



**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT COVER SHEET**

<b>Title of Report:</b>	Additional Free parking options Christmas 2017
<b>Meeting of:</b>	Full Council
<b>Date:</b>	December 4th
<b>Is this an Executive Decision:</b>	No
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Is the Report Confidential:</b>	No
<b>If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:</b>	n/a
<p><b>Essential Signatories:</b></p> <p><b>ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE</b></p> <p>Monitoring Officer: <b>Angela Wakefield</b></p> <p>Date ..... Signature .....</p> <p>Chief Finance Officer: <b>Sal Khan</b></p> <p>Date ..... Signature .....</p>	

**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Report to Council**

**Date: December 4<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**REPORT TITLE:** Additional Free parking options Christmas 2017

**PORTFOLIO:** Cllr Greg Hall

**HEAD OF SERVICE:** Mark Rizk

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Mike Hovers **Ext. No. x1776**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED:** All

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. This report presents a range of options for additional free parking over the Christmas period in addition to the “Free after 3” parking that is currently offered at Coopers Square, Burton Place and the Maltings (Uttoxeter) car parks. The rationale behind providing additional free parking over the Christmas period is to provide an additional boost to businesses in the Borough.

**2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. ESBC currently provide a number of free parking schemes (Free after 3 and refundable leisure centre parking). This report has examined three further options for free parking each with potential merits. However a number of potential issues have to be considered in the provision of free parking. These are:
- The potential for increased town centre congestion as visitors head towards centrally located car parks in search of spaces and remain in the vicinity until one becomes available.
  - Increased congestion as town centre visitors (Burton only) avoid fee paying private sector car parks in search of a free space on Council owned car parks. Private sector car parks account for over 2,000 spaces in Burton.

- Free parking could be detrimental to businesses as turnover of spaces is not generated.
- Free all day parking could be used by town centre workers instead of shoppers and therefore missing the aims of the additional free parking, which is to boost local businesses.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. ESBC have provided “Free after 3” parking at three car parks since December 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. This initiative was aimed at supporting local shops, businesses and restaurants. Recently businesses in Burton have been affected by the closure of St Peter’s Bridge from September through to mid-November. This report seeks to identify options for providing businesses with an additional boost in the busy Christmas holiday period by providing extended/additional free parking for a time limited period.
- 3.2 Coopers Square, Burton Place and The Octagon shopping centres have been consulted on the proposal for additional free parking. Coopers Square and Burton Place would prefer no further amendments (Option 4) due to the town centre “already being at capacity” during this period. Similarly, The Octagon would also prefer option 4 “primarily because the town will be busy every day from now until Christmas and on to the New Year with little incentive needed to encourage further visitors earlier in the day. Additionally, any such extension of free parking, especially to all days, is only likely to encourage workers in the town centre to use the free parking facilities and so deprive the spaces for short term shoppers. Any additional help / encouragement to visit will be better needed / effective if applied outside of the Christmas period or during the next bridge closure period when attracting visitors to the town centre may again be challenging”.

### **4. Contribution to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1. Promoting Local Economic growth.

### **5. Additional Free Parking options**

- 5.1. Three potential options exist for additional free parking. These are:
- The weekends leading (December 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>) up to Christmas.
  - Monday and Tuesdays leading up to Christmas (December 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>).
  - Christmas/January sales week. (December 26<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup> inclusive).
- 5.2 Each possible option has a number of factors to consider before possible implementation. These are presented on the following pages.

