that parking is not available for them.
- 4.9 The option to donate £64,000 to Brighton & Hove Bus Co for free bus travel instead of providing free parking presents a number of issues:
- a) The council cannot legally require Brighton & Hove Bus Company change its tariffs.
 - b) The Transport Act 1985 provides for bus subsidies on non-commercial routes only.
 - c) As there are a number of bus companies operating in Brighton & Hove, it would not be fair to provide a subsidy only to one company.
 - d) The income related to bus travel on those days is likely to be significantly more than £64,000.

5. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 As the Notice of Motion wasn't submitted early enough to take this through the scheduled Committee cycle, in order to meet the deadline of delivering changes by 6th December, the lead-in period has been contracted and therefore it has not been possible to carry out a full consultation with businesses and members of public.
- 5.2 As part of the implementation the views of the community will be sought and the effect of the changes monitored to inform future proposals of this type.

6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The reason why a decision to implement Option 2 is sought is to support local businesses by encouraging trade and keeping the transport network moving.
- 6.2 Option 2 will better encourage higher turnover of parking space and as a result, higher footfall.
- 6.3 Option 2 will help to mitigate the risk of attracting excessive traffic and congestion at a time of year when there is already very high volumes of visitors to the city. It will help to mitigate the risk of damaging business, the environment and the city's reputation.

7. **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications:

Option 1

- 7.1 The total cost of Option 1 is estimated at £64,000, based upon last years' experience.
- 7.2 It is possible that there could be a small drop in revenue resulting from fewer penalty charge notices (PCN's) being issued but due to the relatively small number of spaces affected this is likely to be insignificant and has not been included in the costings.
- 7.3 The cost of option 1 has been estimated on the best information available and has taken account of known seasonal variations and likely responses to price changes. Parking activity is difficult to forecast with any accuracy due to a range of factors that can impact on usage and therefore it is possible that the impact of either option could be different to the estimates presented above
- 7.4 The costings do not include any allowance for advertising or making Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) (if necessary) as these are not expected to be significant and would be met from within existing revenue budgets.
- 7.5 Similarly they do not make any allowance for the cost of any potential challenge to, or losses arising from, these options by other parties who may see them as detrimental to their business.
- 7.6 The cost of option 1 would impact on the council's year-end financial position and potentially upon the level of reserves available to support the 2015/16 budget setting process. The pressures on the council's budget in 2014/15 have been documented in Targeted Budget Management reports to Policy & Resources Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford

Date: 07.11.14

Legal Implications:

- 7.7 The Council has power under section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to vary the charges payable at off-street car parks by way of a notice. Procedure regulations set out the process that must be followed. A notice must be published in a newspaper circulating in the area and displayed in the affected car parks at least 21 days before the changes take effect.

Lawyer Consulted: Katie Matthews

Date: 06.11.14

Equalities Implications:

- 7.8 None

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.9 These have been discussed in Section 4

Crime & Disorder Implications:

7.10 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

7.11 These have been discussed in Section 4.

Public Health Implications:

7.12 **The majority of locally derived pollution comes from either diesel engines or older petrol vehicles. Parking controls are a positive contribution to reducing air pollution.** It is estimated that poor air quality reduces life expectancy in the UK by 6 months. Brighton has an Air Quality Management Area in force because over 21 km of the city's busiest road consistently exceed English and EU legal limits for Nitrogen Dioxide. The city has promoted the use of sustainable transport as an alternative to private car use with the aim of improving air quality. Any increase in the volume of traffic entering the city centre and queuing for car park space could have a negative impact on health and progress being made on improving air quality.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

7.13 These have been discussed in Section 4.

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.14 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

1. COST Action 342 - "Parking Policies and the Effects on Economy and Mobility", <http://www.europeanparking.eu/cms/Media/COST%20Action%20342%20final%20report%5B1%5D.pdf>

Documents in Members Rooms

None

