

To: LEADERSHIP BOARD

On: 19 February 2020

Report by: Director of Environment & Infrastructure

Heading: CAR PARKING IN PAISLEY TOWN CENTRE

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the Leadership Board of June 2019, it was agreed to pilot a 3-hour period of free parking in 5 car parks in Paisley Town Centre for an initial period of 6 months, between July to 31st December 2019. This report sets out in section 4 the evaluation undertaken to date, analysing the economic, transportation and financial data available.
- 1.2 The Paisley Town Centre Car Parking Working Group met on 5th of February 2020 to discuss and evaluate the pilot. The Working Group proposed that the pilot of three hours free parking be extended for a period of 6 months to have a full calendar year's worth of data across the 5 car parks, with more detailed economic and transportation data requested to build on the data gathered to date. The output and outcomes from the extended pilot evaluation will be discussed by the Paisley Town Centre Car Parking Working Group, and then reported to Leadership Board in September 2020 for consideration to inform future car parking policy decisions.
- 1.3 The report also sets out work commencing to support public transport in Renfrewshire and in particular Paisley Town Centre, focusing on improvements to bus infrastructure to improved customers journey times to and from the town centre and across Renfrewshire.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Leadership Board:

- 2.1 Notes the Paisley Town Centre Car Parking Working Group has met to discuss and evaluate the pilot of a 3 hour period of free parking and the outputs are contained within this report.
- 2.2 Agrees to extend the pilot for a further 6 months to allow a calendar year worth of data to be gathered and evaluated for the economic, financial and transportation impact of the car parking pilot, with a report being brought back to a future Leadership Board to inform future car parking policy in Paisley Town Centre.
- 2.3 Notes the financial implications for the Council through extending the pilot period as set out in paragraph 5.4 of this report and agrees to fund the pilot from existing resources earmarked to support regeneration and development activities in Paisley Town Centre.
- 2.4 Notes the commencement of studies to develop bus prioritisation infrastructure for Paisley Town Centre.
- 2.5 Notes the planned electric charging infrastructure planned for off street car parks in Paisley Town Centre.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council agreed to pilot a period of 3 hours free parking in 5 car parks located across Paisley Town Centre between August 2019 and January 2020. These car parks are Orchard Street, Weighhouse Close, Hunter Street, Oakshaw and School Wynd.
- 3.2 During the pilot period new parking meters were introduced that required vehicle registration numbers to be entered and allowed drivers to pay for their parking by card as well as by coin.

4. Pilot Evaluation

- 4.1 In order to evaluate the pilot, economic, transportation and financial metrics were measured to assess the impact the pilot had on Paisley Town Centre.
- 4.2 Economic Data
 - 4.2.1 Paisley First undertook both a business survey and a public survey to evaluate the period of three hours free parking in 5 car parks.
 - 4.2.2 There are around 600 businesses in the Business Improvement District of Paisley First, 97 businesses responded to the business survey. 80 of the respondents said that they had received positive feedback from their customers about the Free for Three pilot.

- 4.2.3 Of the 97 businesses who responded, 52% said that they had seen an increase in footfall in their business, 25% said that they had not seen an increase in footfall and 23% said that they were unsure what impact the pilot of three hours free parking had made on footfall for their business. 37% of businesses said that they had seen a positive impact on sales, 31% said no impact on sales and 32% of businesses who responded were unsure what impact the pilot of three hours free parking had on sales.
- 4.2.4 Paisley First advised that businesses close to the car parks offering a period of free parking had reported an uptake in sales, those further away had not seen an impact. Lastly, it was reported that some businesses had a drop in footfall and income as a result of the introduction of parking charges being reintroduced on a Saturday across the Town Centre.

