

Council to offer free parking after 5 at Christmas



Alive after 5 is the message to city centre shoppers

Despite some opposition the council decided this morning to approve the use of £47,000 to persuade Christmas shoppers to come to the city centre with their cars this Christmas. This cost is shared by the council, Essential Edinburgh and Marketing Edinburgh. These two bodies will contribute £15,000 to reduce the lost revenue to the council.

The full list of streets where there will be no charge after 5 is a lengthy one:-

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Parking-after-five-list.pdf>

During the Transport & Environment Committee meeting this morning the council report on supporting this measure for a second year was discussed. You can read the report [here](#) at Item 7.4.

Councillor Joanna Mowat who represents the city centre asked about consultation with residents. "Some streets were not included last year. These streets are very pressured already. We seem to have consulted everyone else but not the people who live in the streets."

The council officer confirmed that some people who answered the survey may have been residents but they were not particularly targeted.

The Greens wanted the whole plan scrapped and no further action taken until a full option appraisal is carried out.

Transport Convenor, Councillor Lesley Hinds said that the traders want to stay open longer hours over this period, and they think the free parking is important to that scheme working. She also said that for next year the alternatives of encouraging public transport etc would be examined.”

Councillor Jim Orr commented that he has misgivings about doing this in future but was happy to support this for a second year.

Councillor Bagshaw with Councillor Booth in support said:- “£94,000 is being spent on something which is not value for money, and there was not full council support for the plans last year. This money would be better spent elsewhere, for example to reduce bus fares. We agree that the idea is to support city centre business but the way this is being done is not the correct way.

“There is no hard evidence that the car parking initiative works.”