

1. MANCHESTER STREET CAR PARK - EXTENSION OF FREE PARKING TRIAL

Officer responsible Parking Operations Manager	Author Maurice Smith, DDI 371-1738
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The purpose of this report is to present a submission from businesses located in the vicinity of the Manchester Street car park. The submission requested that the “*first hour free*” parking trial currently underway at the Lichfield St, Farmers and Crossing car parks be extended to include the Manchester Street car park.

BACKGROUND

A submission was received from approximately 60 businesses within the vicinity of the Manchester Street Car Park requesting that the “first hour free” parking trial be extended to include this car park.

Subsequently a letter dated 20 November 2001 was received from Mr Gregg Brimmicombe of A Verkerk Ltd raising a number of additional issues pertaining to the Manchester Street car park. For the purpose of this report, only one of the additional issues was included, namely the opening of the car park on Saturdays, particularly during the lead-up to Christmas this year.

Staff have since discussed this matter with Mr Brimmicombe and advised that a report addressing the remaining issues in the submission will be submitted the February meeting of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee. Mr Brimmicombe then proposed as an interim option that the free parking trial be extended to the Manchester Street car park for the three weeks of December leading up to Christmas, and that the car park also be opened on Saturday 8, 15 and 22 December.

DISCUSSION

First Hour Free Parking Trial

During the development of the current Annual Plan the Council resolved to implement an 11 month trial in which people parking at the Lichfield Street, Farmers and Crossing car parks would receive the first hour's parking free of charge. This initiative was ring-fenced to these car parks primarily on the basis that the Lichfield Street and Farmers car parks are the main shoppers car parks. It was necessary to include the Crossing car park within the scope of the initiative due to the fact charges at this facility are contractually tied to both the Lichfield Street and Farmers car parks. The other primary consideration was the additional cost of extending the initiative to other car parks. As such no funding was allocated to extend the free parking initiative to Manchester Street or other car parks.

The cost of extending the free parking trial to the Manchester Street car park for the three weeks leading up to Christmas, starting 10 December, based upon the status quo is estimated to be in the range of \$12,000 to \$15,000. (Say \$13,500)

Saturday Opening of Manchester St Car Park

Opening the car park for the final three Saturdays leading up to Christmas was considered a viable option, particularly as the car park was already scheduled to be open on Saturday 22 December, leaving just two unbudgeted days to fund at a marginal cost of approximately \$1,600. Staff were confident this cost would be off-set by the revenue generated and at worst would be cost neutral.

Promotion

It was advised that no funding had been provided for promotion of the extension of free parking to the Manchester Street car park, nor for that matter to advertise additional Saturday openings.

It was therefore suggested that if the proposal was approved then businesses in the area should include relevant promotion in their own advertising, at their cost.

CONCLUSION

The estimated cost (based upon the status quo insofar as utilisation and revenues are concerned) of extending the first hour free parking trial to the Manchester Street car park during the three weeks prior to Christmas, beginning 10 December, is \$13,500. No funding for this cost had been provided.

Opening the car park on Saturday 8 and 15 December was assessed as being achievable on a cost neutral basis.

DECISION

The Committee noted staff advice that the opening of the car park on Saturdays 8, 15 and 22 December was expected to be cost neutral and that the extension of the free parking trial could be achieved at a minimal cost. Given this, and the benefit of the two initiatives to local businesses, the Committee unanimously supported the proposal. To enable the time frame for implementing the changes to be met an immediate decision was required.

The Committee therefore authorised the Parking Operations Manager to:

1. Open the Manchester Street car park on Saturdays 8, 15 and 22 December 2001.
2. Extend the one hour free parking trial to the Manchester Street car park until 24 December 2001.

The Committee endorsed the Parking Operations Manager's suggestion that businesses in the area accept responsibility for publicising the changes.

Recommendation: That the action taken be confirmed.