

	<h2>Policy and Resources Committee</h2> <h3>2nd December 2014</h3>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Free Parking before Christmas</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Housing and Environment Lead Commissioner</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – List of Town Centres</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Declan Hoare, 0208 359 4320 declan.hoare@barnet.gov.uk</p> <p>Claire Symonds, 0208 359 7082 Claire.symonds@barnet.gov.uk</p>

<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>The report notes a request from the Environment Committee to provide free parking both on and off street in town centres in the three weekends before Christmas for this year and for the next three years, namely up to and including Christmas 2017, and the committee are asked to consider funding and approval for this arrangement.</p>

<h2>Recommendations</h2>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the committee considers the request from the Environment Committee to agree a temporary variation to Parking Fees and Charges to enable free parking in Barnet’s town centres for the three weekends before Christmas for this and the next three years. 2. That the committee note the estimated £90k per annum ‘cost’ for this initiative and confirm that this be funded from the Environment Committee Budget.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 18th of November 2014 the Environment Committee considered a members item on pre-Christmas parking for town centres in the borough for this Christmas. The committee noted that in previous years the council has provided free parking in town centres in the three weekends prior to Christmas, including free parking for the “small business weekend”, for the Finchley light switch on and High Barnet Christmas event. All town centres are listed in Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Environment Committee agreed to support this initiative, for not only this year but the next three and have requested the Policy and Resources to support this and agree ‘funding’ by varying the parking fees and charges for this period.
- 1.3 It is estimated that the total cost of this initiative is £90,000 per annum which comprises the impact on the Special Parking Account (SPA) in terms of loss of parking charges, the cost of publicity and the loss of car park charges. If the Policy and Resources Committee support this initiative, they may wish to mitigate the impact of this reduction by ensuring that this amount is met from the Environment committee budget envelope.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The recommendation for consideration has arisen as a result of a request by the Environment Committee at its meeting of 18 November.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 That this committee does not agree the initiative.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Publicity will be undertaken alongside the process changes required to ensure that the public are aware that free parking is available at the times specified.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Barnet Council will work with local partners to create the right environment to improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study. The aim of this initiative is to support local businesses at the busiest shopping time of the year.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 In order to deliver this free parking concession over the three weekends there will be a financial impact. The sums involved can only be estimated though

£90,000 is believed to be a realistic figure. This includes the costs involved in publicising the change and the practical measures which need to be put in place including publicity and/or producing and installing temporary signage on street as well as reconfiguring the Pay by Phone system to accommodate the free period. It is suggested that the costs that are controllable within this amount will be contained in order that this figure will be appropriate until 2017.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 Under the Road Traffic Act 1991 the Council took over the enforcement of all parking places on the highway in 1994. In 1994 following a pilot where decriminalised enforcement covered three areas, the Council applied for an order to be made designating the whole borough a Special Parking Area which was duly done - with the exception of the current Transport for London Road Network and the M1 motorway. Consequently the Council is empowered to enforce the full range of “decriminalised” parking controls that it implements in any borough road.
- 5.3.2 In using the powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (‘the Act’), the authority has a duty, amongst other considerations, to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities both on and off the highway. This is pursuant to section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 5.3.3 Section 32 of the Act gives local authorities the power to provide parking places on or off street for the purposes of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic. Sections 45 and 46 of the Act enable an authority to designate parking places on the highway and can regulate their use through conditions and charges. The Act also sets out processes and obligations in relation to accounting for on and off street parking.
- 5.3.4 The Council’s Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, confirms that the Environment Committee has responsibility for parking provision and enforcement and gives the Committee authority ‘To make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee on issues relating to the budget for the Committee, including fees and charges proposals and virements or underspends and overspends on the budget’.
- 5.3.5 The Council’s Constitution, Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, paragraph 4.3.8 sets out that the Policy and Resources Committee must approve changes to fees and charges that are significantly different from inflation, the introduction of new fees and charges, and changes to fees and charges outside the normal annual cycle.

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 There is a possibility that the temporary signage will result in disruption and cause confusion which may lead to payments being made which later leads to complaints and requests for refunds. This is particularly likely in relation to those who choose to use the credit/debit card machines as it is not practical to

reconfigure the software in all of the machines due to the costs involved. However, this initiative is intended to be positive and in particular assist shoppers and boost trade for local traders in the lead up to Christmas and therefore the risks are low in comparison to the positive outcomes which are expected to be derived.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 As the free parking concession will be available to all, it is unlikely that anyone will be adversely impacted, other than those who may struggle to read and/or understand the temporary signs. It is acknowledged that Christmas is a Christian festival but that this initiative is in the main about supporting local businesses at the time when the highest levels of shopping activity is undertaken. An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and does not indicate adverse impact on groups

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 In order to ensure that as many people as possible are made aware of this initiative publicity will take place in advance and temporary signage will be installed on site.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 NONE

LIST OF TOWN CENTRES

Edgware	Friern Barnet
Brent Street	East Barnet Village
Chipping Barnet	Market Place
Church End, Finchley	Childs Hill
East Finchley	West Hendon
Golders Green	Golders Green Road
Hendon central	Hampden Square
Mill Hill	Holders Hill Circus
New Barnet	Great North Road
North Finchley	Colney Hatch Lane
Temple Fortune	Apex Corner
Whetstone	Hale Lane
Colindale/The Hyde (Barnet / Brent)	Deansbrook Road
Cricklewood (Barnet / Brent / Camden)	New Southgate
Burnt Oak (Barnet / Brent Harrow)	Grahame Park