

CABINET (TRAFFIC AND PARKING) COMMITTEE

19 FEBRUARY 2008

PAY ON FOOT CAR PARK PAYMENT SYSTEMS, WINCHESTER TOWN CENTRE

REPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Contact Officer: Andy Hickman Tel No: 01962 848105

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB1566 – Car Parking – Pay on Foot Payment System - 12 December 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Report considers the response to the statutory consultation on the possibility of removing the 'pay-on-foot' controls from some or all of the car parks where these operate and to revert to 'pay & display' operation. This matter was considered by Cabinet on 12 December 2007 and the relevant statutory notices required for amendments to the parking order were then placed which required representations to be submitted by 1 February 2008. The Report summarises the responses received and sets out options for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Committee determine which option to pursue in the light of the responses received to the statutory notices.
2. That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to make an order amending the Winchester City Council (Off Street) Parking Places Order 2003 in appropriate terms to reflect the decision of the Committee.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Report CAB 1566 to Cabinet in December 2007 suggested the removal of the 'pay on foot' (barrier controlled) car park payment systems which currently operate at 5 town centre car parks and the reintroduction of the 'pay and display' system which operates at other car parks. The main points made in the December Cabinet report are set out below.
- 1.2 If the changes are agreed, various changes to the Winchester City (Off Street) Parking Places Order 2003 (the parking order which governs the off-street car parks) will be required. A statutory process must be followed to effect these changes, involving public notice of the proposals, and consideration of any representations received. The necessary statutory notices have been published, and this Report gives details of the representations received in the light of these notices.

2 Pay on Foot Car Parks

- 2.1 Pay on Foot systems work on the basis that the driver takes a ticket at the barrier when entering the car park. When returning to the car, the driver pays for the time parked at a payment machine, which then issues a paid ticket which in turn will let the driver out of the car park at the exit barrier. The system works well in some car parks and is recognised as having the advantage of allowing greater flexibility to users as they do not have to determine the length of their stay in advance. However, it is heavily dependent on the successful operation of mechanical systems which are susceptible to misuse or accidental damage and is not accessible to some disabled drivers who are not able to easily operate the ticket machines and exit barriers. The impact of equipment malfunction on car parks which were not built with multiple entry and exit points can be severe, causing queuing and inconvenience to drivers.
- 2.2 During February and March 2003 four car parks (The Brooks, Middle Brook Street, Chesil Multi-storey, and Tower Street Multi-storey) were converted from pay and display payment systems to barrier controlled pay on foot systems. Colebrook Street has a pay on exit system which was installed in 1998. Experience has shown that the equipment for all the above car parks are unreliable and resource intensive to maintain and to service on a daily basis. A large amount of Parking Attendant time is spent attending to problems caused by equipment malfunction and user error which distracts them from other important duties. Maintenance contracts are required with the equipment suppliers (at considerable expense) and a system of help point operators and CCTV cameras are needed to assist members of the public trying to exit and access these car parks. The operation of the machines is also difficult for some disabled people who are not able to operate the payment machines or, more frequently, have difficulty with the use of the exit barriers.

- 2.3 The Council could persist with the current arrangements, which have some advantages of flexibility for users. But these advantages are offset by the inconvenience and worry caused to users by equipment malfunction and by the disproportionate use of Parking Attendant time to manage the pay on foot systems. The long term costs of the equipment must also be considered.

3 Revenue Implications

Changes to Revenue Cost

- 3.1 The pay on foot equipment is maintained at an annual cost of £43,389 per year. If pay and display ticket machines are installed at the five car parks listed above the cost of the maintenance would reduce to £14,000 per year. In addition, any damage which is caused to barriers is not covered by the contract and these require extra staff time and equipment costs to resolve. Tickets for the pay on foot/existing machines cost around £14,500 per annum and this would reduce by 50%, saving £7,250, if pay and display machines were used. As pay on foot requires exit barriers it also has to have help points at each entrance and exit barrier and all pay station help points which communicate with an operator in the CCTV Control Room. The cost of this service is approximately £40,000 per year (over and above the CCTV monitoring contract). This cost would not be incurred if the car parks reverted to pay and display.