4.3 Public Survey

- 4.3.1 There were a total of 544 members of the public who responded to Paisley First's survey. 89% of those who responded said that they had taken advantage of the three hours free parking on recent visits to Paisley. 89% of respondents also said that the three hours free parking had encouraged them to use the Town Centre more often. The most common comment received about the Free for Three car parks was around the lack of clarity of the signage in the car parks showing that it was a Free for Three car park and the clarity of the instructions to operate the parking meters.
- 4.3.2 The Piazza Shopping Centre were able to advise that footfall remained static in their shopping centre over the pilot period, compared to the same period in 2018. The Piazza Shopping Centre highlighted in their analysis that they believe around 60% or more of their customers across the town use public transport, in particular the bus network.

4.4 Transportation Analysis

- 4.4.1 During the pilot period there was a significant increase in the transactions (vehicles) that frequented the 5 pilot car parks during the pilot period compared to the same time period in 2018, with a 56% increase in transactions across these car parks. The majority of the increase in transactions occurred after 10am, when the period of free parking became valid.
- 4.4.2 Across the Council's remaining non pilot off street car parking and on street car parking spaces there was a corresponding decrease in transactions of 4% during the pilot period compared to the same period in 2018.
- 4.4.3 The Paisley Centre MSCP also provided their analysis which showed a 6% decrease in number of cars parked through the pilot period compared to the same period in 2018.
- 4.4.4 The Piazza Centre was also able to provide their car parking analysis for the pilot period which showed around a 10% decrease in transactions during the pilot period compared to the same period in 2018.

- 4.4.5 Overall the Council and Private car parking available to the public in Paisley Town Centre (including the 5 car parks subject to the pilot initiative) showed that there was a 2.2% increase in vehicle transactions during the pilot period compared to the same period in 2018.

4.4.2 Bus Patronage

McGills are the main bus operator within Paisley Town centre during the pilot period they advised that bus patronage fell by 1.2% compared to the same time period in 2018.

4.4.3 Train Patronage

Network Rail have been unable to provide train patronage data for the pilot period to compare to the same period in 2018. Their data is only available annually and in arrears with a time delay of more than 12 months in publication. Therefore, we may have to wait until December 2020 for 2019 data. We have requested more detailed data to support evaluation.

4.5 Financial

Council Car Parks and On Street Parking

- 4.5.1 The 5 pilot car parks showed a 48% decrease in revenue during the pilot period compared to the same time period in 2018. Across all other Council off street and on street parking, there was a 5% decrease in revenue income during the pilot period compared to the same time period in 2018. Overall this has culminated in a 15% reduction in revenue income received from all the Council's on and off street car parks during the pilot period compared to the same period in 2018, resulting in a reduction in overall income of around £90,000 during the pilot period, if this were to continue to follow the same pattern over a financial year it would result in a drop in revenue income of around £180,000 per annum.

Private Car Parks

- 4.5.3 The Piazza Shopping Centre and the Paisley Centre also saw a drop-in parking income received during the pilot period to correspond with the drop-in transactions set out in sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 of this report.

5. Car Parking Working Group

- 5.1 The Paisley Town Centre Car Parking Working Group met on 6th February 2020 to discuss the evaluation data set out in section 4 of this report.
- 5.2 The Working Group proposed, that in order to build upon the data that is available, the pilot be extended for a further 6 month period to have a full calendar year's worth of

data on the impact of three hours free parking across the 5 car parks has had on Paisley Town Centre.

5.3 Over the next 6 months, The Working Group agreed that:

- More detailed economic analysis was required. Only a 6th of all BID businesses responded to the business survey and although footfall data is available for the Piazza Shopping Centres, it was agreed that more detailed economic analysis was requested to show the impact that the pilot has had on the economy of the Town Centre.
- The Council and Paisley First will work together to analyse and evaluate Saturday parking patterns in the Town Centre.
- There will be car parking surveys undertaken during this extended pilot period to ask drivers about their reasons for visiting Paisley and what impact, if any, the pilot has had on their parking and commuting behaviours
- The Council will look to take on board the comments received from the public and business surveys around the signage for the Free for Three car parks and associated parking meters.
- The group also agreed about the importance of public transport to the Town, in particular, bus patronage and the desire to have electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the Town Centre. The next two sections of this report set out in more detail what will be progressed with these areas over the coming months,

5.4 The financial implications for extending the pilot would be expected to mirror the reduced income pattern established during the initial pilot period as set out in section 4.5.1 of this report with an expected drop in revenue income between February and September 2020 of around £100,000.

