

Decision maker:	Cabinet member transport and regulatory services
Decision date:	Wednesday 7 February 2018
Title of report:	Poppies: weeping window event - parking provision
Report by:	Car parks and parking strategy manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Widemarsh, but affecting all city wards.

Purpose and summary

Review parking provision for coaches for the duration of the Poppies: Weeping Window event.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **free parking provision for coaches at Merton Meadow (overflow) car park, for the period 14 March to 29 April 2018, be approved.**

Alternative options

1. The current agreed charges remain in place and are applied to all coaches attending the event. This is not recommended as it does not support the promotion and overall success of the event.

Key considerations

2. The Poppies: Weeping Window event is being held at Hereford Cathedral between 14 March and 29 April 2018. This is a significant event for Herefordshire and is anticipated to increase footfall in the city by up to 100,000 over the six weeks the event is running. The

event is being managed so that the maximum benefit for the local economy can be achieved by driving footfall around the city and promoting the county during the event to encourage repeat tourism.

3. The event organisers have formally approached the council and requested free parking for coaches, so they may promote the event and manage coach parking.
4. Coach tour operators are arranging day and overnight trips for visitors from across the wider region to Hereford for the event. As a result, this will bring large numbers of visitors to the city. These visitors will arrive by coach to drop off points in the city centre, it is proposed that free coach parking will then be available at Merton Meadow overflow car park.
5. To enable coach parking to be effectively managed across the city, parking should be encouraged at Merton Meadow, which is outside of the core city centre. This measure will also assist with the promotion of the event to coach operators, so they offer this trip to their customers.
6. Event organisers are forecasting approximately 10 to 15 coaches per day and a significant increase in visitors to the city. Council "Guidelines on free parking in public car parks" states "a charge may be waived at the council's discretion in support of charitable events or large events of significance having a positive impact on both the reputation and economy locally". It is recommended, as this event is considered significant, that the discretion outlined in these guidelines is applied to coaches attending the event. Merton Meadow overflow car park has sufficient capacity to sustain this level of coach occupancy during the event period.

Community impact

7. This event is likely to have a significant positive impact on the local economy, both Hereford city and throughout the wider county. Therefore, this measure is deemed appropriate to support with the council's key priority of '*Support the growth of our economy*' (Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020).
8. The car park is already designated for public use, where coaches are permitted to park, and therefore there is no perceived impact on residents living adjacent to the car park.

Equality duty

9. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. We do not believe that this decision will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

- 11. The potential additional income expected from coaches attending this event is forecasted to be £5K, therefore the implication of this recommendation is the loss of this potential additional income. There would also be a small loss of income from coaches that would otherwise park at Merton Meadow if the event was not being held, this is forecasted to be £550. Both losses would be outweighed by the increased use of the car parks by visitors arriving by car for the event, therefore there are no budgetary implications in approving this recommendation.
- 12. The hire charge associated with the hire of the car park is to be waived.

Legal implications

- 13. The council has a guidelines document for free parking, approved by officers, in accordance with the chief executive's scheme of delegation.
- 14. The general position is that a 'hire' charge will be made to any event organiser in return for the organiser being able to promote free public car parking as a part of the event. This hire fee is calculated by dividing the annual net car park income by the number of charging days and adding VAT.
- 15. This charge may be waived at the council's discretion in support of charitable events or large events of significance having a positive impact on both the reputation and economy locally. The council may, at its discretion, seek a reduced contribution from the event organiser or other interested party, or waive the charge entirely. It seems appropriate in this occasion for discretion to be exercised in this case.
- 16. The council may require certain conditions to be met by the event organiser, as part of any agreement and this will need to be considered.

Risk management

- 17. There are no associated risks identified.

Consultees

Hereford Cathedral (Project Manager) – support this recommendation in its entirety.

Eat, Sleep, Live Herefordshire – support this recommendation in its entirety.

Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID) - support this recommendation in its entirety.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None