

DECISION TAKER: Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Kelsie Learney

REPORT TITLE: PHONE PAYMENT SYSTEM PROVIDER/OPERATOR - PROCUREMENT AND CAR PARK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

16 JULY 2024

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WARD(S): ALL WARDS

PURPOSE

The phone payment system allows customers to pay on-line as another option to the traditional cash or card payment methods provided at the council's car park payment machines. It gives customers the ability to purchase parking sessions through their device/mobile phone, either via a call, SMS text, or using an application. RingGo is the sole incumbent operator/supplier, their solution is used in all the council's chargeable car parks.

The current contract with RingGo expires on 22nd November 2024. The purpose of this report is for approval to carry out a procurement exercise to seek to agree a new contract.

This report also considers and seeks approval for two matters in relation to parking management at The Brooks car park in Winchester and at the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park car park.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Delegate to the Head of Programme – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency to agree tender documents and to seek tenders for a new contract for a phone payment system provider.
2. That the contract period be for 4-years, with an opportunity for extension of 1 year.

3. Delegate to the Head of Programme – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency to enter into a contract with the successful bidder.
4. Agree to change The Brooks car park chargeable hours from 8am - 7pm to 8am – 6pm to match the recently changed opening times of the shopping centre.
5. Agree to change the car park free period for users of paid leisure activities from 4 to 3 hours at the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park car park.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Phone payment system payments has become an integral part of parking payment systems for the council, accounting for 63% of all payments in 2023. It reduces barriers for customers by creating a simpler and more flexible parking payment method. As a result of this, it plays a significant role in supporting the delivery of the Parking & Access Strategy, helping to facilitate the movement of customers from the city centre to park and ride car parks.
- 1.2 A phone payment system supports the Council's plan for tackling the climate emergency. The system allows payment without the issue of a paper ticket and therefore help reduce the Council's paper usage. For each of the 1,513,930 cashless transactions that were processed in 2023, there would otherwise have been a paper ticket printed. Additionally, the cashless payment solution can allow for innovations such as the corporate parking system used by the University of Winchester.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The current provider does not charge the council for this service through transaction fees but receives income from users as a result of charges for voluntary text reminders in relation to end of parking periods. The current contract is valued at c£183k per annum, based on the 90% contractor share of additional service income in 2023/24.
- 2.2 The basis of the tender will require providers of a phone payment system to offer a similar or equivalent system to that currently in operation in the district. The evaluation process will include impacts on the council and customers in terms of any additional costs. Following the tendering exercise any financial implications will be reported back to cabinet before future contracts are agreed.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to undertake any activity a normal person could undertake, for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area. The Council is satisfied it has the enabling power(s) to procure and award a contract for works, goods or services following a robust procurement exercise.
- 3.2 The Council has an obligation as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". It is considered by officers that the Cashless Payments Contract assists the Council to meet these requirements.

3.3 Any procurement for works, goods and services will be in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015) and the subsequent contract managed in-line with the Council's Contract Management Framework.

4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

4.1 A communication plan to advise customers and stakeholders of the changes recommended in this report will be rolled out if changes are agreed.

5 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken set out in appendix 1 of this report.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Risks are set out in the table below.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure – Changes to the current pricing schedule could lead to a significant increase in cost to the customer and/or the council.	Solution will be procured through a complaint process to obtain best value for money.	
Exposure to challenge	Representatives from Legal and Procurement are included within the project team and will be consulted throughout the procurement process.	
Innovation – Poor market knowledge may lead to unknowing exclusion of new, innovative solutions, or procuring one that's bad value for money.		New market solutions could have features that optimise existing processes and functionality.
Reputation – impact on customers of changes at WSLP and The Brooks Impact on customers of pay by phone parking. The Council has had a cashless phone payment	Communications plan to be developed to ensure changes are well explained to customers and in a timely manner. Other options exist to pay direct at car park payment systems including cash and credit card.	Opportunity to advertise the alternative payment methods and products we offer.

