

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Briefing Note**

**PAY ON FOOT PARKING SYSTEM**

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report summarises the adoption of pay on foot on selected Council car parks.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 None – this is a briefing note.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current system of operation on Council operated car parks is pay and display. This requires a driver who wishes to park to buy a ticket and display it on his dashboard. Failure to do so may result in a parking fine being issued to the driver of that vehicle. Similarly, if that driver fails to return within the amount of time he has purchased, he may also leave himself open to an excess charge.
- 3.2 Whilst the system is relatively economical and easy to operate, it does use the threat of financial penalty to force compliance. It is also relatively easy to avoid payment. For example, there are 1470 spaces patrolled by Civil Enforcement Officers, and these can take a reasonable amount of time to walk round. The chances of being caught are therefore relatively small, and even if all three officers are patrolling there is a chance that drivers can avoid payment.
- 3.3 As an estimate, officers believe that the section is between 5% - 20% effective when finding parking offenders. This is no reflection on the staff that patrol, but is more an indication of the effectiveness of the current system of pay and display.
- 3.4 There are also a number of drivers who will now sit in their cars and wait for their passengers to avoid payment. When an enforcement officer approaches, they will drive away to avoid the issue of a parking fine. This has become far more prevalent in the last six months than it used to be, and presents a significant problem to parking staff as we have a policy of allowing drivers the chance to comply rather than immediately book them. The current equipment issued to officers does not involve running shoes, and there are a number of drivers who simply drive away to avoid the issue of the excess charge notice.

- 3.5 The Transport and Engineering Officer lives within a short distance of the Recreation Road South car park and regularly walks through it late at night. The number of excess charge offences being committed is readily apparent, and it is clear that compliance during the later hours of operation is not very high. The parking section is currently staffed for enforcement from 0800 to 1900 from Monday to Saturday. This is because there was no increase in the number of staff when the days and times of operation were amended to include Sundays and up until 2200. Late night patrols are mounted on a random basis, but the core hours of the business are from 0900 to 1900.
- 3.6 An alternative system is the provision of a pay on foot system. This requires the driver to wait at a barrier after entering the car park, press a button and withdraw a token. The driver then parks normally and after completing his business returns to the car park. He then takes the token and inserts it into a pay station on or near the car park and pays the appropriate fee. When leaving the car park he is required to again stop at a barrier and insert the token he has previously paid for his parking with into the exit machine. The barrier arm then lifts and he is free to leave the car park.
- 3.7 The system does not require enforcement activity to check if drivers have paid, and if drivers have overstayed their welcome. Therefore the system is far more attractive to drivers who can park without worrying about receiving an excess charge. This is also attractive to retailers who regularly point out that pay and foot increases the average spend per visitor.
- 3.8 The system is however staffing hungry. There is a perception that was fuelled during previous attempts to introduce pay on foot that staff could be reduced and savings made. This is not the case. Pay and display can break down and drivers can use another machine. Pay on foot breaks down and someone has to check payment has been made and then release the cars which have been imprisoned. Similarly, during extremely busy periods, there will be occasions where it will cause drivers to back up. This can be reduced by having officers pressing the buttons for them and hand them the ticket before they reach the barrier so that the driver can just drive in. Other car parks where pay on foot has been introduced have developed queuing at peak times when entering and exiting the car park.
- 3.9 The system counts how many drivers have entered the car park and will normally allow a preset number of spaces to be occupied (for example 95%) before only allowing drivers in when someone has exited. This will work well during normal periods but requires closer attention during busy periods so that the system can be altered so that more drivers can be let in. As 6% of spaces provided are solely for blue badge holders, it is not a simple matter to control the number of cars entering the car park. This therefore does require an officer to be present at all potentially busy times. In addition, real time information signs denoting whether there are spaces will need to be

provided near to the entrance to these car parks so that customers are aware if there are spaces or not, and can decide whether or not to queue.

