



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	Free Wi-Fi and Car Parking Feasibility Study
Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date:	14 th March 2016
Is this an Executive Decision:	YES
Is this a Key Decision:	NO
Is the Report Confidential:	NO
If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:	N/A

Essential Signatories:

ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE

Monitoring Officer: **Angela Wakefield**

Date Signature

Chief Finance Officer: **Sal Khan**

Date Signature

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

Date: Monday 14th March 2016

REPORT TITLE: Free Wi-Fi and Car Parking Feasibility Study

PORTFOLIO: Cultural Services

HEAD OF SERVICE: Mark Rizk

CONTACT OFFICER: Chris Ebberley Ext. No. x1772

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To provide Elected Members with the final report from the Consultant into the feasibility of providing free Wi-Fi and car parking in Burton, Uttoxeter and Tutbury.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. There is a target in the Corporate Plan (PLEG01) to commission a study to review the feasibility of introducing free Wi-Fi and making car parks free to promote growth.

2.2. In August 2015, the Council appointed Clockwork City Limited as its consultant to carry out a feasibility Study into the Council providing free Wi-Fi and car parking in the Town Centres of Burton and Uttoxeter and the village of Tutbury.

2.3. The attached report (Appendix 1) is the final report from Clockwork City Ltd. and poses two main questions, the first being 'Should ESBC subsidise parking?' and secondly, 'Should ESBC provide free public Wi-Fi?'.

2.4. With both questions there are recommendations as to what direction the consultant believes the Council should take.

3. Background

3.1. In August 2015, the Council appointed Clockwork City Limited as its consultant to carry out a feasibility Study into the Council providing free Wi-Fi and car parking in the Town Centres of Burton and Uttoxeter and the village of Tutbury.

4. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

4.1. There is a target in the Corporate Plan (PLEG01) to commission a study to review the feasibility of introducing free Wi-Fi and making car parks free to promote growth.

Promoting Local Economic Growth - To Benefit Local People by Turning Aspiration into Reality			
PLEG01	Review East Staffordshire's Town and Village Centres' capacity for utilising technological advancements	Commission a study to review feasibility of introducing free WiFi and making car parks free to promote growth (March 2016)	Leader of the Council

5. Report

- 5.1. The attached report (Appendix 1) is the final report from Clockwork City Ltd. and poses two main questions, the first being 'Should ESBC subsidise parking?' and secondly, 'Should ESBC provide free public Wi-Fi?'
- 5.2. There are recommendations following both of these questions as to what direction the consultant believes the Council should take.

6. Free Car Parking

- 6.1. This report agrees with the current 'free after three' programme in key ESBC car park locations.
- 6.2. It is the recommendation of the consultant that this programme be reviewed after six and twelve months to consider the financial impact on the local authority, the impact on vends (i.e., number of cars using the spaces between 1500 and 0800), and business feedback on the programme (for example, transaction numbers, store turnover, average basket prices).
- 6.3. It is also recommended that ESBC take this opportunity to begin a broader accessibility review, encompassing parking services but also walking and cycling routes, signage and public realm improvements, bus routes and future evolution of parking stock to incorporate modern payment methods.

7. Free Public Wi-Fi

- 7.1. Results from the town centre users surveys show that public Wi-Fi is in itself not a significant 'pull' factor when town centre users decide where to shop, socialise and spend their time. It is a useful but functional service and one that, especially in Burton upon Trent, is already provided by solid 3G and 4G mobile data coverage.
- 7.2. There is a significant chance a free Wi-Fi network, with no sign in process, will simply replace users' mobile data connection; this will save the user money, but have little if any impact on the performance of town centre businesses. The return on investment for ESBC is likely to be, at best, minimal, while the capital and revenue costs of the service will impact on the Council's bottom line.
- 7.3. It is the recommendation of the consultant that for Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter, the development of free public Wi-Fi is considered only as part of a wider place-making strategy.
- 7.4. If the ultimate purpose of installing Wi-Fi is to re-energise the town centres, the research conducted for this Review has established Wi-Fi alone cannot achieve this. There is considerable scope to physically improve both town centres (way finding, walking and access routes, the Maltings site in Uttoxeter, evening economy opportunities in Burton upon Trent) that should be considered a priority over a free public Wi-Fi network at this stage.
- 7.5. At the request of the ESBC Councillor focus group, a place making proof of concept could be considered around Burton upon Trent Market Place. It has the current appeal and future potential to provide a focal point for footfall and event activity, could support a street cafe style environment, and would provide local traders with a simple route to engaging with consumers digitally (contactless payment, for example).
- 7.6. A future roll out in Uttoxeter could be based around a leisure cluster. Broader issues may need to be resolved within Uttoxeter before specifics, such as Wi-Fi, can be considered; the role of the Local Plan and Big Heath Local groups needs to be considered alongside that of the three local authorities in the area, and a concerted effort to establish a common sense of identity should be prioritised to help guide future decision-making on, for example, whether a public Wi-Fi network is appropriate and where this should be phased in.

8. Financial Considerations

This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Lisa Turner.

- 8.1. The free after three car parking has already been approved by the Council and is accounted for in the council's MTFS.

8.2. The consultant’s report provides an example of what a free Wi-Fi solution could cost:

Figure 10: WiFi Installation Costs	
Burton upon Trent	
Capital Costs	£38,600
Line rental (for 3 years)	£1,900
Elephant Maintenance & Reporting (per month)	£330
Annual Power Costs ¹²	£183
Uttoxeter	
Capital Costs	£29,650
Line rental (for 3 years)	£1,900
Elephant Maintenance & Reporting (per month)	£220
Annual Power Costs	£122
Burton upon Trent Market Place	
Capital Costs	£17,877
Line rental (for 3 years)	£1,900
Elephant Maintenance & Reporting (per month)	£110
Annual Power Costs	£61

8.3. There are no financial issues arising from this Report. The consultant makes several recommendations on what the Council should consider with regard to subsidised car parking and free Wi-Fi. This report to Cabinet does not include any Financial Considerations as the report is intended to provide Elected Members with the results of the feasibility study.

9. Risk Assessment and Management

9.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

9.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

9.2.1. Subsidised car parking and free public Wi-Fi can lead to growth in the economy.

9.3. **Negative** (Threats):

9.3.1. Any investment in free public Wi-Fi or subsidised car parking carries a degree of risk, namely the financial impact on the Council. Any investment should be considered as part of the benefits that may result from subsidised car parking and free public Wi-Fi.

9.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

10. **Legal Considerations**

This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team:
Angela Wakefield.

10.1. There are no significant legal issues arising from this Report.

11. **Equalities and Health**

11.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

11.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

12. **Human Rights**

12.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

13. **Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

13.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures) N/A

14. **Recommendation(s)**

14.1. That Elected Members consider the report from the consultant.

Background Papers

14.2. None.

15. **Appendices**

15.1. Appendix 1: Report from Clockwork City Ltd.