<p>option in place for over 10 years and customer have become used to it and it has become a popular way of paying for parking.</p> <p>Changes at WSLP and at The Brooks car park may impact on customers.</p>	<p>Changes at The Brooks are to bring payment periods for the car park in line with the recently changed opening hours of the shopping centre and hence to reduce customer confusion and resulting in cars being locked in the car park. There remains a risk of people becoming shut into the underground car park even though information signs have been amended to reflect new times as the chargeable period displayed on the car park tariff boards are not aligned, this suggested change will allow that confusion to be removed. A system is in place and will remain in place whereby customers can ring special maintenance to be attend and allow them to exit the car park if they have become unintentionally locked in. .</p> <p>Changes to the free parking period at WSLP will be well communicated. Everyone Active has advised that this will not impact of customers and is a better time period to reflect activities undertaken at the centre. This will be monitored and kept under review.</p>	
<p>Achievement of outcome</p>	<p>A precise specification in conjunction with a</p>	

	thorough competitive procurement route should ensure we obtain a solution that meets our needs. From there we can closely manage the contract and work the supplier to ensure that our current and future requirements are met.	
Property	N/A	N/A
Community Support – Failure to re-procure could be disruptive and undermine confidence in the Council to deliver on strategy.	If a new contract cannot be procured before the current one ends, all car parks have alternative payment methods which should minimise disruptions in the layover period between contracts.	Re-procurement represents an opportunity to seek out a solution that provides more value to local businesses.
Timescales – Moving to a new supplier may increase the time required for contract mobilisation.	Extensive supplier pre-market engagement has been completed to better understand mobilisation timescales.	Pre-market engagement with suppliers could develop our knowledge of the current market and help inform decision-making during the procurement process.
Project capacity – Inadequate resource and staff leave may result in a failure to procure before the contract's expiry date.	Work packages have been thoroughly planned and resource requirements are well understood and in place .	

7 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 7.1 The Phone payment system provides customers with an alternative to the traditional cash or card payment methods used at the council's car park payment machines. It should be noted that cash and card payments will still be available at car park payment machines. A phone payment system gives customers the ability to purchase parking sessions through their mobile phone, either via a call, SMS text, or using an application. RingGo is the sole incumbent, their solution is used in all the council's chargeable car parks.
- 7.2 Over the current and previous contract, customer usage has gradually increased, becoming the council's most popular payment method for parking. In 2023, there were 1,513,930 transactions, which represents 63% of all parking transactions.

- 7.3 The popularity of the cashless payment method is evidence of the benefits that the solution provides customers. This includes the ability to pay by card in car parks where the payment machines are not fitted with card readers, a more efficient customer experience, and the ability to manage their parking sessions from anywhere.
- 7.4 The solution also offers many benefits for the council including the modernisation of parking payment systems, keeping the council in-line with the industry best practice standard, and environmental benefits such as the reduction of paper usage because of ticketless parking. Each of the 1,513,930 transactions from 2023 represents a ticket that would otherwise have been printed.
- 7.5 Key issues which will be included in the tender document are a financial assessment and a qualitative assessment of the bidders. Financial assessment will include charges to the council and to the customer. Quality aspects will be assessed on aspects including added value benefits; system usability and reliability/ customer support, and product and service innovation.

Other parking management issues

The reduction in operating hours of The Brooks car park.

- 7.6 It is recommended to reduce the chargeable hours in this car park from 8am - 7pm to 8am – 6pm. The Brooks shopping centre has changed the opening hours of the shopping centre and now stops access to the car park from 530pm and closes the exit at 630pm. Although the information signs have been amended to reflect these changes the tariff boards at the car park payment machines still display chargeable periods as from 8am - 7pm. This causes customer confusion and has resulted in some cars being locked within the underground car park. A change to the legal parking places order is required to allow the bring the legal order in line with the new opening and closing times of The Brooks shopping centre, and then to amend the tariff boards accordingly, thus removing the current confusion and impacts on customers.
- 7.7 A reduction of the 'free parking period for users of the leisure centre' at Winchester Sport & Leisure Park car park.
- 7.8 Everyone Active in discussion with the council's parking service feel that that the current 'free period' of 4 hours parking for 'users of paid leisure activities' should be reduced to 3 hours. This will assist both Everyone Active and the parking service to effectively manage and control the car parking and ensure its available for leisure centre users. Everyone Active has assessed the programme of activities on offer at the centre and feel that 3 hours is adequate for customers' needs based on activities undertaken.