- 3.10 The fact that the Council already charges blue badge holders to park is an advantage as pay on foot will not work with a concession for blue badge holders. The first step for many local authorities when introducing pay on foot is to remove the concession allowing free parking for blue badge holders.
- 3.11 The Recreation Road South car park will require some redevelopment to accommodate pay on foot. A curbed entry lane will need to be built to accommodate a number of vehicles to allow stacking of waiting vehicles on the car park. This will require some spaces to be removed and some to be placed elsewhere in the car park. The layout will cause some comment as it will be a change from the current layout. However, officers believe it represents the best fit for a suitable inlet road.
- 3.12 The exit lanes will remain largely unaltered.
- 3.13 It is necessary for pay and display to remain working and functional until the go live date, after which the equipment can be removed and stored.
- 3.14 In order to maximise the revenue generated on the car park, it may be necessary to relocate a number of spaces for the disabled and spaces for parents and children to the multi storey car park. The number of spaces for the disabled will remain at or above the statutory minimum level of 6% of all spaces. The layout, provision and alteration of car park layouts are operational matters.
- 3.15 There will be a need to consider a grace period during which drivers may still exit the car park without payment. Without any background data this is difficult to predict, and as flexibility will be required in setting this time this should remain as an operational decision. Taxi drivers will require passes which allow a limited amount of waiting to allow them to pick up and drop off. However, as a basic principle all drivers who enter the car park should be advised that payment is required. Failure to adhere to this will result in lost revenue and misses the point of pay on foot. The principle that everyone is required to pay is also the one in place with the current system – therefore this represents no change to the current pay and display system.
- 3.16 Officers would recommend that pay stations are placed adjacent to the Recreation Road South car park in front of the canopy over the entrance to the supermarket. These pay stations could be used by customers of either car park as the machine would recognise which car park the customer had come from and charge the appropriate tariff.
- 3.17 The disadvantages of this system are that;

- It requires higher staffing levels
- There is a capital cost

3.18 The advantages of this system are that;

- It increases compliance from 85% to 99.9%
- It is a far more customer focused system
- It reduces friction between offenders and Council staff
- It generates more revenue

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The fundamental financial issue for the installation of the pay on foot system are whether the increased staffing costs can be exceeded by the increase in revenue generated.

4.2 The increase in staffing which is necessary to ensure that staff are available even at times of annual leave and sickness would cost the Council an additional £43k per year. This includes two Civil Enforcement Officers. (Note this figure assumes that staffing levels are at 4 full time CEOs).

4.3 The increase in revenue is difficult to predict. Increases in revenue from other car parks have shown an increase of around 10% to 30%. In the most recent example available to officers, a 250 space car park with a similar fast turnover to Recreation Road South achieved an increase of 30%. Even taking into account the increase achieved by charging blue badge holders, this still represents an increase of approximately 21%. The number of spaces lost due to the provision of an inlet road for stacking would lead to a decrease of around 1% of spaces. Officers believe that it would be prudent to estimate an increase of around 17% on current revenue. This would be an additional £95k per year.

4.4 There is a spread of likely outcomes. These are based on the following parameters;

- The current level of non-compliance
- Historic levels of non-compliance
- The attractiveness of the system in encouraging people to use these car parks.
- Information from other parking operators

4.5 The current level of non-compliance is relatively high with officers noticing an increase in the number of drivers attempting to avoid payment. The historic level of non-compliance is based was 15%. Therefore the current non-compliance rating will be higher.

4.4 The spreadsheet below summarises the financial position officers believe would occur if the pay on foot system was introduced;

Cash collections	-£6k
Increased staffing	-£43k
Maintenance	-£6k
Less spaces and better capture	£95k

**Total** £40k

- 4.5 There is a risk that the 17% figure may not be achieved. Some drivers may be put off using the car parks, for example, and not all of those who currently avoid payment may decide to park on-street or avoid payment in other car parks. This has to be balanced against higher levels of enforcement from having more staff and the improved attractiveness of the pay on foot system. Officers would therefore caution that the possible spread of improved income would be from £54k to £119k. The £95k used is the best guess that officers can provide for any increase provided that car park use remains at the current level.
- 4.6 Cash collections would need to be increased particularly as notes could now be used by some customers in the pay stations. There would also be an increase in the cost of maintaining the equipment.
- 4.7 Although there would be a drop in the number of excess charges issued on Recreation Road South and Churchfields Multi Storey car parks, there would also be an increase in the number issued on other pay and display car parks as on most evenings there would be two officers patrolling up until 22:00. Officers believe that this would lead to a marked increase in excess charges issued, particularly as many drivers are aware of the current relatively low level of enforcement.
- 4.8 Officers would estimate that the capital cost of the scheme would be around £165k. The table below shows the estimated cost of the equipment – this should not be taken as a definitive price guide.

