

**Rother District Council**

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 2 November 2020

**Title:** Discretionary Free Parking in Car Parks December 2020

**Report of:** Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Field

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of Report:** To seek Members views on proposals to offer nine free parking days in Battle, Bexhill and Rye car parks during December 2020.

**Decision Type:** Key

**Officer Recommendation(s):** It be **RESOLVED:** That Members views be sought on whether to agree nine free parking days in Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centre car parks during December 2020.

**Reasons for Recommendations:** To support the local business economy in the period leading up to Christmas.

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**Introduction**

1. In previous years, the Council has granted three days of free parking to each town in the district during December. Officers have historically applied the existing delegated authority within the Council's Constitution that allows the award of up to seven days free parking annually (officer delegation 3.3.12). The actual dates of the free days have historically been selected by the Chamber of Commerce in each town to best meet their needs.

**Proposal**

2. The Council has received a request from Battle Chamber of Commerce to provide free parking on every Thursday and Saturday during December, equivalent to nine days. The Battle Chamber of Commerce has indicated that the measure would be beneficial for local businesses and encourage visitors to the town whilst enabling people to social distance by not limiting free parking to just three days as in previous years.
3. The average daily income from car park charging across Battle, Bexhill, and Rye is approx. £2,170 per day in total. Therefore, the Council would lose income of approximately £20,000 by providing nine free parking days in the town centres. Note that this is an additional £13,000 of lost income compared to a typical year where only three days free parking are provided.

## Financial Implications

4. Car park income during 2020/21 has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; current projections show an income shortfall in the region of £150,000 in 2020/21 due to reduced car park usage and the suspension of charges in all car parks between 26 March and 17 May 2020.
5. There is an added risk that the projected income shortfall could increase further during the second lockdown starting on 5 November 2020 and while the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement on off-street car parks emerges.
6. The impact of COVID-19 on the revenue of local businesses and the local economy has been significant to date and is likely to be made worse by the four-week lockdown planned for 5 November 2020. The intention is for lockdown measures to be eased in December 2020.

## Conclusion

7. These proposed measures may encourage greater footfall in the town centres of Rother and support the local economy during December when lockdown restrictions may be eased.
8. Members views are sought on the proposals to offer nine days of free parking to the town centres of Battle, Bexhill and Rye during December 2020.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

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Appendices:	None
Relevant Previous Minutes:	
Background Papers:	- None
Reference Documents:	Officer delegation 3.3.12 in the Constitution