

Committee: Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Task Group
Date: 4 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Options for Car Park Payment Methods
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Summary

- 1 This report provides Members of the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement (DPE) Task Group details of alternative payment methods and recommends that the status quo be maintained.

Background

- 2 Members will recall that following a motion at Full Council that Officers were asked to provide details of alternative payment methods in all of the Council's car parks.
- 3 Currently, all car parks have Pay and Display machines installed. On arrival, visitors purchase and display a ticket for a set time. There have been some concerns expressed that this is too prescriptive as people have to return to their cars within a set time period if they do not wish to receive an excess charge ticket.
- 4 In order to address this problem, Officers have researched the possibility of installing Pay on Exit Machines and staffing a Kiosk facility in all car parks. The appendix sets out the pros and cons for adopting either of the options and provides information about the advantages of maintaining the status quo.

Financial Implications

- 5 Were the Council to consider installing Pay on Exit machines, each car park would have to have entrance and exit barriers, a ticket issuing machine and a pay on exit machine positioned in an appropriate area. The pay station would have to accept both coins and notes and a member of staff would have to be on call and in close proximity should any problems with the machinery arise.
- 6 Officers contacted a number of national parking companies in order to ascertain an indicative cost for the machinery. The cheapest capital charges for installation in all 9 car parks was £48,100 per car park (the total cost would be £432,900) plus installation costs. In addition, the Council would have to retain a minimum of 3 parking attendants to service the three main towns in the district. This would have a knock-on effect in patrolling off street throughout the district.

- 7 Were the Council to consider operating a pay on exit system whereby motorists paid at an exit point, the capital costs would be in the region of £9,500 per car park (totalling £85,500) for the barrier installation plus the associated capital costs of providing a secure “hut”. In addition, staffing costs would escalate as each car park would require a member of staff to collect payment and operate the exit barriers.

Conclusion

- 8 It is considered that whilst either of the options could be provided that they would both be prohibitively expensive in capital outlay and once all the Health and Safety implications have been taken into account, would place a heavy revenue burden on the council.
- 9 Whilst it is accepted that the current pay and display system is not the most flexible system, it is considered that it is the most cost effective and secure system when taking into account the wide geographical locations of the council’s car parks.

Recommended that the DPE Task Group recommend to the Highways and Transport Committee that no changes are made to the payment methods in any of the Council’s car parks.

Background Papers: [\[Click here to type in background paper details\]](#)

Appendix

Comparisons – Pay on Foot to Pay and Display

Feature	Pay on Foot/Pay on Exit	Pay and Display
Evasion of Payment	All users will have to pay prior to exiting the car park	Customers could evade paying for their parking
Revenue from Penalty and excess charges	No	Yes
Customers having to return to vehicles at a set time	Customers can stay as long as they wish (exclusive of car park closing time)	Customers have to return to their vehicles at a set time
Traffic flow	The entry and exit times at the car park are increased but are faster than pay on entry/exit systems. Queues onto main roads can be a problem	There is no impediment of traffic flow
Discounted parking by shops, theatre etc.	Available by the use of validating device which would be leased from council	Reminder portion of the ticket could be used to provide a discount against parking costs
Power failure	Manual operation of the system with possible revenue loss	Latest machines will operate for approximately 1-2 (+) weeks on battery only. No revenue loss
Equipment failure or down time due to servicing	A 2 entry, 2 exit with 3 pay stations will be able to operate. There would be reduced traffic flow during the servicing or failure of a lane. A single entry/exit system is of course equipment critical at the entry and exit points	Customers would have to use another machine (if more than one machine in the car park) and would therefore be inconvenienced. No impairment of traffic flow
Staffing	A member of staff is required to monitor the system and operate the customers 'help' intercom. It is possible to operate the site remotely but problems can occur if an attendant is not on site within a few minutes. This is especially true at peak times	Provided the machine has tickets and the cash boxes are not full, the system could operate with the absence of staff. Effective patrol/enforcement is important but not essential in the short term to maintain revenues
Convenience	Provided the pay stations are positioned in suitable walkways, customers do not have to walk any additional distance than would otherwise be the case. They do not have to make a repeat visit to their vehicle to display a ticket	Customers have to purchase their ticket and then return to their vehicle to display the ticket
Friendliness	Customers do not receive penalty charges. Customers can be under pressure at the exit barrier if they are not able to offer or insert a valid ticket. Queues can quickly form.	Penalty charges are issued
Security	Thieves would have to bring a vehicle into the car park in order to obtain a parking card to exit with a stolen car. Entry and exit lanes are excellent points to view a static vehicle driver with CCTV	Patrol Officers provide reassurance to customers
Change giving	Yes	No
Vandalism	Barriers are susceptible to vandalism and accidental damage. Major revenue loss may happen if a barrier arm is damaged	Pay and Display machines can of course be attacked. If there is more than one machine in the car park then there is no reason for revenue loss unless there was a series of attacks

Maintenance Cost	Unless operators have their own maintenance staff the service costs for Pay on Foot system are often two or three times that for a Pay and Display car park. Out of hours, weekend cover is likely to be required	Low Maintenance cost. Attendants can rectify significant amounts of faults. Car parks with more than one machine do not require weekend and out of hours cover
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