

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 23 OCTOBER 2001**

#### **KILMARNOCK TOWN CENTRE PARKING**

##### **Report by Director of Development Services**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to seek the committee's guidance regarding off-street parking charges in the town centre car parks on the four Sundays in December prior to Christmas 2001.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Roads Division undertook a detailed survey of off-street parking in Kilmarnock Town Centre in June 1998 and a survey of on-street parking in March 1999.

- 2.2** The findings of the surveys showed that:

- (a) there was extensive long-stay commuter parking in the most convenient of parking spaces in the town centre;
- (b) there is extensive illegal long-stay parking;
- (c) the more popular car parks within the central core were full for long periods of the day on both Saturdays and Sundays; and
- (d) extensive indiscriminate parking on-street in residential areas and near junctions in the town centre

These parking characteristics impede convenient access for shoppers and business purposes which is essential to sustain economic activity in the town centre.

- 2.3** To address these issues, a number of initiatives have been brought forward:

- (a) a new Traffic Regulation Order was introduced in June 1999 which limits the period of stay to 4 hours in all of the central car parks (except the multi-storey) to create a more rapid turnover and thereby meet the demand for short-stay shopping parking;

(b) consultations on further controls over on-street parking within the town centre and controls on parking in neighbouring residential streets..

**2.4** The introduction of the short-stay parking restrictions in the off-street car parks has now been in place for over 2 years. The indications are that the measures have helped to increase the parking opportunities for shoppers.

**2.5** There are local concerns that there has been an increase in the on-street parking demand in and around the town centre. This problem will be addressed by the introduction of the proposed on-street parking controls.

**2.6** Some retailers have expressed concerns that the town centre may be losing custom to out-of-town centres, which provide extensive, often free parking. To fully assess any changes in the parking pattern in recent years, further comprehensive parking surveys will be carried out during next year.

### **3 PARKING CHARGES ON SUNDAYS LEADING UP TO CHRISTMAS**

**3.1** At its meeting on 8 October 1998 the Development Services Committee approved the practice of setting the charges for the surface car parks within Kilmarnock town centre at zero pence per hour on Sundays throughout the year with the exception of the four Sundays in December prior to Christmas when normal charges would apply.

**3.2** The collection of charges on the approach to Christmas was considered necessary to:

- Ensure a turnover in the use of the available off-street parking spaces to achieve improved parking opportunities;
- Allow shoppers to park in the busy town centre car parks;
- Provide a revenue stream to enable the car parks to be manned for enforcement and to provide security for patrons.

This policy is consistent with the findings of the surveys and strategy reported at Section 2 above.

**3.3** A number of retailers have expressed concern that charges on these Sundays before Christmas may be reducing their competitiveness compared with some of the major out-of-town centres such as Braehead, where there is extensive free parking.

**3.4** Representations have also been received from churches adjacent to the town centre whose congregations use the off-street car parks during the mornings.

**3.5** To address the conflicting concerns about charging for car parking in the four Sundays leading up to Christmas four options are proposed for consideration as follows:

- (1) normal charges for all off-street car parks
- (2) no charges in all off-street car parks (it is recommended that the multi-storey should be closed in this option for the reasons explained at para 3.6 below
- (3) normal charges in car parks within the 'ring road' apart from the multi-storey. The following car parks would be free:
  - the multi-storey
  - Portland Street (north of viaduct)
  - Sturrock Street (behind Salvation Army)
  - St Andrew's Street
  - Titchfield Street
  - Portland Road (west of Grange Street)
- (4) Charges in the afternoons only

**3.6** Opening of the Foregate multi-storey car park requires the presence of attendants. Under options (1), (3) and (4) the cost of this would be recovered from income. Opening the multi-storey car park would represent an additional cost under option (2). It is, therefore, recommended that if option (2) is agreed by the Committee the multi-storey should not be opened.

**3.7** Option (3) is recommended since this would encourage turnover of spaces in the most accessible car parks whilst offering Christmas shoppers free parking in a number of car parks close to the town centre. This would also provide free parking for church goers. The use made of the inner and outer car parks would be monitored to provide the basis for review of charges in future years.

**3.8** Option (4) would offer little practical benefit over options (3) which would also provide an opportunity for free parking for church goers.

## **4 LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1** None

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The loss of income resulting in the recommended option is estimated at £1,500. Free parking in all car parks would result in a loss of £5,600 from budgeted income. These losses could be made up through adjustments in other programmes of the Committee.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to make normal charges in the Council's car parks within Kilmarnock town centre for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas as set out as option (3) at para 3.5 above.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

**18 October 2001**

**SC/JR**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 Sunday Parking in Kilmarnock, Development Services Committee, 8 October 1998
- 2 On-Street Parking Kilmarnock Town Centre, Development Services Committee, 29 September 1999
- 3 On-Street Parking Kilmarnock Town Centre, Development Services Committee, 21 November 2000

For further information please contact Keith Orton on 01563 555714

**Implementation Officer: Keith Orton**

**AGENDA**