

CASHLESS PARKING

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

This report seeks approval from the Committee for officers to procure a service provider to continue to offer cashless parking options within Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's pay and display car parks.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree to the procurement of a long term service provider to offer cashless parking within Borough Council car parks**
- (2) Authorise the Head of Housing and Environment and the Head of Corporate Governance, in conjunction with the Chair of Environment & Safe Communities Committee, to procure a cashless parking service provider.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 In June 2019 this Committee agreed to the procurement of a cashless parking system on a trial basis, initially expected to be two years. In the financial year 2020/21, 27.6% of visitors to the Borough Council's pay and display car park opted to pay using the cashless parking provider. In 2021/22 to date this has increased to over 33.8% of car park users.
- 1.2 On this basis, there is a trend for visitors to pay by cashless methods and it is expected to increase. The removal of cashless parking would inconvenience a number of car park users and be seen as a backwards step.
- 1.3 The initial 2 year trial period from September 2019 has come to an end although service currently remains on a rolling monthly basis on the same terms and conditions.

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- 1.4 It is proposed to secure a longer term offering using a local authority accessible procurement framework to provide cashless parking services and to secure a better financial return on the use of this service.
- 1.5 The cashless service is currently offered in 8 Borough Council car parks, as well as the Rainbow Centre, but could be extended to car parks in Kingston Road (Stoneleigh Parade), Town Hall (rear) and Hope Lodge.
- 1.6 The cashless service would continue to be offered in conjunction with cash or card payment options where these currently exist.

2 Background

- 2.1 In June 2019 this Committee agreed to the procurement of a cashless parking system on a trial basis, initially expected to be two years. The report stated that after this period the trial could be extended for a further three years or that a paper be brought back to the Committee to agree the next steps.
- 2.2 Since September of 2019 a cashless provider, namely RingGo, have been offering this service in the Borough Council's pay and display car parks in addition to the Council's own offering of payment by cash or card.
- 2.3 In a society where people increasingly do not carry coins, the ability to pay for parking by mobile phone or app increases the payment options available for users of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council car parks.
- 2.4 The added bonus for those using a cashless parking option is the ability to extend their parking time (where maximum length of stay restrictions allow) using their phone or tablet without the need to return to the car park. This reduces the fear for those using a pay and display option of returning late and receiving a penalty charge notice.
- 2.5 Convenience fees and additional text message options are passed on to the car park user.
- 2.6 Civil Enforcement Officers are able to monitor the use of the cashless service via their handheld devices.
- 2.7 The trial has been successful with over 33% of pay and display car park users now using the service. The banking interface and reporting has been relatively straight forward and there have been few occasions where mobile signal issues have impacted on the ability to check vehicle information.
- 2.8 One of the impacts of the Covid pandemic is to increase the use of cashless systems. This reduces any potential risks of transmission. Other benefits are operational efficiencies with need for less cash collection and banking.

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- 2.9 The alternative options to securing a longer term arrangement are to continue on the present 'trial' terms, although these are not as favourable to the Council as it does not offer an income share or to cease to offer a cashless option. Given that 1/3 of car park users are now using this method to pay for their parking, ceasing to offer the service would inconvenience a significant number of users.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 There is no impact of continuing with this service. The withdrawal of such a service could have a negative impact on some blue badge holders who would be required to physically attend the pay machines if a cashless alternative was unavailable.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 The option of a cashless service reduces the amount of money held in the pay and display machines, thereby reducing potential for any crime or fraud should anybody seek to remove the cash box in an unauthorised manner.

3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 N/A

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 The service is reliant on good mobile and internet connectivity which has not been a problem during in the first two years trial.

3.5 Other

- 3.5.1 The data associated with cashless parking transactions is held by the service provider so there is no risk to the Council in this regard.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 To protect and grow the annual income generated by car parks it is important that their users are offered efficient and convenient methods of payment.
- 4.2 The cashless service is cost effective to the Council as it reduces the necessity for costly cash collection services, and credit card fees are borne by the supplier and offset against the convenience fee.

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- 4.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Finance colleagues will evaluate all proposals to ensure the service provided by the agreed provider is cost effective to the Council with no adverse impact on existing budgets.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Legal advice and assistance is required with contract drafting and negotiation with a provider to ensure the Council is not negatively impacted.
- 5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the content of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
Managing our Resources; Supporting our businesses and local economy
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** The Council will work in conjunction with a cashless service provider to provide more convenient and efficient parking options.

7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Cashless Parking June 2019
[http://th-modgov-01/documents/s12845/Cashless%20Parking.pdf?\\$LO\\$=1](http://th-modgov-01/documents/s12845/Cashless%20Parking.pdf?LO=1)

Other papers:

- None