

CABINET

12 DECEMBER 2007

CAR PARKING – ‘PAY ON FOOT’ PAYMENT SYSTEM

REPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report presents proposals to remove the ‘pay-on-foot’ controls from car parks where these operate and to revert to ‘pay & display’ operation. The report summarises the reasons and implications of this proposal.

This is a Key Decision which has not been included in the Forward Plan because the immediacy of the operational issues arising from the existing system had not been anticipated. The Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee has been notified.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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.
2. That a supplementary capital estimate of £ 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.

CABINET12 December 2007CAR PARKING - 'PAY ON FOOT' PAYMENT SYSTEMREPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTUREDETAIL:1. Introduction

1.1 This report proposes the removal of the so-called 'pay on foot' (barrier controlled) car park payment systems which currently operate at 5 town centre car parks. It proposes the reintroduction of the 'pay and display' system which operates at other car parks.

1.2 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 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 have 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 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.

2 Pay on Foot Car Parks

2.1 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.

2.2 Experience has shown that the equipment for all the above car parks is 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. This 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 is required 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.

2.3 Taking all of these considerations into account it is proposed that the pay on foot systems for The Brooks, Middle Brook Street, Chesil Street Multi-storey, and Tower Street Multi-storey and the pay on exit system for the Colebrook Street car park are

removed and replaced with conventional pay and display systems. This change will take approximately 3 months to implement if agreed by Cabinet at this meeting, subject to the consideration of any objections to the public notice given in respect of the consequential changes to the parking order.

3. Changes to Revenue Cost

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 5 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/exist 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.

4. Cost of Pay and Display Machines

Each new pay and display machine will cost approx £2,200 to purchase and erect. A total of 30 machines as listed below would be required making a total cost of £66,000. However 8 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 can be funded from the car parks capital improvement programme for 2007/08 and therefore a supplementary capital estimate of £49,300 will be required in the current financial year.

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

5. Advantages and Disadvantages to the Public

Members should be aware that the reversion to pay and display will 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.

- 5.1 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, in the new year a trial is being undertaken of a Pay by Phone system in a number of our

pay and display car parks. This will enable customers to dial a number and pay for their car parking over the phone by credit or debit card.

- 5.2 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 will also be benefits to season ticket holders in Tower Street and Chesil Street car parks who under the new arrangements will be able to park in other car parks when these are full as they will be issued with windscreen badges rather than swipe cards.
- 5.3 For the Brooks Car Park it will 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 will 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.
- 5.4 The reversion to pay and display in all the Council's car parks will improve the efficiency of the car parks operation and simplify the Council's administrative arrangements. It will have the effect of reducing the flexibility of ticketing for a minority of users but this disadvantage is offset by the reduction in inconvenience caused by equipment malfunction and the improvement in accessibility for disabled users.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6. CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

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

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 Staff resources are available to implement the proposed changes as outlined above.
- 7.2 There is a one off capital cost for new machines and signs of £62,300 and a potential annual revenue saving of around £77,000 if pay on foot systems are replaced by pay and display systems in 5 city centre car parks. A supplementary capital estimate is sought for £49,300. Appendix A provides a summary of the financial implications.
- 7.3 Although difficult to estimate in advance it is not considered likely that there will be any significant increase or decrease in the Council's income from payments for parking resulting from this change.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

9. APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Summary Financial information

CAR PARKING – 'PAY ON FOOT' PAYMENT SYSTEM

Summary Financial information

	No.	Unit cost	Total cost
<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>			
Pay & display machines	30	£2,200	£66,000
<u>Less</u> machines in storage	(8)	£2,200	(£17,600)
Erection of machines in storage	8	£800	£6,400
Signs	30	£250	£7,500
Total capital costs			£62,300
<u>Less</u> Virement from Car Parks Capital Fund.			(£13,000)
Supplementary capital amount required			£49,300
<u>RECURRING REVENUE EXPENDITURE</u>			
Pay on foot equipment maintenance			(£43,389)
Pay & Display ticket maintenance			£14,000
Tickets – reduction in costs			(£7,250)
Help points communication with Control room – not required			(£40,000)
Annual Revenue saving			(£76,639)