Cost of Pay and Display Machines

- 3.2 Each new pay and display machine would cost approx £2,200 to purchase and install. A total of 30 machines as listed below would be required making a total cost of £66,000. However eight machines are available in storage which can be used although new pedestals will be required at a cost of £800 each. This would reduce the cost to approx £55,000. There would also be a cost to erect signs which need to be displayed at each ticket machine. The cost of each sign would be approx £250 making a total of £7,500. The total cost would therefore be £62,000. However, £13,000 could be funded from the car parks capital improvement programme for 2007/08 and therefore a total of £49,300 would be required in order to replace the pay on foot machines with pay and display machines.

- The Brooks (8 ticket machines)
- Middle Brook Street (4 machines)
- Chesil Street MS (10 machines)
- Tower Street MS (6 machines)
- Colebrook Street (2 machines)

4 Advantages and Disadvantages to the Public

- 4.1 Members will be aware that the reversion to pay and display would have both advantages and disadvantages for car park users. Pay on foot/exit has the advantage of allowing the user to stay as long as they wish without risk of a penalty charge notice, because they pay once their visit is complete rather than anticipating how long it will take. Retailers believe that pay on foot/exit car parking is better for business as visitors are less likely to hurry their trip to fit with the time they have paid for. On the other hand, pay on foot/exit is frustrating for customers when there is

machinery malfunction and is sometimes off putting for those who are concerned that they may not be able to exit the car park if something goes wrong.

- 4.2 Pay on Foot Pay Stations will take coins and notes and will give change whereas the pay and display machines only take coins and do not give change. However, at its meeting of 30 May 2007 (CAB 1462 refers), Cabinet agreed to a trial of a 'pay by phone' system for off-street car parks, and granted delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, to a) amend the Off-Street Parking Places Orders to provide for such payment and b) agree future adoption of the system. Such a system will enable customers to dial a number and pay for their car parking over the phone by credit or debit card.
- 4.3 The draft amendment order to the Off Street Parking Places Order which was advertised (as mentioned in 1.1 above) included provision for the implementation of a Pay by Phone system. None of the representations commented on the proposals to introduce a Pay by Phone system, and therefore an amendment Order will be made in any event to allow this system to be implemented from April 2008 on the basis of a trial in a number of the Council's car parks.
- 4.4 In pay on foot car parks, disabled drivers have to pay in order to exit the car parks whereas in pay and display car parks disabled drivers can park without charge by displaying their Blue Badge. This will help generally throughout the town enabling disabled drivers to park without charge at the five above mentioned car parks and will offset the loss of some disabled users spaces in the Broadway as part of the Silverhill redevelopment. There would also be benefits to season ticket holders in Tower Street and Chesil Street car parks who would be able to park in other car parks when these are full as they will be issued with windscreen badges rather than barrier cards.
- 4.5 For the Brooks Car Park, it would be necessary to maintain a barrier control at the entrance in order to stop cars entering during periods when the car park is full. This is necessary due to the car park being underground and the impact that cars circulating whilst looking for and waiting for spaces would have on air quality. The barrier would be controlled by an automatic counter and would be accompanied by a variable message sign to indicate when the car park is full. There is no requirement for this to be subject to remote monitoring.
- 4.6 Cabinet was advised in CAB 1566 that the building works being undertaken at Ashburton Court require the closure of the Sussex Street entrance/exit for around 12 months at the end of February 2008. This will mean that the car park will have to operate with only 1 exit/entrance for this period. During this time it will be necessary to suspend the pay on foot system and revert to pay and display. The car park cannot operate with only 1 entrance/exit and barrier controls without causing severe disruption to users and causing long tail backs which would have knock on effects on the one-way system in this area of the town.
- 4.7 At the Cabinet meeting on 12th December 2007 various representations were made by the business community regarding the report. In the light of these it was agreed to proceed with advertising the proposed changes to the car parking order so that Cabinet could consider formal responses before deciding whether to proceed with any changes in the current system.

