



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 5 NOVEMBER 2019**

SUBJECT: FREE AFTER 3

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the opportunity to provide a Free After 3 parking promotion covering December 2019.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (17) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to traffic management functions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **Committee is asked to consider the provision of 'Free After 3' parking in the St Giles Centre Multi Storey Car Park from Saturday 30 November 2019 to Saturday 4 January 2020 (inclusive).**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 For the last four years Committee has approved a 'free after 3' scheme whereby parking in certain car parks in Elgin is uncharged after 3pm in the run up to Christmas. In 2015 the parking ticket machines were altered to issue a nil-value ticket so the quantum of use could be assessed. Following the first year the findings of officers was that the scheme did not generate sufficient economic benefits to offset the financial impact to the Council to warrant maintaining the scheme on a permanent basis (report to this Committee on 8 March 2016, para 9 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 For the last three years the car park ticket machines have not been reprogrammed, this means that there is no data available to demonstrate the financial impact of the scheme. Based on the 2015 scheme, there was a direct cost to Council in relation to loss of car parking income up to £2,500. As the decision was taken in 2016 to minimise costs by not reprogramming the ticket machines, this can only be an estimate. Consequently this report includes the additional expenditure warning in the Summary of Implications.

- 3.3 In line with the operation of the Free After 3 scheme in 2018, Batchen Lane multi-storey car park is not included in the scheme as the occupancy levels in the car park are very high. If committee recommends to implement the scheme for 2019 then based on occupancy figures, in line with last year, it is recommended that the scheme is promoted for the St Giles Centre multi storey car park only.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The proposals relate to the Corporate Plan priority of Sustainable Economic Development by promoting and developing infrastructure.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implications.

(c) Financial implications

When the council approved the budget for 2019/20 on 27 February 2019 (para 4 of the Minute refers), the three year indicative budget before the council showed savings required in 2020/21 of £12.2 million and £6.7 in 2021/22. Although the final figures will vary, it is clear that the council will have to reduce its costs significantly across all services in future years. All financial decisions must be made in this context and only essential additional expenditure (in this case for expenditure read waiver of income) should be agreed. In making this determination the committee should consider:

- Is there a statutory requirement to incur the expenditure?
- Are there any alternative actions available to avoid or reduce the cost?
- Are there alternative ways in which the service could be provided?
- What are the risks and consequences of not allocating the funding?
- Does the expenditure contribute to long term financial stability?

If in light of these factors the spend is considered essential, Committees should consider how it could be accommodated within the service budget, including what other activity would have to cease or diminish with what impact and risk. Only following these considerations should request be made to the Council for additional budget allocation.

If the additional spend recommended in this report is approved, this will increase the savings targets by up to £2,500. In mitigation, the car park income in this financial year is performing better than budget, which would offset the financial impact.

While in isolation these figures may not be significant, the cumulative impact of all new pressures will require to be taken into account for future years. If the committee recommends additional budget to be allocated this recommendation will be considered in the next quarterly budget monitoring report in the context of the current overall financial

position of the council and in particular in the overall context of spend beyond affordable limits that impinges on the Council's reserves policy position.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no material risks in relation to this proposal.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications and no material socio-economic impacts.

(h) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Legal Services Manager, Equalities Officer, Principal Accountant (P Connor), and Committee Services Officer (L Rowan) have been consulted and their comments incorporated into this report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Committee is asked to consider a Free After 3 promotion for 2019 restricted to St Giles Multi storey carpark.

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Background Papers:
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