



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Ben Brailsford,
Parking Services Manager

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Report of: *Executive Director, Place*
Report to: *Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability*
Date of Decision: *9 November 2017*
Subject: Christmas Parking and Festive Buses offer

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>Transport & Sustainability</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>		

Purpose of Report:

The report sets out proposals for a free Christmas parking offer in 2017 and a promotional offer for the festive bus services.

Recommendations:

- Approve that all pay and display parking in the City Centre will be free on the six Sunday's leading up to Christmas 2017 (19 , 26 November and 3, 10, 17 and 24 December 2017)
- Approve Council funding of £9000 for a "one plus" festive buses offer to encourage people to visit the city centre by public transport

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Alison Chambers & Andrea Snowden
	Legal: Richard Cannon & David Sellars
	Equalities: Annemarie Johnston
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission: <i>Laraine Manley</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted: <i>Councillor Jack Scott</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Ben Brailsford</i>
	Job Title: <i>Parking Services Manager</i>
	Date: <i>8 November 2017</i>

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 It is normally the case that the Council makes some form of free parking offer in the pay and display parking spaces it controls, as a gesture of goodwill, intended to encourage visitors and stimulate the retail / visitor economy. Most towns and cities make similar offers at this time of year.
- 1.1.2 In the past three years, these have been in the form of free parking in the afternoon/early evening on the three Saturdays running up to Christmas.
- 1.1.3 In previous years, the offer was made on Wednesdays to support the late opening of shops in the city centre. However, shops no longer tend to open late, so continuing with that specific offer was not supportive to retail and, at the request of stakeholders, the offer was switched to Saturdays in line with the wishes of retailers
- 1.1.4 Consultation has taken place on the nature of this year's offer with the Business Improvement District (BID) Manager, the City Centre Retailers Group and City Centre Management Team. The results of this consultation were a request that the free parking offer be moved to Sunday's in the lead up to Christmas, but that parking is free for a full day, rather than part day as in previous years. Also the offer will begin much earlier, from the switch on of the Christmas lights on Sunday 19 November. It was felt by the consultees that these changes would make it easier for customers to understand and easier to market the offer. The timings would also work well with the overall marketing of the Christmas experience in the city centre.
- 1.1.5 The loss of parking income resulting from this offer could be up to £30,000 and there is a minor cost in publicising the offer, such as applying information stickers to all of the 500+ pay and display machines and putting up notices in the car parks. This is an estimate based on analysis undertaken by Transport, Traffic and Parking Services Business Management which identified Sunday income at £4.7k per week.
- 1.1.6 It is important to note that the pay and display car parks within the city's parks (operated by Parks & Countryside) are not included in this offer.
- 1.1.7 A festive bus service has operated each year since 2008/9, originally funded by Sheffield City Council to fill the gap on Boxing Day and New Year's Day when no commercial services operate. They provide a skeleton service for the people of Sheffield to help reach employment and leisure opportunities.

- 1.1.8 Services are procured by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) and since 2013/14, on Boxing Day only, they have been split between First and Stagecoach as Sheffield Bus Partnership (SBP) partners. The reduced network on New Year's Day (20 buses as opposed to 50) is too small to warrant opening both depots and thus are the subject of a competitive tender.
- 1.1.9 In 2016/17, for the first time Boxing Day services (cost £28k) were funded by a four way split between SBP partners. New Year's Day services (cost approx. £11k) which run at a more significant loss, were solely funded by the Council. The same arrangement has been agreed for 2017/18.
- 1.1.10 Although services operate at a loss on both days, Boxing Day loadings have been relatively consistent over the past five years (20-25,000). New Year's Day, on the other hand, has been generally significantly lower (2016/17 passenger numbers of 5,160 being roughly an average figure, with the odd exception). However both days' loadings are impacted by external factors– principally which day of the week the holidays fall upon (and hence shop opening patterns), along with sporting fixtures and weather.
- 1.1.11 This year, at the request of the Cabinet Member for Transport, work has been undertaken to look at how an enhanced Festive Buses offer might be worked up in conjunction with the SBP. The working proposal is for a “one plus” free travel offer. This will be targeted to encourage new people to travel by bus, specifically to and from the city centre on Thursday evenings for late night shopping and on Sundays in the run-up to Christmas.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 The operation of on and off street parking spaces, the management of parking through the introduction of parking restrictions and use of parking permits contribute to the management of traffic in the city. Traffic management is a key part of the Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy, a statutory document that sets out how transport will help support the development of the Sheffield City Region (SCR) over a next 15 year timeframe.
- 2.2 Traffic management through parking restrictions and their enforcement also enables the Council to help deliver its “Vision for Excellent Transport in Sheffield”, by investing in facilities to enable people to make informed choices about the way they travel and helping transport contribute to the social, economic and environmental improvements we want to happen in the City.

