

## **Bromsgrove District Council Car Parks - Capital Works Programme**

### **Explanatory Notes – Appendix 2**

#### **1. Recreation Road South and Churchfields Multi-storey ‘Pay on Foot’ System Replacement**

The Pay on Foot system for Churchfields Multi-story and Recreation Road South Car Parks is unfortunately at the end of its working life, the system being installed back in 2009.

We have experienced over a long period of time, a considerably large number of breakdown issues causing inconvenience to users, such incidents averaging 7 No. per month recently. During such interruptions, large queues quickly form when one or two Pay Stations cannot be rectified by the Civil Enforcement Team. Even larger queues can form during busy periods, especially on Bank Holidays and at weekends. This is certainly not beneficial for the reputation of the organisation and can often lead to confrontation with angry customers.

The system will not accept card payments, and in these days when a considerable proportion of the general public expect not to carry cash around with them, and rely exclusively on card payments, more problems are experienced with disgruntled customers. Repeated requests are made for us to provide alternative methods of payment for all our car parks, not only at these two locations. When more and more customers are paying with £10 notes, this consequently very quickly empties the change hoppers within the ‘Pay on Foot’ machines. There is obviously a time delay to allow for these to be replenished before they are able to dispense the correct change once again. There are also the cash collection costs to be taken into consideration.

The Pay on Foot computer operating system runs on an extremely outdated Microsoft facility, Windows 2000 NT Pro. As a consequence, no support or patches are available to us. It relies purely on the system being rebooted continually when a failure occurs, hoping that it continues to function.

The vehicle barriers on entry and exit are aging together with the remainder of the installation. Again, the barriers suffer with regular failures. The underground cabling is also beginning to deteriorate making vehicle detection difficult at times, which as a result causes further vehicular access issues at entry and exit.

The vehicle registration recognition software (ANPR) is very poor compared to modern standards, and it struggles with certain number and letter combinations. Customers regularly lose their tickets, thus creating additional work and loss of staff time when having to take the relevant details from the customer, then locating the actual vehicle on the ANPR, and finally sending the lost ticket to the Pay Station. The new system would be ticketless, and customers would just enter their vehicle registration number when paying. This will reduce the costs of the system by some £7k per year and will not create large amounts of wastepaper reducing our CO<sup>2</sup> emissions further.

When a new replacement system is installed the numbers of breakdown issues will be greatly reduced, thereby relieving the Civil Enforcement Officers of being on continual stand-by and allowing them to undertake their normal enforcement duties.

## **2. Recreation Road South and Churchfields Multi-storey Change to 'Pay & Display' System**

If the 'Pay on Foot' is now replaced with a normal 'Pay & Display' method, the need for the continual presence of a CEO is no longer applicable, and whose time can be spent more productively undertaking enforcement patrols. Additionally, the original overriding reason why 'Pay on Foot' was adopted in the first place is also no longer applicable. This is due to the recent introduction of a Cashless Payment System to all car parks, thereby ensuring that any additional payment required by patrons so they do not incur a Penalty Charge Notice, can be completed quite easily by means of a simple mobile phone app. Additionally, card payments will also be available as a standard payment facility on the ticket machines.

Since the introduction of the Cashless Payment System by the mobile phone app only some nine weeks ago (from the date of writing this Report), some 7,000 No. payments have already been made across all car parks using this facility, which proves its popularity. It is of course true to say that its use at this time is almost certainly propelled as a direct result of COVID-19 precautions, but once used, its usage is unlikely to be significantly reduced when conditions return to some normality.

The car park barriers are no longer required, thereby reducing potential failures and resultant delays to customers.

It should also be noted that the maintenance contract for the 'Pay on Foot' method is considerably more expensive than that of the regular 'Pay & Display' ticket machines, which is another significant cost saving, over and above the initial installation saving.

## **3. Lighting in Car Parks**

The majority of car park lighting is not LED at present, so consequently we are using more energy than is necessary. Compare this to Churchfields Multi-story Car Park whereby replacing units to LED resulted in a saving of approximately 33% of the annual electricity costs. Therefore, such lighting improvements resulting directly in the reduction of energy usage will contribute towards the climate change agenda.

We would need to also replace the existing columns (due to their age) at the same time. In Parkside Car Park, we would use a black unit with a heritage fitting, as it is located within the Conservation Area, and in all other car parks, we would almost certainly use a galvanised steel column with lamps as utilised by Worcestershire County Council.

Such installation works obviously needs to be undertaken before any resurfacing works are carried out.

Improved lighting will result in enhanced CCTV coverage.

## **4. Replacement Pay and Display Ticket Machines**

The old accent ticket machines require replacement as they cannot be configured to accept card payments. We will need to have the extra payment equipment fitted into our newer elite machines. This can all be procured through the ESPO framework contract.

The necessity for change is that these days the general public are carrying less cash with them and rely on alternative payment methods. We continually receive regular complaints about the lack of alternatives to cash payment.

The costs of dealing in cash are higher than taking payment electronically.

## **5. Lifts**

Consideration needs to be given to upgrade the lifts within Churchfields Multi-story Car Park. They are beginning to show signs of their age. A condition survey has been undertaken to assess accurately their current condition, and to identify works that will be necessary to ensure the lifts operate for at least a further 15 years. The main structure of the lifts is in good condition, the refurbishment being to the operational parts which are usually replaced every 15 years. There is no value in replacing the lifts with new ones, as it would cost significantly more and would result in very little efficiency saving. The report is available if required.

