

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Christmas Free Parking</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Officer Management Team - Director of Services</b> <b>Prepared by - Head of Environment</b>

### 1. Purpose of Report

To decide whether to offer free parking at the Council's car parks on two Saturdays in December 2014.

### 2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 To contribute to the Council's medium term aim of planning for a thriving and sustainable South Bucks, with vibrant towns and villages.
- 2.2 This matter also contributes to the Council's aim to deliver value for money services that are driven by customer and community needs.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 In order to encourage the use of local shops within the District in the run up to Christmas, the Environment PAG in September 2013 agreed to recommend to Cabinet that for two Saturdays in December 2013 the Council's pay and display car parks should be free of charge.
- 3.2 The recommendation was accepted, and the public was allowed to use the car parks free of charge on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December.
- 3.3 On 7<sup>th</sup> December usage was higher than a normal Saturday in the Gerrards Cross car parks, but there was no increase in the other areas. On 14<sup>th</sup> the Beaconsfield car parks were very busy in the morning, whereas the Gerrards Cross ones were less busy than the preceding week.

### 4. Proposal/Discussion

- 4.1 One headline in the local press in November said "If you know free parking works let's have it all year". It is however difficult to quantify the benefit to local businesses of providing free parking. A story in the Burnham Advertiser in January suggested that trade in Burnham High Street had improved in December year on year, however the article went on to imply that the really busy day was Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> when car park charges were normal.
- 4.2 Members are asked to consider allowing free parking in the Council's car parks on two Saturdays in December.
- 4.3 If Members are agreeable, officers suggest consulting local businesses to decide which Saturdays would be best.
- 4.4 Officers estimate that the cost per Saturday in lost revenue would be approximately £3,000.

## 5. Resources, Risks and other implications

- 5.1 There are no figures for assessing the benefit to local traders of having a free Saturday.
- 5.2 The Council will lose revenue of about £6,000 for two Saturdays.
- 5.3 The cost of arranging free days is negligible.
- 5.4 We will need to put notices up in the car parks one month prior to the free days.

## 6. Summary

- 6.1 The Environment PAG is asked to note the contents of this report.
- 6.2 Members of the PAG are asked to advise the Portfolio Holder whether to recommend to Cabinet that there should be free parking in the Council's car parks on two Saturdays in December, and to recommend which Saturdays to choose.

<b>Portfolio Holders:</b>	<b>Councillor N Naylor</b>
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<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>None</b>