## Option 1: The weekends leading (December 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>) up to Christmas

### Income reduction.

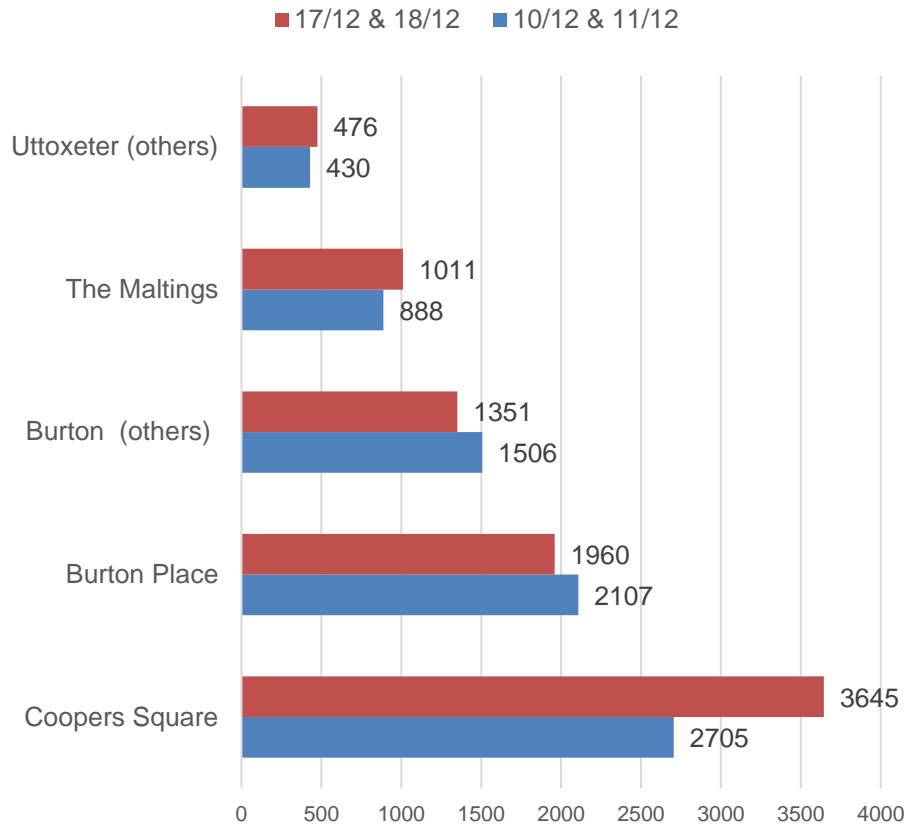
**Figure 1 Income reduction free parking for the three remaining weekends before Christmas**

	Projected reduction 2017
Dec 9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup>	£21,550

### Tickets and footfall

- 5.2.1 The diagram below sets out the number of tickets purchased as an illustration of potential footfall numbers based on the corresponding days in 2016. As with income caution should be exercised when reading these figures as these are derived from the pre-September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 tariff. Weekend car park use is generally at or near capacity particularly in the run up to Christmas.
- 5.2.2 Coopers Square and Burton Place would bear the brunt of free parking provision on the weekends before Christmas. Also, Burton (others) consists of 44% and 41% of tickets purchased at the Meadowside Leisure. Like their counterparts in Uttoxeter (Uttoxeter other 54% and 51% each weekend) these parking charges are refundable for use of the facilities.
- 5.2.3 Should members adopt the above option, consideration should be given to the potential for increased town centre congestion as visitors head towards centrally located car parks in search of spaces and remain in the vicinity until one becomes available. Some of this pressure on congestion is relieved by competitor car parks that provide over 2,000 additional parking spaces in Burton at a comparable tariff to the Council. Should these competitors not introduce free parking there is a risk of further congestion in and around free car parks. Furthermore, members should note that all day free parking could be detrimental to businesses as turnover of spaces is not generated. Free all day parking could also be used by town centre workers for free parking resulting in shoppers not being able to park and thus defeating the aims of the additional free parking.

**Figure 2. Ticket purchases as a footfall indicator (December 2016)**



**Operational considerations**

5.2.4

Implementing this parking option will have an operational impact. Community Enforcement Officers will have to ensure that all parking machines are covered and uncovered at the start and end of each free parking period. This will require an amendment to existing staff rotas and will divert staff from other patrols to tackle issues such as littering, dog fouling and fly tipping.

