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**Subject:** CHARGES FOR PARKING DURING THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD (FREE FROM THREE)

**Meeting and Date:** Cabinet – 6 November 2023

**Report of:** Shaun Taylor, Community Services Manager

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Charlotte Zosseder, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

**Decision Type:** Executive Key Decision

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Purpose of the report:** To offer free parking in Dover District Council's car parks from 3pm Monday–Friday throughout December 2023 to provide support for local businesses.

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**Recommendation:** To agree to offer free parking in the Council's car parks from 3pm from Monday to Friday throughout December 2023.

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The report seeks to provide support to local businesses, by offering free parking in Dover District Council car parks from 3pm Monday – Friday throughout December 2023; at a revenue cost impact to DDC of circa £12,000. Usual charges will apply on all other times/dates.

## 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 With many DDC car parks located in the heart of town centres they are convenient for local shops. On-street parking charges will still apply. With many retailers now gearing up for the festive season, DDC wants more people to recognise the value, quality and choice that local, independent traders provide.
- 2.2 It should be noted that all other parking restrictions, e.g., yellow lines, etc. will continue to be enforced throughout the district.

## 3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1: To consider the proposal to offer free parking in the Council's car parks 3pm throughout December 2023
- 3.2 Option 2: To consider the proposal to offer free parking in the Council's car parks for the five Saturdays during December.
- 3.3 Option 3: To take no further action and offer no free parking.

## 4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 **Option 1 is recommended.** This is both the preferred option of traders and the best value for money. The decision to provide free Christmas parking on the dates/times as specified in this report will support local businesses and help to promote shopping in the district's town centres. A recent meeting between the Transport and Parking Services Team and local businesses leaders highlighted a weekday – Free for Three initiative as the preferred option. Free Xmas parking has had a positive impact in previous years and has been well received by both local businesses and their customers. This has presented many benefits to local town centres.

4.2 Option 2: This option is not recommended for the reasons noted within the report. Free full day Saturday parking during December (5 days). Although well received in previous years, due to the full day period anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the spaces are used by local businesses, shop workers and residents as opposed to attracting a significant increase in visitor use.

4.3 Option 3: This option is not recommended for the reasons noted within the report.

## 5. **Resource Implications**

5.1 Free parking over the Christmas period has been an ongoing offer for several years and therefore this has already been considered when the 22/23 income was forecast. There has been a change this year in the types of days offered. Last year 2022 – 5 free Saturdays throughout December. In 2021 - 4<sup>th</sup> December and a block of free days from 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021- 28<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 1<sup>st</sup> Jan – 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2022 were offered).

5.2 To provide some guidance to the financial implications, the average daily income from 3pm – 6pm on a weekday is roughly £600 and the average whole Saturday income is circa £6,000.

5.3 Therefore, an entire month of free parking from 3pm for chargeable weekdays in December equates to circa £12,000 loss of revenue.

5.4 Similarly, five free Saturdays would equate to circa £30,000 lost revenue.

5.5 Implementation is part of core parking services delivery with no additional costs.

## 6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

6.1 No implications.

## 7. **Corporate Implications**

7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comments. (JS)

7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report detailing the proposal to offer free parking in the Council's car parks after 3pm throughout December 2023, does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>.

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