5 REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 As a result of the Public Notices four written objections were received and are summarised in Appendix A. Representations were also made at Cabinet on 12th December. The minutes of this meeting in respect of this item are included in Appendix B.
- 5.2 In addition, the proposal was also considered by the Environment Scrutiny Panel on 28 January 2008 (CAB 1631 refers). The minutes of this meeting are included in Appendix C.

6 OPTIONS

- 6.1 The draft amendment Order as advertised allows for flexibility, in that it does not designate car parks as being either "Pay on Foot" or "Pay and Display" but rather it requires payment to be made, and specifies the method of payment by reference to the type of equipment installed in the car park. In this way, it would be possible to adopt any of the options set out below, and make changes in the future without a specific amendment to the Parking Places Order (e.g. introduce Pay and Display in some car parks at this stage, and then phase the change into other car parks in the future) although Members may wish to indicate that further non-statutory consultation should be made before further changes are made in the future.

- 6.2 Cabinet has a number of options as to the arrangements it might put in place and these are summarised below. The potential capital funding requirement amounting to £49,300 for the implementation of replacement pay on foot equipment has been provided for in the latest capital programme which is being considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2008 (CAB1607).

- **Do Nothing.** Continue to operate the pay on foot systems, as they are, and accept the operational difficulties and the impact that they have on customers and the associated costs. There would be no revenue savings and capital investment in new equipment would become necessary in due course. It should be noted that, due to the works occurring over the next 12 months at Tower Street Car Park (see paragraph 4.6 above), it will be necessary to convert Tower Street to Pay and Display during this period, to avoid unacceptable traffic problems which might arise with a single entrance being available.
- **Remove all Pay on Foot Payment Systems.** This would entail removing pay on foot payment systems from all 5 car parks in the town centre and replacement with pay and display systems. This would be the most straightforward option in operational terms and would enable significant revenue savings to be made from not needing to maintain and monitor the equipment. The capital costs of reinstating pay and display were detailed in the previous report to Cabinet.
- **Remove Pay on Foot payment Systems from some of the car parks.** Cabinet could choose to remove the pay on foot system in any one or in a combination of car parks. The current operational difficulties are more difficult to manage at Tower Street and Chesil Street car parks as they are further away from the office in Middle Brook Street. Therefore, if the current pay on foot systems were left in place for The Brooks and Middle Brook Street car parks and removed from the two multi-storey car parks at Tower Street and Chesil Street then operational difficulties would be greatly

reduced. Delays in entering the Middle Brook Street car park do cause hold ups in the one-way system where they are particularly undesirable in air quality terms and this may be something Members wish to consider. The pay on exit system in Colebrook Street will have to be replaced in the forthcoming financial year due to the age and condition of the equipment. Replacement pay on foot equipment or a pay and display system could be installed.

- **Replace the current Pay on Foot systems in some or all of the car parks.** Cabinet could decide to retain pay on foot in some or all of the car parks and replace the existing unsatisfactory systems with more reliable equipment. This option would require capital investment in the order of £60 - £70,000 per car park. Although new equipment could be expected to be more reliable it would still be installed into car parks that were not designed to accommodate pay on foot systems. Breakdowns, though less frequent, would still cause problems in car parks which have only one entrance or exit. Revenue costs are unlikely to be much changed over the current arrangements although more reliable equipment would have a positive impact on the use of staff resources.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

The proposals accord with the corporate priority for safeguarding our high quality environment and an efficient Council.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Removal of Pay on Foot systems at all the 5 car parks which currently have this facility and replacement with a pay and display system would incur additional capital expenditure of £49,300 as set out in the December 2007 Cabinet Report, for which provision has been made in the latest capital programme. Revenue savings of approximately £76,000 per annum would arise from reductions in monitoring and maintenance costs. There would not be revenue savings of any significance from changing the system in one or two car parks. There is no provision in the capital programme for providing new pay on foot equipment in any car park. Such replacement would cost in the region of £60 - £70,000 per car park.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A:

Schedule of Responses to Public Notice

APPENDIX B:

Minutes of Cabinet: 12 December 2008, CAB 1566

APPENDIX C:

