

Decision under Delegated Powers

Free Parking for Sundays, evenings and daytime up to 1 hour in Beehive Lane car park to support the town centre Bedford Square re-generation programme – May 2021

Officers Requesting Decision

Karl Harrison – Car Parks and Civil Enforcement Manager

Officer Making Decision

Alan Twells – Head of Regulatory Services

Recommendation

To implement the following free parking tariffs from the 24th May 2021 within Beehive Lane car park, as detailed below:

1. Monday to Saturday – Free Parking for up to 1 hour. All tariffs over the one hour period to remain unchanged and,
2. Sundays and evenings – Replace the 60p charge for Sundays and Evenings with ‘Free’ parking.

The initial period of implementation is 7 weeks to support the town centre re-generation works, with additional weeks to be agreed by the Chief Executive, to support on-going re-generation works in the town centre, particularly if there is a significant loss of on-street parking.

Reason

Bedford Square, Wards End, Devonshire Square and Granby Street all have free on-street parking for up to 1 hour. During the Bedford Square re-generation works, most of these bays will be inaccessible for at least some of the works. This amounts to approximately 70 limit wait spaces, 20 disabled bays and taxi ranks. Leicestershire County Council has indicated that some provision for replacement free parking should be given by Charnwood Borough Council while the works take place.

Following consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, urgent agreement that fees are altered on a temporary basis to Free parking for up to one hour is recommended at Beehive Lane car park only and not Granby Street. This is to help direct traffic away from the town center where the re-generation works are taking place.

Authority for the decision

The Head of Regulatory Services under The Council’s Constitution, section 8, Scheme of Delegation to Officers Page: 8-27, Street Management, bullet point 7:

“To use car parking promotions as an operational tool to encourage users to park in Council town centre car parks when it is considered beneficial to the town and the Council.”

Additionally, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposals.

Decision and Date

Background

The Bedford Square Gateway Project is currently underway in the town centre. As part of the re-generation works, Street Management have been advised that on-street car parking spaces will be lost in Bedford Square, Wards End and Devonshire Square as the works progress. Charnwood Borough Council are obliged to offer alternative free parking.

As well as the loss of on-street parking spaces, Southfields Road Extension car park is also closed (It is being used as a site compound for the Bedford Square contractors). Southfield offices which would normally be open to the public at evenings and weekends is also being used by the NHS vaccination Hub.

At the same time as the re-generation works, the country is coming out of a long lockdown and many town centre businesses and shops are just starting to re-open. A free parking incentive would help support the recovery program during this period.

Various parking options were presented to the Chief Executive, who consulted Cllr Jonathan Morgan, Leader of Charnwood Borough Council, with potential benefits and costs in the form of reputational risk and potential loss of income.

Options were:

1. No change to tariffs or free parking
2. Free parking for stays of 1 hour or under
3. The first hour free for all tariffs
4. Free parking for every tariff

The 2nd option – ‘Free’ parking for stays of 1 hour or under, (For those vehicles parking for more than 1 hour, the normal tariffs will apply e.g. £1.60 for up to 2 hours etc.) was agreed for implementation as part of this Delegated Decision.

Free parking for up to 1 hour, mirrors the lost on-street availability where a driver could park in Bedford Square or Wards End etc. for free, for up to 1 hour. If a driver wanted to park for longer, they would need to park and pay in a town centre car park or park on-street, out of town.

Part 2 of the recommendation is Sundays and Evening tariffs are also included in the ‘free’ parking offer. The tariffs would normally be 60p between 6pm and midnight during the week and 60p for all day Sunday

These are also included in the ‘free’ parking concession because:

- It would normally be free on-street after 5pm/6pm with no restrictions – these on-street spaces are now being taken out of use as a result of the re-generation project,
- It will support night time economy i.e. gyms, pubs, cafes, cinema etc.
- It is not possible to separate the 60p for 1 hour from the 60p for Sundays and weekends so it is included in the lost income figure reported below
- There could be confusion with the public if they can park for free before 6pm but are then expected to pay after 6pm

The ‘free’ up to 1 hour parking offer is limited to Beehive car park only – Granby Street car park has not been included in the offer. By offering Beehive only, signage with the offer can be put up at the Bedford Square junction. This will encourage drivers to Beehive Lane and help to reduce traffic through the town centre going to Granby Street.

Comments from HR

There are no significant impacts on staffing to consider.

Financial Implications

The loss of income can be attributed as a cost for the Bedford Square re-generation project:

The temporary arrangement for ‘free’ parking will result in a direct loss of income from the Beehive Lane car park budget account. In addition to the ‘normal’ expected Beehive income loss, there will be an additional loss as many short stay parkers will migrate from Granby Street car Park to Beehive.

Start Date	End Date	Beehive (£)	
12 April 2021	12 May 2021	£	2,700
12 April 2019	12 May 2019	£	6,100
60p Income - Estimate based on a % of total amount of 2019			
Town recovery level as %	Both £ pcm	Beehive only £PCM	
60%	£ 6,660	£	3,660
70%	£ 7,770	£	4,270
80%	£ 8,880	£	4,880
90%	£ 9,990	£	5,490
100%	£ 11,100	£	6,100

An estimated loss of income per calendar month is approximately £5k. The ‘free’ parking option is required to support the Town centre re-generation scheme for 7 – 8 weeks. The loss of income is estimated at approximately £10k.

[Note that the numbers in the table show a relatively low uptake of the car park income in April to May ’21. However, further relaxation of COVID restriction did not come into place until 17th May ’21. Hence, the estimated recovery levels used as numbers are expected to steadily rise].

