

## Appendix 4 – Wirral Chamber of Commerce BID team comments

1) Birkenhead Business Improvement District fully supports Wirral Borough Council's introduction of free parking charges. This has injected a substantial amount of footfall in Birkenhead. Noticeably following the free parking, Birkenhead is now number two in the UK for recovering cities and towns.

2) The continuation and promotion from Wirral Council regarding free car parking would be a continued boost to our businesses. Many residents may still be wary about travelling via public transport into the town centre and free car parking will allow the town centre to be more accessible for them. Our neighbouring retail park in Bromborough offer free car parking and this could mean that those who have been using Birkenhead during this period may decide to go elsewhere.

3) However, there will be concerns of more cars on the road in the town centre obviously goes against Wirral Council green plan and naturally encouragement towards public transport, walk, cycle has always been promoted in usual circumstances however our businesses need residents to shop in Birkenhead and keep the economy local in order to give Birkenhead the best possible chance to come out of this pandemic.

4) Our businesses would encourage further free car parking to help boost our economy. However, if parking charges should be re-introduced it would be preferable for the charges to be competitive with The Pyramids Centre which charge £2.00 all day, admittedly the Council Car parks have a varied tariff for different times, for example Europa Square short stay is 70 pence for 30 minutes up to £4.70 for all day.

5) Another observation is that the likes of Europa Square car park, which is opposite the Market, it provides foot fall to that side of the town centre and has been consistently full during lock down as a result of free parking. It may be worth considering reintroducing charges in certain areas.

6) Overall, our recommendation is with the proposed developments about to happen it would be beneficial for the Council to be flexible in their approach to car parking fees to encourage safe ingress and egress into the town centre for the very point you raised with people's concerns travelling on public transport, especially with increase of Covid Infections on Wirral Presently.

**Wirral Chamber of Commerce | Community Action Wirral | Birkenhead BID**

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