<u>Pay on Foot Equipment</u>	£k	Quantity	Total £k
Entry Terminal	£ 5	3	£ 16
Exit Terminal	£ 4	3	£ 13
Barrier - straight	£ 2	4	£ 8
Barrier - articulated	£ 2	2	£ 5
Basic paystation	£ 16	3	£ 47
Note paystation	£ 17	1	£ 17
Back office software	£ 12	1	£ 12
Intercom	£ 11	1	£ 11
Commission and training	£ 2	1	£ 2
			£ 131
<b><u>Capital Costs - POF Install</u></b>			
Relining			£ 3
Car Park Adjustments			£ 16
Shelters for paystations			£ 10

Electrical work	£	2
Contingency	£	3
Total Cost	£	165

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The making and amendment of car parks orders is regulated the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Checks would need to be carried out to review if any changes were required to the current parking order and if necessary implement a revised parking order. The Council would also have to enter into a legal agreement with the contractor supplying the Pay On Foot system covering the terms and conditions for the installation and operation of the system. The usual procurement procedures would apply.

## **6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 The Council has adopted the Town Centre as a priority and the parking section directly supports the Town Centre as many visitors will use the car parks when visiting the town.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 None

## **8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The beneficial implications for the customer using pay on foot are that;
- There is no need for customers to worry about bringing change with them.
  - No excess charge notices will be issued for overstaying the time on the ticket or not displaying a ticket.
  - The pay on foot machines do not require the entry of a registration number and are therefore simpler to use.
  - A member of staff will be available at all times of charging to respond immediately to customers.
  - The opportunity for avoiding payment will be reduced.
- 8.2 The adoption of system which does not rely on punishing drivers to force compliance, and allows drivers to spend as much time as they need when shopping, will of significant benefit to all customers on these two car parks.

## **9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Although the current provision of parking spaces for the disabled is generally good, the current system of pay and display is unpopular with

many drivers who have problems using the equipment. There is at least one driver who has stated that they are unable to use the pay and display machines and are also unwilling to use the Shopmobility in the town.

- 9.2 Pay on foot is seen as a much easier system to use for all concerned. The multi storey car parks in Redditch all use pay on foot and charge blue badge holders in the majority of car parks. This system has worked very well and officers understand that there has been little or no reason for complaint from drivers with a disability who use these car parks.
- 9.3 However, the additional hour which drivers who use a blue badge on Bromsgrove District Council pay and display car parks would be lost to users of the pay on foot system. Similarly, there is no facility for the transfer of tickets from one car park to another or from one system to another. To offset this officers will attempt to ensure that all drivers pay only for what they use by breaking each tariff down into 5 minute segments.
- 9.4 There is a significant benefit for all customers in having pay on foot, and this would be shared by many drivers with a disability. 25% of the pay stations purchased for this project will be those specifically designed for the use of drivers with a disability.