## **6. Resurfacing**

The surfaces on all the car parks are now beginning to reach the end of their design life, resulting in the breakdown of the surface binder materials. As a result, areas are breaking up due to the appearance of surface cracking which then facilitates the ingress of surface water. Potholes of course follow and so the surface deterioration continues. As a side issue of this surface deterioration, the thermoplastic white line markings can sometimes disappear, resulting in enforcement concerns, when drivers are not able to distinguish parking spaces with ease.

The normal design life of a carriageway can be considered to be around the 25-year mark, but with continuous tight turning movements of vehicles within car parks, then the design life is likely to be shortened. Once resurfacing has taken place, coupled with necessary re-kerbing, as required, road markings will have to be replaced.

## **7. Virtual Permits**

The provision of an electronic virtual system for permits including season tickets, residents' permits, staff permits and dispensations, across both on and off-street parking is considered essential to enhance the usability of the car parks, and to significantly improve the customer experience of obtaining and managing a permit.

Virtual permits will improve the service for the customer as there will be no need to post evidence of residency and ownership of the vehicle as this can be uploaded for approval. Customers will also be able to pay for their permit after application with a debit or credit card. The web-based system will mean that temporary permits such as dispensations can be issued at short notice. This is the same for changing vehicles to accommodate visitors.

The system is linked to the handheld devices used by the Civil Enforcement Officers. When patrolling the areas and after scanning a registration plate, the system will notify the Officer if a valid permit has been purchased. This removes the need for paper permits, plastic holders and will help reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions.

A total of 170 No. permits were issued last year covering the various classifications. Also, there is expected to be an increase in the number of Residents' Parking Schemes operational within the district, when they are approved by the County Council, which will increase the demand in administration.

Having a flexible and virtual platform on which to manage the schemes will enable customers to have more control over their application, reduce administrative demand and eliminate the demand for costly consumables.

## **8. CCTV**

North Bromsgrove Car Park requires a CCTV installation, as no coverage was provided as part of the recently completed main construction works. The car park is unfortunately vulnerable to crime and vandalism, with reports of thefts from vehicles having already been reported.

We have selected two options to choose from, both with 3 No. cameras on fixed posts and two dome cameras that will cover the full extent of the car park. The fixed camera is for the entrance to record all cars that enter and leave, and the other cameras will cover the remainder of the car park.

The two options are either having the cameras mounted to the existing lamp columns, or the more expensive option is that they are mounted on the own specific columns, the advantage of the latter option being that this increases picture quality as the post is more stable. This design has been undertaken in conjunction with the Community Safety Team.

## **9. Shopmobility**

The shopmobility service in Bromsgrove is well used and currently has 8 No. scooters, 2 No. power chairs and 3 No. manual wheelchairs. Membership currently stands at 892 No. customers registered since the scheme began. Approximately 125 No. members use the scheme on a regular basis.

There is a quick turnover of scooters and on occasions, customers can be waiting for equipment to return. Customers are currently restricted to 3 hours only per day.

The storage area for the scooters is also used to contain lockers and changing facilities for the staff, although there is not enough room to allow one locker per Officer. There is also no area for wet clothes/hanging space which is useful when the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) are changing in wet weather.

The CEOs use the public seating area for their lunch breaks, certainly not ideal when customers are entering and exiting the facility.

Areas are essential for secure and safe storage of cleaning materials, consumables such as tickets, machine parts and supplies, which are unfortunately currently used also for a workspace for Officers. The 'office' workspace comprises a small desk with a PC which is used for confidential work, and an additional desk for other members of the Wychavon District Council management team.

Consequently, it is intended to increase the overall shopmobility allocated area to alleviate the unsatisfactory cramped working conditions for staff. Such proposed extension will be within the existing multi-storey envelope.

## **10. Capital Expenditure**

Detailed discussions have taken place with Financial Services to agree on the most appropriate way to finance these works within the five-year programme. Consequently, amendments have been made to the works' programme, particularly within Year 1 and 2, to facilitate works more appropriately, as £120k is already available within this year's Capital Programme.

## **11. Selection of Individual Works**

This programme of works has been produced with the emphasis on trying to not only maintain the infrastructure of the car parks to an acceptable standard in terms of engineering integrity, but also to ensure that the car parks remain a welcoming place, with all modern facilities provided, for residents and visitors alike to park and feel confident to leave their vehicles.

However, it is possible that some areas of improvement works are considered surplus to requirements, purely from a financial point of view. Therefore, there is possible scope for items to be omitted if considered inappropriate. It should of course be acknowledged that certain works are considered essential, to ensure that Health and Safety is not compromised as a minimum. Also, certain works are linked to each other, e.g. by delaying the installation of new lighting, but proceeding with resurfacing, may result in that when street lighting needs to be installed, new cable trenches may be required which may involve both costly and unsightly excavation and reinstatement works within the recently installed new surfacing.

## **12. Possible Future Disposal of Car Park Site**

Obviously, from time to time certain car park sites are considered surplus to requirements, if alternative measures are to be put in place. As such, these sites are then released for development purposes. In such an event, where a site is earmarked for possible disposal, any planned car park works associated with this programme will of course need to be discussed CMT, with a view to halt the work.

## **13. Electric Charging Points**

Where electric charging points (ECPs) are to be installed within the car parks, then advanced ducting and foundation works will be undertaken in advance of any resurfacing works to be undertaken. The precise position of such facilities can be determined well in advance of them being actually installed. These preliminary works will ensure that the electric charging points do not appear as a late 'add-on' exercise.

With the ever increasing need to provide such facilities, all the car parks will be assessed with preliminary works being undertaken as necessary, even if at this stage ECPs are considered not to be required at that particular location.

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