## Option 2: Monday and Tuesdays leading up to Christmas (December 11th, 12th, 18th and 19th)

### Income reduction

Figure 3 below illustrates the potential income reduction for 2017

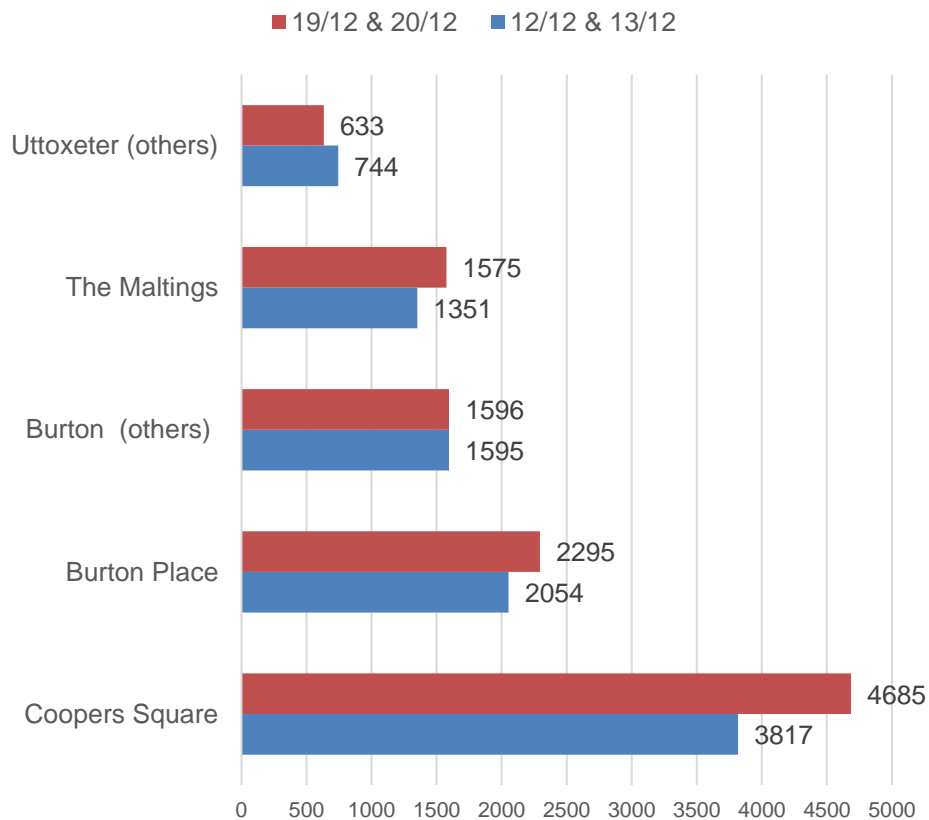
	Projected reduction 2017
Dec 11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup>	£15,589

### Tickets and footfall

5.3.1

The same rationale, contextual factors and wider points to consider for option 1 are also present with this second option. However, in 2016 Christmas holidays commenced on Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> therefore a spike in ticket sales can be seen at this time. In 2017 Christmas term holidays start from Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**Figure 4 Ticket purchases as a footfall indicator (December 2016)**



### Operational considerations

5.3.2

These are same for option 2 as option 1.