Loss of income will be monitored in the Agresso budgets for car parks. This free parking concession will be reported via the budget monitoring process (in addition to the Southfield Extension closure and free parking for the vaccination hub at Southfields Offices.)

Altering tariffs requires a software update. The supplier for the car park machines and software is currently negotiating a new (additional) annual agreement. They have offered one free tariff change as part of the deal which would eliminate potential implementation costs. Therefore, there are no additional supplier costs. There is normally a four week lead in time but a quicker turn around has been negotiated to be able to offer the scheme from Monday 24 May '21

Risk Management

The financial implications are identified above. There is a risk that the longer the free parking goes on the greater the financial implications and greater the expectation from the Town Centre and members of public.

The reasons for additional parking income losses needs to be recorded and re-iterated through budget monitoring processes and reporting to Members.

On top of the major town centre disruption, there would be a reputational risk to the Council if free on-street parking was taken away from the public and then a 'free' alternative parking concession was not offered. It will be made clear in comms that the free parking offer is to replace the lost parking spaces in the town centre.

There may be some confusion with free parking for up to 1 hour. Some people may interpret this as 1 hour free parking i.e. a discount off all tariffs. Street management has already started working with Comms to send a clear message regarding the recommended 'free' offer.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Further loss of income if the scheme is extended beyond 7 weeks	3	2	6	Further authorisation required should the scheme be extended. The total loss of income (project cost) is likely to be below an estimated £30k if extended beyond the 7 weeks
Poor financial performance recorded against the Street Management budget account	3	2	6	Car park budget monitoring reports record additional support measures for the Town centre regeneration scheme
Poor communication to the public regarding the 'free' parking offer	3	2	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The contractor (Fitzgeralds) to put road signage in Bedford Square 2. Comms to promote on social media detailing the offer for up to 1 hour only 3. Posters on site explaining offer is for up to 1 hour only
Software issues with the change in tariffs	1	3	3	The new tariffs have been tested on the software but will not be fully tested until go live. The

				Street Management team will monitor
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Key Decision:

Yes / No

Background Papers:

DELEGATED DECISION – ADDENDUM

Decision of Officer Making the Decision

Head of Regulatory Services – Alan Twells

Date: 2 August 2021

DD Reference number: DD102 2021 – Free Parking for up to 1 hour to support the Town Centre Regeneration (**Appended**)

Officer Requesting Decision (Addendum)

Car Parks and Civil Enforcement Manager – Karl Harrison

Decision and Date (for Addendum)

Free Parking for Sundays, evenings and daytime up to 1 hour in Beehive Lane car park to support the town centre Bedford Square re-generation programme – May 2021

Recommendations / Addendum

To extend the free parking for up to 1 hour, evenings and Sundays in Beehive Lane car park until 7th November 2021

Reasons

The Bedford Square re-generation work is programmed to continue until November 2021. This includes road closures in Wards End and Devonshire Square. Leicestershire County Council Highways have a number of on-street free parking bays for up to 1 hour. The on-going regeneration works have meant the loss of these free on-street spaces.

The extension of free parking for Sundays, evenings and up to 1 hour in Beehive Lane car park is required to support on-going road closures and loss of town centre parking associated with the Bedford Square re-generation works.

Further details

Background

As per DD102 2021 – Free Parking for up to 1 hour to support the Town Centre Regeneration (Appended)

The initial DD, allowed for some loss of income with an initial period of 7 weeks for the free parking up to 1 hour, evenings and Sundays and an estimated a loss of income around £5,000 per month.

Under the 'Risk Management' in the delegated decision it was identified that the scheme may need to be extended should the re-generation works programme need it. Under such circumstances the following mitigation was included:

“Further authorisation required should the scheme be extended. The total loss of income (project cost) is likely to be below an estimated £30k if extended beyond the 7 weeks”

The Chief Executive has been consulted regarding the proposed extension of free parking and the financial implications and he has agreed that we extend the free parking until mid-November 2021 as detailed in this addendum.

Letter to businesses

Financial Implications

Figures have been collated from the parking software to show the number of Beehive Lane car park users that have had the free parking.

Free parking since 24th May 2021 equated to approximately £1,000 per week (inc. VAT). However, it should be noted that during the period of full road closure at Wards End in the week commencing 19th July 2021 the 'lost' income increased by 20%. i.e. £1,200 for a part week of road closures (the road re-opened on Friday and numbers picked up again at the weekend). This is likely to be because drivers felt it was easier to use Beehive Lane than negotiate the diversions for Granby Street.

At the time of the full road closures Granby Street occupancy went from going full almost daily to an estimated 40-50% occupancy. Therefore, there is a greater loss of income as not all drivers will have migrated to Beehive Lane car park.

Please note that during the Bedford Square regeneration works, there have still been on-street spaces available in Wards End, and Devonshire Square. The majority of parkers benefiting from free 1 hour parking, evenings and Sunday parking would most probably normally have parked at Beehive anyway.

**Estimated loss of income for the whole scheme from 24th May 2021 to 7th November is:
24 weeks at £850 to £1,000 per week
i.e. £20 to £24k (exc. VAT) loss of income**

The loss of income will be against Beehive Lane M510 J0502. This is in excess of any loss previously reported due to the pandemic recovery and other car park closures. (Granby Street car park will also have a loss of income particularly when there are full road closures).

Reasons for further losses in income will be recorded in the budget monitoring papers.

Key Decisions

No

Background Papers

DD102 2021 – Free Parking for up to 1 hour to support the Town Centre Regeneration Letter to businesses??

Signed:

Date: