

Agenda Item No. 4(c)

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER - HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**16 June 2015**

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL WOODLAND FESTIVAL -  
SPECIAL CAR PARK CHARGE TO SUPPORT THE COST OF STAGING  
THE EVENT**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek the Cabinet Member's approval for a special event car parking charge of £6 per car at the Derbyshire County Council Woodland Festival at Elvaston Castle Country Park in September 2015. This charge will act as the price of entering the festival and will be used to offset the cost of staging the event.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The Derbyshire County Council Woodland Festival is a multi-day event held at Elvaston Castle Country Park each year. This year it will take place on 26 and 27 September. It celebrates traditional woodlands craft and skills, and is a vehicle to promote an interest in woodland management throughout the County. It is very popular with the public and attracted in excess of 15,000 visitors in 2014.

In previous years, the public have paid the standard site parking charges to enter the event. However, in view of the need for the Countryside Service to contribute to the £157 million of cuts faced by the County Council up to 2018, every effort is being made to run Countryside Events on a more commercial and sustainable basis with the goal of becoming cost neutral to the Authority in three years. A feature of the Woodland Festival is that the exhibits are situated in the woodland surrounding the formal gardens at Elvaston Castle. Consequently, to charge an entrance fee would involve either elaborate fencing or force the event to be staged on the showground field. This would result in the loss of much of its unique feel and atmosphere.

Visitors to the show in 2014 were consulted on aspects of the show, such as its marketing, advertising, commercialisation and charging. A total of 217 questionnaires were returned and the results analysed; 78% of the respondents accepted the need to pay to attend the event and 77% indicated a willingness to pay the standard Countryside Service event fee of £3.20 per adult or £8.00 for a family. It would be difficult to collect standard event

charges for the reasons cited above so it is proposed that a standard fee of £6 per car be charged during the weekend of the event for all visitors to the park. The collection of the car parking charge requires no additional fencing or equipment beyond the existing resources deployed to manage car parking.

This figure is based on experience of dealing with traffic management at Elvaston during events and takes into account the different occupancies likely to be found in each car. It is benchmarked against special event car parking charges at neighbouring country parks in Nottinghamshire.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Based on the attendance figures for the 2014 event, this £6 charge would give an estimated income of £14,000 and help offset the cost of staging the Derbyshire County Council Woodland Festival which, in 2014, was estimated to be approximately £18,000. It is proposed that additional income to offset the running costs will be derived from charging caterers at the event and securing a range of event sponsors. Detailed costs for the event will be collated so an accurate assessment of the net cost can be made.

(4) **Legal Considerations** It is proposed that the temporary change to the parking charges are made through the 'Notice of Variation' procedure under Section 35c of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

This will involve publishing a notice giving details of the proposed charges at least 21 days before they come into force. The notice must be displayed at all car parks to which the special event car parking charges will apply. There is no procedure to be made for objections to be made to the notice.

(5) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** The Woodland Festival is a popular event which continues to increase its visitor numbers each year. The aim has always been to host an inclusive event, attractive to all members of the public, especially those that perhaps would not have the opportunity to participate in the crafts on offer at the event. The car park charge has been set at a level that would not dissuade visitors on low incomes.

## **Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Infrastructure Department. Officer contact details – Stephanie Burkinshaw, extension 39677.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

- 9.1 Approves the special event charge of £6 per vehicle for the Derbyshire County Council Woodland Festival at Elvaston Castle Country Park.
- 9.2 That the Director of Legal Services be requested to initiate the Notice of Variation Procedure to make the changes to the car park charges for the duration of the Woodland festival.
- 9.3 Notes that the income derived is used to offset the cost of running the festival.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**