Minutes of Environment Scrutiny Panel: 28 January 2008, CAB 1631

APPENDIX A SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

| | CORRESPONDENT | ADDRESS | SUMMARY OF RESPONSE |
|---|---------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | M Sherry | Kings Worthy | The proposal is really about extracting more money from the motorists. Will not encourage shoppers. Respondent will start shopping in Alesford where there is free parking and local shops. |
| 2 | P Middleton | Upham | This would be a retrograde step. Pay and Display systems require attendants time whereas barrier controls do not and work all the time. The disadvantages of Pay on Foot are caused by poor management. Was there a consultation? Pay on Foot is reliable and sophisticated whereas pay and display is inflexible. We need to change the pay on exit in Colebrook Street to Pay on Foot. |
| 3 | A Swain | Winchester | The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the economy. Difficulties arise with young children through using P and D systems as you have take them to the machine and then return to the car. Restrictive to only have a limited amount of time. |
| 4 | C Symes | Winchester | Pay on Foot system very useful for visitors of people who live in streets near to car parks because you pay when you leave for the time of the stay. WCC only want extra revenue not extra visitors. Charges being raised to £1/hr is extortionate. Surely money wasted on changing payment systems cannot be justified. |

CAB1635 (TP) APPENDIX B.**CABINET****12 December 2007****Attendance:**

Councillor Beckett – *Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism* (Chairman) (P)

Councillor Allgood – *Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources* (P)

Councillor Coates – *Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities* (P)

Councillor Hollingbery – *Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communications* (P)

Councillor Pearson – *Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety* (P)

Councillor Stallard – *Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport* (P)

Councillor Wood – *Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport* (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Beveridge, Busher, Collin, Evans and Higgins

Mr A Rickman (TACT)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Humby, Jackson, Spender and Sutton

1. **CAR PARKING – 'PAY ON FOOT' SYSTEM**
(Report CAB1566 refers)

Councillor Beckett declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a City Council appointee to the City Centre Partnership Board. He remained in the room, spoke and voted thereon.

The Chairman stated that Cabinet recognised that 'pay on foot' systems were favoured by traders, but was concerned about how the current systems were working. Therefore, more customer friendly methods which resulted in fewer queues were being investigated. The proposals in the Report should be regarded as for further discussion and Cabinet would welcome any alternative suggestions for improvements.

Councillor Wood summarised the difficulties experienced following the introduction of the 'pay on foot' and 'pay on exit' systems, as outlined in paragraph 2.2 and section 5 of the Report. He acknowledged that it was a finely balanced decision, but believed that the trial reintroduction of 'pay and display' could be assisted by a new Pay by Phone system and the possible introduction of machines allowing payment by credit card.

Councillor Wood proposed changes to the Recommendations, to enable the proposals to be trialled in one or two car parks, before a decision was taken as to whether to reintroduce 'pay and display' more widely. The following words should be

added at the end of Recommendation 1: "... in principle, with progress dependant upon results from earlier experience." In addition, Recommendation 2 should agree a capital estimate "up to" £49,300. Cabinet agreed to these amendments.

Mr G Love (Winchester City Centre Partnership) spoke in opposition to the Report's proposals, as the Partnership had called for the introduction of 'pay on foot' systems in 2001. He believed the difficulties experienced were not due to the system itself, but its operation in practice. If ticket machinery/barriers required updating, this should be funded rather than removing the systems altogether. He also expressed his opposition to the proposals on behalf of Winchester Chamber of Commerce representatives, who were unable to attend the meeting. The Chamber considered the Report's proposals to be a retrograde step which would reduce Winchester's ability to compete with other nearby towns. The savings outlined were limited compared to the benefits to the town's trade. The Chamber believed the proposals were short-sighted, particularly with regard to Winchester Business Improvement District status.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Beveridge also expressed concern about the proposals, as he believed there were wider matters to be considered than savings. He did not know of any other local authority which had removed 'pay on foot' systems once introduced. He considered that the decision should not be taken until full consultation and scrutiny had been undertaken.

Councillor Higgins also spoke, at the invitation of the Chairman, against the proposed changes as he believed 'pay on foot' offered more flexibility. However, if 'pay and display' machines were introduced, he suggested they should be more efficient and allow people to pay for the exact time of parking required.