### Option 3 Christmas/January sales week. (December 26th to January 1<sup>st</sup> inclusive)

#### Income reduction

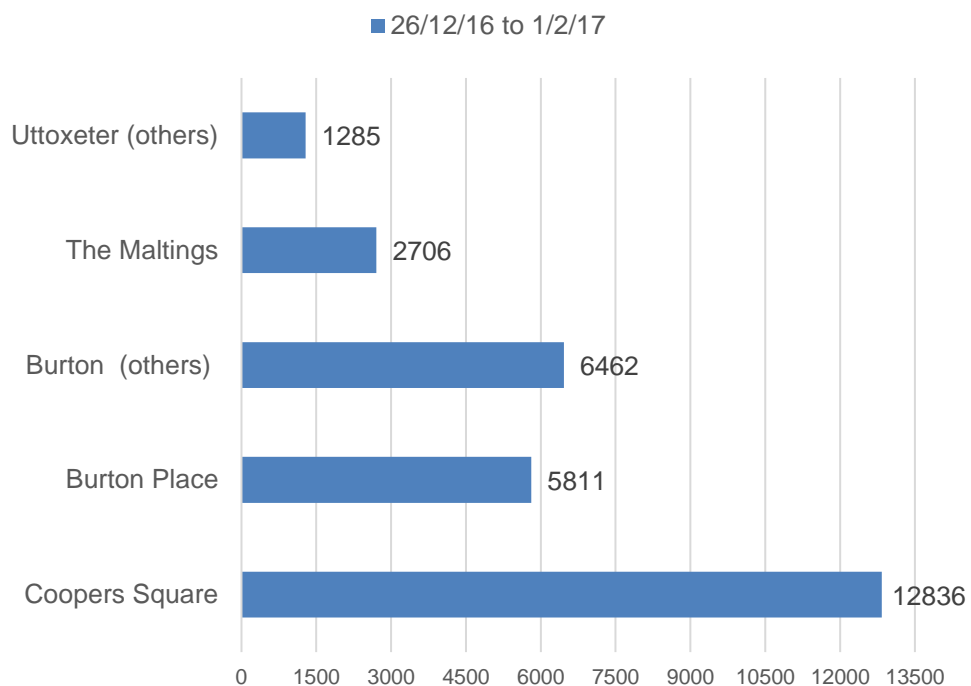
Figure 5 below illustrates the potential income reduction for 2017

	Projected reduction 2017
Dec 26 <sup>th</sup> 2016 to Jan 1st 2017	£21,327

#### Tickets and footfall

5.4.1 Rationale and contextual issues are equally applicable to option 3 as the two previous options. However, as an example, during this week tickets for Burton leisure centres drops to 20% of all other car park ticket sales compared to 40-50% for the rest of December. This option run in parallel with post Christmas sales provides the greatest scope for retailers to benefit from free parking.

**Figure 6 - Ticket purchases as a footfall indicator (December 26th to January 1<sup>st</sup> inclusive)**



#### Operational considerations.

5.4.2 Whilst similar to options 1 and 2 this choice has the operational advantage of requiring just two visits, one on Christmas Eve to cover the parking machines and the other on January 2<sup>nd</sup> to remove the covers.

## Option 4 No additional free parking

- 5.5.1 With the existing “Free after 3” free parking (Coopers Square, Burton Place, Maltings) scheme and refundable parking at both Uttoxeter and Meadowside Leisure Centre the Council already provide a range of free parking options.

## 6. Financial Considerations

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Anya Murray*

- 6.1. The main financial issues arising from this Report are as follows:

Revenue	2017/18
Option 1 Weekends leading up to Christmas	£21,550
Option 2 Monday & Tuesday leading up to Christmas	£15,589
Option 3 Post Christmas sales week	£21,327
Option 4 No change	£0

- 6.2. In recent years the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy has taken account of a reduction in car parking income arising from the Free after Three Scheme of £167,842 and more recently a review of charges leading to a further reduction in income of £76,280.

## 7. Risk Assessment and Management

- 7.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

- 7.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

7.2.1. Free parking may provide a boost to local business following the recent bridge closure and encourage residents who have been inconvenienced over recent months.

- 7.3. **Negative** (Threats):

7.3.1. Free parking will further reduce Council income.

7.3.2. Free parking may not help local business and may increase congestion as visitors avoid parking tariffs on other car parks

7.3.3. Free all day parking will reduce the turnover rate of parking spaces in the town centres and could be detrimental to business.

7.3.4. Free parking may be taken up by workers rather than shoppers.



7.3.5. Option 4 (No additional free parking) is the preferred option of the shopping centres.

7.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

8. **Legal Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team:  
Angela Wakefield*

8.1. There are no significant legal issues arising from this Report.

9. **Equalities and Health**

9.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

9.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

10. **Human Rights**

10.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

11. **Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

11.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures) N/A

12. **Recommendation(s)**

12.1. That each of the options presented in the report be considered and a decision made on which option to pursue.