6. Bus Infrastructure

6.1 Many of the visitors to Paisley Town Centre use public transport to access and egress the town. In addition to Gilmour Street Station being the 4th busiest rail station in Scotland, there are a large number of bus movements within the town. Within the evaluation it was highlighted that a large percentage of these customers come to the town by public transport, particularly bus travel. In order to support the continued use and increased use of public transport the Council has commenced work with local transport providers, to identify potential opportunities for improving bus infrastructure in Renfrewshire, with an initial focus on Paisley Town Centre. The work shall include opportunities to introduce bus priority infrastructure, which would improve journey times to and from Paisley Town Centre and enhance connections to other parts of Renfrewshire.

- 6.2 The Council has sought and agreed support to develop proposals through a design study in conjunction with SPT to determine the deliverability of the proposals over the coming years. This work will also support planning of proposals to feed into the Scottish Government's £500million bus infrastructure fund. Further detail on the operation of the infrastructure fund will be released in the coming months but it is expected that it will be closely aligned to the new Transport Act's provisions and will seek to focus on strategic, large-scale interventions.
- 6.3 The introduction of bus priority infrastructure along with improved active travel infrastructure will support accessibility to the town and encourage visitors to the town to use public transport services.
- 6.4 These studies will focus around Paisley; however, the feasibility will also take a Renfrewshire overview and seek areas of commonality to take forward across Renfrewshire.

7. Electric Charging Infrastructure, Parking Meters & Digital Car Park Signage

- 7.1 Over the last 2 years, the Council has been successful in applying for external funding for electric charging infrastructure totalling £955,000. Over the next 3 months electric charging points are being installed across Renfrewshire in partnership with Transport Scotland, with a particular focus on Paisley and initially 4 Council off street car parks will have these facilities installed - Hunter Street, Moncrieff Street, Bridge Street and the Lagoon car park.
 - 7.2 In addition, Renfrewshire Council were successful in securing £40,000 support from Transport Scotland and are working in partnership with Energy Saving Trust. The information derived from these feasibility studies will support our strategy for the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in future years, with a focus on increasing charging infrastructure within off street car park and on street parking locations in Paisley and throughout Renfrewshire.
 - 7.3 Customers have fed back very positively about the modern parking meters and there has been around a 40% uptake of cashless payment within the 5 pilot car parks. During the extended trial period modern parking meters that can take card as well as coin payments will be trialled in some of the existing car parks to ensure results are consistent.
 - 7.4 During the next 6 months the Council will progress with the development of an implementation plan for digital/ real time signage in Paisley Town Centre and on key arterial routes at approach the town.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The financial implications of extending the pilot are detailed in section 5.4 of the report, with funding to compensate for the loss of parking income being funded from existing resources to support regeneration and development activities in the Town Centre. Sections 6 and 7 of the report also have financial implications being met from external and capital funding.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *None*
3. **Community Planning**
Reshaping our place, our economy and our future – The proposal set out in the paper seeks to support the economic growth of Paisley Town Centre
4. **Legal** - *None*
5. **Property/Assets** – Investment in parking meter infrastructure.
6. **Information Technology** – New infrastructure technology piloted
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report
8. **Health & Safety** – *None*
9. **Procurement**– *None*
10. **Risk** – *None*
11. **Privacy Impact** – *None*
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – *None*
13. **Climate** - *None*

List of Background Papers

- (a) Leadership Board report of February 2019 – Review of Car Parking in Paisley Town Centre.

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