

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 28 September 2020

Report by: Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

Report title: Consideration of proposal for 'Free after 3' car park pilot to be offered in Bishop's Stortford in partnership with Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District

Ward(s) affected: Bishop's Stortford wards

Summary

A period of free parking is proposed to be offered in Bishop's Stortford with the aim of encouraging visitors and shoppers back to the town

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION:

(a) A trial parking promotion "Free after 3" is agreed in Bishop's Stortford to run for a period of two months

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 It is proposed that, in partnership with the Stortford Business Improvement District (BID), a special parking promotion is offered in the Causeway car park.

1.2 Any vehicle parking in Causeway car park after 3pm on Tuesdays in October and November will be able to park free of charge subsidised by the BID.

2.0 Background

2.1 There is a public perception which is also held by members of the BID that car park charges discourage shoppers from visiting town centres.

- 2.2 In order to encourage an increase in footfall, the BID want to fund a trial parking promotion offering a period of free parking to encourage more visitors to the town.
- 2.3 The proposal will be cost neutral to the council as the BID have agreed to compensate the council for lost income, as set out in the appendix.
- 2.4 The 'FREE after 3' model has been adopted in other towns across the country featuring BIDs including Sunderland, Durham and Bury St Edmunds. The success of this promotion has not been formally measured but anecdotal evidence suggests that shoppers may stay for longer when parking charges are free.
- 2.5 The promotion will take place one day per week on the quietest shopping day – Tuesday in Causeway car park.
- 2.6 Causeway car park has displayed a substantial drop in usage since lockdown and unlike other car parks intended for shoppers, has not returned to previous levels.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 A parking promotion forms part of the BIDs business plan and has previously been discussed with East Herts officers

4.0 Options

- 4.1 N/A

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 No risks. Loss of parking income will be paid by the BID

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 N/A

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

Yes. The offer of free parking does not encourage sustainable travel.

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A – Calculation of parking income loss

Contact Member

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