Other improvements alongside this change in 'free hours' will improve customer satisfaction and increased parking space availability such as

additional disabled parking and the addition of a rapid electric vehicle charge point.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 8.1 The council could not offer a phone payment system but this was rejected as it is a popular system which offers choice and flexibility to customers. The other payment methods such as cash and credit card will also remain available.
- 8.2 Changes in relation to The Brooks are necessary as The Brooks management company has already changed the opening and closing hours of the shopping centre, which they are permitted to do under the terms of their lease.
- 8.3 In regard to changes to the free parking period for users of the leisure centre other options such as a shorter period was considered but rejected as it would not allow sufficient times for some activities/ activities.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

None

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate:	Your Service Area:	Team:	Officer responsible for this assessment:	Date of assessment:
	Question	Please provide details		
1	What is the name of the policy or project that is being assessed?	Parking and access projects including car park management and payment systems.		
2	Is this a new or existing policy?	This programme of work supports delivery of existing policies including the Winchester Movement Strategy, Parking and Access Strategy, air quality management area and carbon reduction targets.		
3	Briefly describe the aim and purpose of this work.	Parking and access projects as set out above including phone parking payment systems and two specific changes to car parking management at The Brooks and the WSLP car park.		
4	What are the associated objectives of this work?	To support customers in the effective and efficient use of payments systems and car parks.		
5	Who is intended to benefit from this work and in what way?	Residents and customers using car parks.		
6	What are the outcomes sought from this work?	Improved customer satisfaction.		
7	What factors/forces could contribute or detract from the outcomes?	Economic factors		
8	Who are the key individuals and organisations responsible for the implementation of this work?	Staff and contractor/partners of the city council		
9	Who implements the policy or project and who or what is responsible for it?	Parking services		

		Please select your answer in bold . Please provide detail here.	
10a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of race differently in a negative way?	Y	N We do not believe so.
10b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance.	
11a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of sex differently in a negative way?	Y	N We do not believe so.
11b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance.	
12a	<p>Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of disability differently in a negative way?</p> <p><i>you may wish to consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Physical access</i> • <i>Format of information</i> • <i>Time of interview or consultation event</i> • <i>Personal assistance</i> • <i>Interpreter</i> • <i>Induction loop system</i> • <i>Independent living equipment</i> • <i>Content of interview)</i> 	Y	<p>N</p> <p>Changes and improvements to car parks could affect individuals and their access if not designed carefully</p> <p>Important considerations include the location and availability of disabled and mother and toddler parking provision, the height of payment machines, the type of signing used, lighting and the provision and maintenance of lifts.</p> <p>All of these factors are carefully considered in the design and installation of schemes and equipment in car parks and reflected in the improvements that we are bringing forward.</p> <p>Reference is made of the results of our resident's survey and census data to inform our decisions.</p>
12b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	<p>Reference is made of the results of our resident's survey and census data to inform our decisions.</p> <p>We also regularly talk to representatives' groups such as the</p>	

		<p>BID, Chamber of Commerce and local town and parks council to identify issues and solutions to local concerns.</p> <p>We review any complaints received and take appropriate action. Our Civil Enforcement Officers regularly receive direct feedback from customers in our car parks which we consider carefully and reflect in any proposals being brought forward.</p>		
13a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of sexual orientation differently in a negative way?	Y	N	We do not believe so.
13b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Based on best practice and customer feedback.		
14a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of age differently in a negative way?	Y	N	<p>Potentially a pay by phone system could be seen to impact on customers who may not have access to a mobile phone but other payment methods such as cash and or credit card will still be available in car parks.</p> <p>Important factors such as lighting levels, heights of payment machines, provision of disabled parking spaces, steps and or lift provision are accounted for.</p>
14b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance.		
15a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of religious belief differently in a negative way?	Y	N	We do not believe so
15b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance		
16a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the	Y	N	We do not believe so

	basis of gender reassignment differently in a negative way?			
16b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance		
17a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of marriage and civil partnership differently in a negative way?	Y	N	We do not believe so
17b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance		
18a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of pregnancy and maternity differently in a negative way?	Y	N	We do not believe so
18b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Customer feedback and assessment of best practice and guidance		

19	Could any negative impacts that you identified in questions 10a to 15b create the potential for the policy to discriminate against certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics?	Y	N	
20	Can this negative impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics? Please provide your answer opposite against the relevant protected characteristic.	Y	N	Race: Sex: Disability: details included above Sexual orientation: Age: details included above. Gender reassignment: Pregnancy and maternity: Marriage and civil partnership: Religious belief:
21	How will you mitigate any potential discrimination that may be brought about by your policy or project that you have identified above?	Through good provision of lighting, signing, payment machines, disabled car parking, and good access via lifts etc.		
22	Do any negative impacts that you have identified above impact on your service plan?	Y	N	Yes and addressed through ongoing improvements and adaptations.

Signed by completing officer	Campbell Williams
Signed by Service Lead or Corporate Head of Service	Andy Hickman