

Traffic Orders Section  
Northamptonshire Highways  
One Angel Square  
One Angel Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1ED

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018

**Proposed changes to parking within Northampton Town Centre Pay and Display Zone – Reference PKG/P1759**

Dear Mr Whiting

Further to your letter dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> September with respect to the proposed changes to parking within Northampton Town Centre, Northampton Town Centre Ltd (Business Improvement District) are writing on behalf of our levy paying businesses to **object to the proposed changes** on the grounds this will be detrimental to businesses within the town centre.

Northampton Town Centre Ltd (Business Improvement District) represents 926 levy paying businesses within the town centre. The Business Improvement District (BID) has consulted with the businesses through meetings and a poll since receiving the letter.

The BID Business Plan Objective 2d is to

*work closely with the Councils and Car Park operators to influence the provision of a 'parking experience' across Northampton for both visitors and those that work in the area, in a way which is commercially sustainable, increases patronage and meets the needs of the town centre's businesses.*

The principal concerns raised by businesses are in relation to Proposal 1,

*"Variation to the hours of operation for all time limited (Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm) pay and display bays, limited waiting bays, loading bays and permit holder bays within the Town Centre Pay and Display Zone, including single yellow lines. Currently restrictions apply from 8am-6pm, Monday to Saturday; under the proposals this would change, with restrictions in operation from 7am-7pm, 7 days a week."*

- The early evening and night time economy is crucial for Northampton town centre. The change in operating hours from 6pm to 7pm is likely to have a negative impact on visitors and local customers who come into the town centre to shop, enjoy the theatres and cinema or to eat and drink, and who are likely to be penalised by the loss of free parking after 6pm and Sunday. These potential customers may also decide to delay their trip until after 7pm or cancel which would have a negative impact on businesses.

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# Northampton

## TOWN CENTRE BID

For the businesses by the businesses

- Currently, some visitors will leave their cars overnight in the town centre and get taxis home, in the knowledge they will need to collect before 8am the next morning or later on a Sunday. Under the proposals they will now need to collect before 7am all week. This may not be realistic for all drivers and cause them to consider whether to come into town.
- Sunday is already a comparatively quiet day in the town centre but the imposition of charged parking would have a significant, negative impact on the current trading levels and make planned initiatives to improve this situation even more difficult to achieve.
- Also, many of our business owners are town centre residents who currently park without restriction from 6pm to 8am and have no restrictions on Sunday's. The changes will result in an inconvenience for the property owners and tenants particular the elderly or those with a mobility challenge. Others will have to go to school or work in advance of 7am, or move their cars to another location so as not to risk a fine. Sunday worship in the town centre would also likely be impacted.

The broad consensus is that many of the proposed changes, in particular the increase in number of bays and extension in dwell times are positive proposals. However, there is real concern in relation to the change of hours to 7am-7pm, 7 days a week. It is the businesses view that this would have a negative impact on the town centre both economically and in terms of public perception (another nail in the coffin).

Businesses have also raised serious concerns with the BID that the consultation letters do not appear to have been delivered to all businesses. From a BID perspective there has been a real lack of awareness from the businesses we have spoken to, met and polled. Of those polled 86% disagree with the proposed changes.

Several businesses we have met with have requested a meeting with Northamptonshire County Council, so they can raise further questions about the proposals, understand the evidence base used in the decision-making process and put forward their own recommendations for improvements. We would request that you offer to hold such a meeting or attend one organised by the BID asap.

It is well documented that Town Centres in general and High Streets in particular are under considerable and continuing pressure and we strongly believe that this major change to parking regulations (7x7x7) will only add to those challenges and result in a further deterioration in footfall and spend rather than helping businesses to thrive and survive.

To reiterate we are writing on behalf of our Northampton town centre businesses, and it is likely you will also receive individual letters from them.

If you have any questions please contact BID Executive Director Rob Purdie on 01604 837766 or email [rob@northamptonbid.co.uk](mailto:rob@northamptonbid.co.uk)

Yours sincerely



Rob Purdie

Executive Director

Northampton town centre Ltd (Business Improvement District)