

Report No.

Report to Planning and Environment Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Continuation of Station Road Car Park Subsidised Parking Scheme

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To invite Committee to (a) Agree the subsidy to be paid to Wiltshire Council for a the third year of providing free 1&2-hour parking at the Station Road Car Park, in line with its decision in principle taken this time last year. (b) To decide on the continuation of the subsidy for a fourth year.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Full Council resolved that a Working Party be formed to work with the Town Team on a joint proposal to Wiltshire Council to explore our paying a subsidy to Wiltshire Council so that some periods of parking could be provided free of charge in the Town's car parks. (The subsidy reflects the estimated loss of revenue to Wiltshire Council for providing free 1&2-hour parking.) A formal Funding Agreement was signed on our part in July 2015 and the free 1&2-hour parking scheme at the Station Road Car Park went into operation for its first year at the beginning of August 2015.
- 2.2 Every year since then, the Committee has agreed to the continuation of the scheme. So free parking was provided in the years noted below, together with the subsidy paid by the Town Council to Wiltshire Council:
- (a) August 15 to July 16: £5145 shared equally with the Town Team;  
(b) August 16 to July 17: £5000 shared equally with the Town Team.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 Committee agreed to the continuation of the scheme for a third year as long as the cost did not exceed £7,500. The subsidy for August 17 to July 18 would be shared with the Town Team with a limit of liability of their payment of £2,500. This would be the last year that the Town Team would share the subsidy with the Town Council.
- 2.4 Last week, Wiltshire Council Parking Services advised that they would be seeking a subsidy for the third year, August 17 to July 18, of £5,590 which "includes the inflationary increase applied in February".
- 2.5 The Committee's budget for the current financial year 2018-19 includes the item "4097 Car Parking Subsidy £4,000".
- 2.6 Data on the uptake of free parking since August 17 is being sought from Wiltshire Council. However as reported to Committee in September 2017, for the first two years of the scheme the number of free 1&2-hour tickets issued rose from a pre-trial average of 20 (paid for) a day to 68 (free) a day, the trend for free tickets being upwards throughout those two years. These data were the subject of a press release and subsequent positive article in The Wilts and Glos Standard for 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017. There is no reason to believe that the scheme has become any less popular in its third year.
- 2.7 Parking Services stated that they would be happy to see the scheme continue for a fourth year, August 18 to July 19. They agreed with my suggestion that the subsidy for this fourth year should be decided on this time next year.

2.8 There is a question of whether the Town Council would wish to subsidise 1&2-hour parking, or any other charges, on Sunday and Bank Holidays, if charges on these days are introduced. On this topic, Parking Services said "Rather than make assumptions for any usage on Sundays and bank holidays we would prefer to analyse the data if and when changes are implemented."

3. Subsidy for the third year August 17 to July 18

3.1 In line with its decision on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, Committee is invited to agree a subsidy payment totalling £5,590 to Wiltshire Council for the third year of the free parking scheme. This figure is within the advised limit of liability of £7,500. £2,500 would be recovered from the Town Team so the net cost to the Committee would be £3,090. This is within the current budget allocation of £4,000. If agreed the payment would be made in August 2018.

4. Subsidy for a fourth year August 18 to July 19

4.1 Committee is invited to agree to advising Parking Services that the Town Council will continue with the scheme, in the knowledge that the Town Team would not be sharing the payment, for a fourth year August 18 to July 19, with the following provisos:

- (a) The subsidy would be of the same order at this year with a limit of liability of £7,500 (as this year).
- (b) Sunday and Bank Holiday parking would not be subsidised pending the introduction of those charges and a further decision by this Committee.
- (c) The actual subsidy for August 18 to July 19 would be agreed around this time next year and paid in August 19.

4.2 If previous years are a pattern, Parking Service need to know the Town Council's intentions immediately in order to arrange new signage if the scheme does not continue.

5. Proposal

5.1 Committee is requested to consider the proposals in 3 and 4 above.

6. Financial implications and risks

6.1 The financial implications are detailed above. It is possible, although unlikely, that the £7,500 limit of liability would be exceeded in a fourth year if further parking is subsidised and data will be sought to allow any breach to be predicted. If a breach looks likely, Committee can consider in the autumn altering its budget provision for its financial year 2019-2020 to accommodate the parking subsidy to be paid in August 19.

6.2 No risks are foreseen.

Cllr John Gundry  
Chair, Planning and Environment Committee  
30<sup>th</sup> May 2018