- 2.3 The priority in spending any surplus parking income is the provision and maintenance of off street parking spaces. Income may also be used to fund public transport improvements, new highway schemes, highway maintenance, reducing environmental pollution and maintaining and improving public open spaces.
- 2.4 This report sets out a temporary removal of charging in order to support the city's retailers and leisure establishments in the City centre at an important time of the year for their businesses.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Council is not required to consult on changes of this nature, but the Business Improvement District Manager, the City Centre Retail Group and the City Centre Management Team have all been consulted and support the proposed parking offer.
- 3.2 Regarding Festive Buses, work has been undertaken with SBP partners to refine the offer as the best possible, practical option within the time available.
- 3.3 Monitoring and evaluation of uptake and effectiveness will help us determine if similar promotional initiatives are further tested in future years. On bus surveys during the Boxing Day and New Year's Day will help establish the value of the Festive Services to Sheffield and the city centre in particular.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

- 4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications
 - 4.1.1 Overall there are no significant differential, positive or negative, equality impacts from these proposals. There may be a small positive financial impact for visitors by encouraging them to shop and visit the city centre at a key time of year.
 - 4.1.2 The bus surveys will ask where people live, their age, gender and if they have a disability, to understand who is using the service. This information, along with the other survey questions, will help evaluate who and why people are using the service. If there are any future promotional initiatives, this will help inform the approach that will be taken.
- 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications
 - 4.2.1 Any costs of making the necessary changes to enable free parking on Sundays will be met from the parking services budget.

4.2.2 The £18,000 cost of the Festive Buses offer will be split evenly between Sheffield Council and SYPTE. This sum represents £13k reimbursement to operators based on assumed take up of the offer and £5k for marketing.

4.2.3 The £9000 contribution from Sheffield City Council will be met from the existing festive buses annual budget.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (“the Act”) imposes a general duty on the Council to exercise its function under the act to “secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway”. Collectively, these criteria may be referred to as “traffic management purposes”.

4.3.2 Section 45 of the Act gives the Local Authority a power (a discretion) to designate parking places on a highway; to charge for the use of them and to issue parking permits for a charge.

4.3.3 Section 46 of the Act enables a Local Authority to exempt from the payment of any charge any vehicle left in a parking place in such circumstances as may be specified in a TRO, and for treating any vehicle so exempted as having been left there, and the charge from which it is exempted as having been paid, at such time as may be so specified.

4.3.4 Section 55 of the Act requires that the Local Authority keep an account of their income and expenditure in respect of designated parking places. This includes ‘pay and display’ income. The ring-fenced account is referred to as the Specialist Parking Account. Section 55(4) of the Act sets out the purposes for which any surplus income in respect of designated parking places can be used. These purposes include:

- Provision and maintenance of off street parking
- Meeting costs incurred in the provision or operation of public transport
- Highway and road improvements and maintenance
- Reducing environmental pollution
- Improvement and maintenance of public open space
- Provision of outdoor recreational facilities open to the public without charge

All of these functions are carried out by the Council’s Place Directorate, which includes Transport, Traffic and Parking Services and the Highways Maintenance Divisions. Any surplus in income in respect of designated parking places is currently utilised in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Act to underpin the activities of these two service areas.

4.3.5 Under the Transport Acts 1968 and 1985 as amended councils have the power to “take any measures appropriate for the purpose or in connection with promoting”:-

- a. The availability of public passenger transport services other than subsidised services, so as to meet any public transport requirements the council considers it appropriate to meet;

The proposed monetary provision is a proper use of these powers.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 There are no other implications

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Council could maintain its current tariffs throughout the festive period, but this would not provide additional support to retailer and leisure operators in the city at an important time of the year for their businesses.

5.2 The Council could chose not to promote a festive bus offer, but this would not encourage any further take up of public transport, particularly on Boxing Day and New Years Day.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Council wishes to provide support for retailers and leisure establishments in the city at a key time of the year. The consensus of stakeholders is that they would wish to see the free parking offer altered to make it easier for customers to understand and support improved marketing.

6.2 Support for Festive Buses is part of a wider package designed to encourage travel to the city centre.