

CABINET

6TH NOVEMBER 2008

**SUPPORTING LOCAL RETAILERS
(Report by Chief Officer Management Team)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper seeks the endorsement of Cabinet for an urgent initiative by officers to support local retailers and residents in the lead up to Christmas and the new year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.2 The recent unsettled economic situation has been much in the press and media. This has led to calls for government nationally and locally to support businesses and individuals experiencing economic hardships. Whilst in Peterborough this has led to the introduction of limited free parking at some off peak times there has also been calls from the Chamber of Commerce for Huntingdonshire District Council to introduce a free parking scheme.

3. THE CAR PARK VOUCHER SCHEME

- 3.1 Mindful of the recent introduction of revised car parking charges, which are still settling down in the district, but also with the objective of addressing the concerns of retailers, officers are proposing a car park voucher scheme be introduced. The scheme will entitle the voucher holder to park for up to four hours in any district council car park on any Saturday in December or January at no cost. Because of publishing deadlines, it has been necessary for officers to arrange for incorporation of the Voucher into District Wide Magazine, which will be published in November to enable its use in the run up to Christmas.
- 3.2 This scheme is principally aimed at increasing the number of people who choose to shop at Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. To the extent to which this scheme encourages additional visitors to these towns it is not expected to be a cost on the Council. The vouchers are available to all residents on a one per household basis and some will be used by people who would have parked in a charged for car park in any case. We estimate this cost to be in the range £1,500 - £18,100.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Members are asked to endorse the action taken by officers regarding this car parking voucher scheme.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

None

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