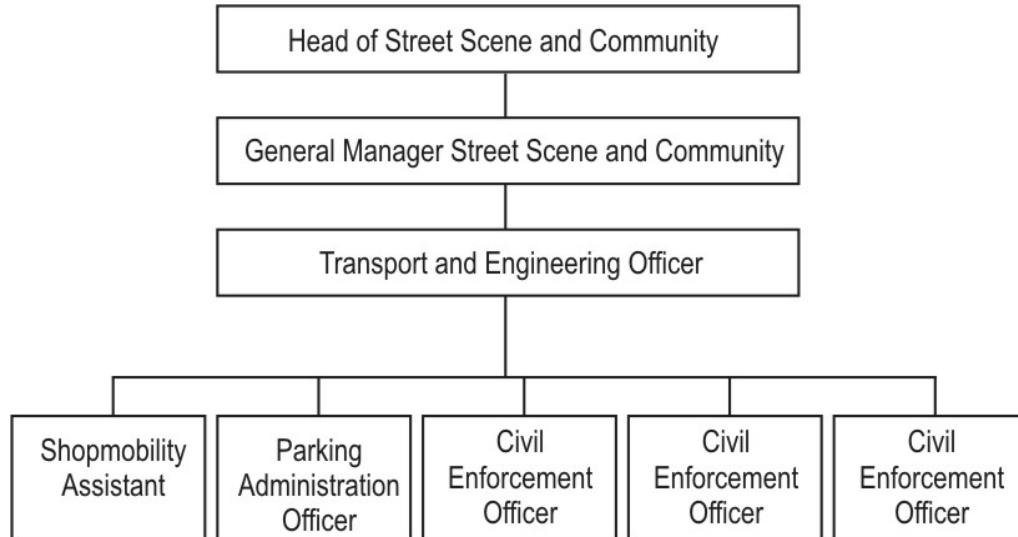
**10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None

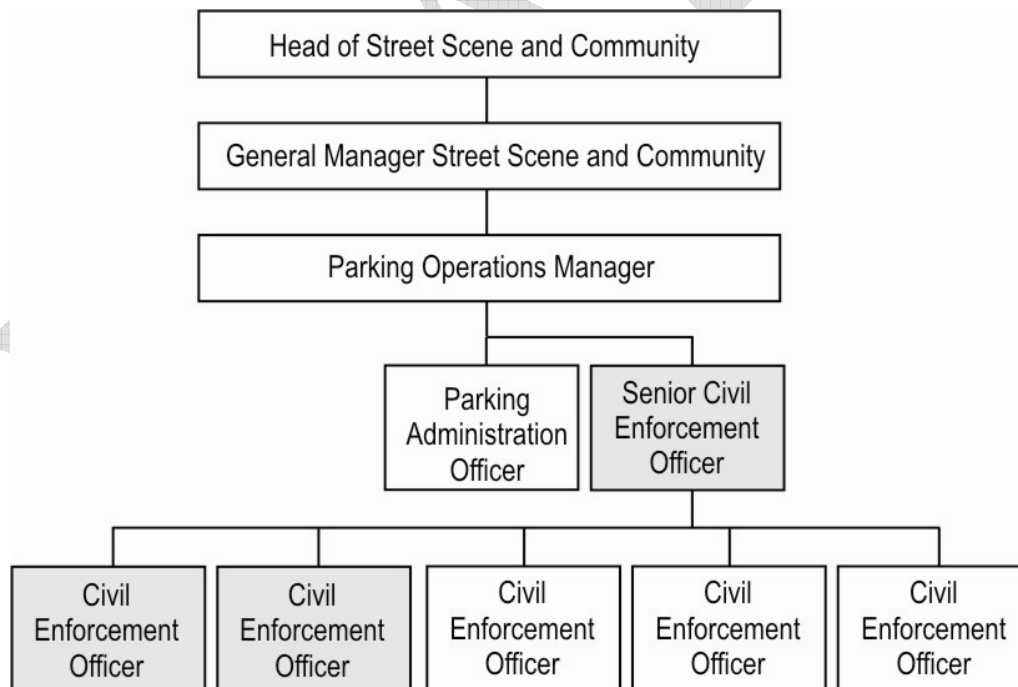
**11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

<p>Procurement Issues</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Personnel Implications</p> <p>The introduction of pay on foot will require the employment of two Civil Enforcement Officers. These will need to be in post by the start date of the scheme. In the proposed structure a Senior Civil Enforcement Officer is listed – it is likely that this post would not be necessary until the Council adopts CPE.</p>

The existing and proposed staff structures are listed below;



The proposed structure would be;



Governance/Performance Management

Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998  
 The use of pay on foot will reduce the risk of crime and disorder on the two car parks in question.



In addition, the anti social behaviour exhibited by young drivers who use the town centre car parks as a base for racing around the town would be prohibited from making use of these car parks late at night.
Policy None.
Environmental None.

**12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	<b>Yes</b>
Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	<b>Yes</b>
Executive Director - Services	<b>Yes</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>Yes</b>

**13. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards.

**14. APPENDICES**

None.

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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