Cabinet noted that the Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee had requested that this Report be considered by the next meeting of the Committee on 21 January 2008.

In response to comments made, the Head of Access and Infrastructure stated he was unaware of 'pay and display' systems being re-introduced by other Councils. However, he believed there to be ongoing difficulties experienced with the 'pay on exit or foot' system across the country. He acknowledged that technology was improving and officers could investigate new systems available.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the removal of the 'pay-on-foot' and 'pay on exit' controls from car parks where these currently operate and the reintroduction of 'pay and display' operation be agreed in principle, with progress dependant on results from earlier implementation.
2. That a supplementary capital estimate of up to £49,300 is approved for the provision of new pay and display equipment and associated costs.
3. That notice of intention to make an order varying the Winchester City Council (Off Street) Parking Places Order 2003 so as to reflect the change in payment system be advertised and the Head of Legal Services be authorised to make the order if no objections are received.

CAB1635 (TP): Appendix C**ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL****28 January 2008****Attendance:****Councillors:**

Lipscomb (Chairman) (P)

Anthony (P)
 Barratt (P)
 Bell (P)
 Busher (P)
 Clear (P)
 Higgins (P)

Howell (P)
 Jackson (P)
 Mather (P)
 Saunders (P)
 Spender (P)
 Wright

Deputy Members:

Councillor Biggs (Standing Deputy for Councillor Wright)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Pearson (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety)
 Councillor Wood (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport)
 Councillor Beveridge

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Baxter and Learney

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1. **CAR PARKING – PAY ON FOOT PAYMENT SYSTEM**
 (Report CAB1566 refers)
 2. **MINUTE EXTRACT – CABINET 12 DECEMBER 2007**
 (Report EN53 refers)

The Panel considered the above two Reports together, as the Minute Extract outlined Cabinet's consideration of Report CAB1566.

The Panel noted that the Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee had asked that this Report be referred to the Panel as part of the proposed phased trial move back to "Pay and Display" car parking. The Panel was asked to comment to the Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Committee meeting to be held on 19 February 2008, which would be considering the response to the public consultation on the changes to the Parking Order.

Councillor Beveridge spoke of his concerns regarding the recommendations in the Report. However, he considered that, given the possible future development of the

Colebrook Street open surface car park and because its equipment was nearing the end of its life, it was sensible at this location to replace the current pay on foot system with the cheaper, pay and display machines. Similarly, he suggested that since the Tower Street car park was subject to a renovation, he supported the temporary installation of pay and display machines in this car park.

However, he considered the replacement of pay on foot with pay and display systems in all other car parks to be a retrograde step, which would be against the wishes of local people and businesses. He further suggested that the Council should seek to overcome the shortcomings of the current pay on foot system through better equipment, rather than converting to pay and display.

Councillor Wood introduced the Report and explained that the conversion to pay on foot had been introduced four years ago, without a trial period. He explained that the design of the car parks, with single points of entry and exit, did not lend themselves to the pay on foot, barrier operated system. He stated that when the system did not work, it caused major traffic jams in the areas leading to the car parks.

Councillor Wood clarified that, following Cabinet's discussion on the Report, the Council were consulting on the proposals (of which the Panel's consideration would form part) and a decision would be made at the Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Sub-Committee to be held on 19 February 2008. However, Councillor Wood expressed a preference for the pay and display system to be reintroduced at those car parks on the periphery of the town.

During discussion, Members raised concerns that the car parks on the periphery of the town could be regarded as the most difficult for shoppers to return to within the time limits of their parking ticket, the inconvenience pay and display caused customers, its potential effect on trade in the town and security issues in the car parks. From their own experiences of using the car parks, the Panel did not recognise the problems highlighted by Councillor Wood that motorists were frequently unable to gain access to the car parks because of problems with the pay on foot system which he had suggested resulted in long traffic jams.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Committee be recommended to note the Panel's concerns regarding inconvenience to shoppers, potential effect on trade in the town and questioned the reported delays caused by motorists being unable to access the car parks.