

FEASIBILITY OF 'PAY ON EXIT/FOOT' PARKING AT WEBSTERS WAY CAR PARK

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This matter has been referred from Council 25th July 2000 following a request from Members for a Feasibility Study on the possible implementation of 'Pay on Exit/Foot' parking at Websters Way Car Park, Rayleigh. The report has been delayed because of obtaining quotations from installation companies.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 For some time now the Parking Industry has argued the relative merits of 'Pay on Exit', 'Pay on Foot' and 'Pay & Display' parking control systems. The argument for which method of charging to use should always be related to the individual requirements of the car park and each site will have particular needs to swing the decision for or against each of the three systems. A brief synopsis of the three systems outlining their strengths and weaknesses is given below.

3 PAY-ON-EXIT

- 3.1 'Pay and Display' is recognised as a cost effective and efficient method of the management of car parks. It relies on the motorist pre-purchasing a ticket for the duration of his stay. The critical requirement of 'Pay on Exit' is to maximize the throughput of vehicles at entry/exit points and 'Pay on Exit' machines. However, it must be stressed that any form of barrier will impede the flow of vehicles in and out of the Car Park. 'Pay on Exit' systems also tend to work best when there is sufficient scope for multi entrance/exit lanes and for these to be located on a service road thus not affecting traffic flow.

4 PAY-ON-FOOT

- 4.1 Whilst imposing the same constraints as 'Pay on Exit' with regards to throughput of traffic, 'Pay on Foot' differs in that it requires the motorist to pay for his parking at a Paystation **before** returning to his vehicle. This greatly reduces the queues at exits because the insertion of a validated ticket opens the barrier rather than the insertion of coins following the exit station machine calculating the fee due and dispensing change. Where it would be unusual to see pedestrian queues at Paystations they do sometimes occur and some sort of weather protective shelter may be required (not included in costings).

Motorists would also need to return to the Paystation with shopping, pushchairs etc rather than just load their vehicles and drive off as they do with 'Pay and Display'.

5 PAY AND DISPLAY

- 5.1 'Pay and Display' is the most widely used method of parking control in the country due to its low cost and reliability. However, the need to know the length of stay in advance and the inability to give change are limitations. Balanced against this is the fact that 'Pay & Display' continues to function if a situation arose where all Staff were unavailable whereas 'Pay on Foot' or 'Pay on Exit' are more likely to need human intervention.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Firstly, consideration should be given to the logistics of introducing a barrier system in Websters Way Car Park.
- 6.2 The car park currently has on average 1800 visitors per operational day which, during peak times (between 09.00 – 16.30), equates to approximately 4 vehicles entering per minute. However, in the context of Pay on Foot/Exit, this is an average figure and individual times can vary enormously when some action is required of drivers.
- 6.3 At best, flow rates may reach 6 vehicles per minute in exit lanes – at worst it may take one vehicle several minutes (e.g. lost ticket). A situation could arise where a driver's 'grace time' expires whilst queuing to reach the exit ticket reader. Equally in a car park with entry barriers, in any given minute, 1 or 2 cars may arrive and the lane will be idle for part of that minute. At other times as many as 10 cars may arrive and if this group has been led in by a slow motorist who is also slow to activate the barrier, a queue will quickly form which could stretch back onto the highway.
- 6.4 Whilst recognising there is a fast turnover of bays in Websters Way Car Park, on occasions during the week it is full to capacity. At these times motorists would be advised either to wait at the barrier for a space to become free or to move on to another car park. This would have implications in respect of the traffic flow on Websters Way. The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) reports that initial consultation with Essex County Council Highways has revealed serious misgivings in respect of the practicality of such a scheme particularly in view of Websters Way's conversion to two way traffic flow in 1998.

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- 6.5 The Corporate Director (F&ES) also reports that an extensive redesign of the Websters Way Car Park would be required to facilitate the four-entry/exit lanes necessary. This would inevitably result in a loss of spaces within the car park. The approximate number is expected to be in the region of between 20-40 bays. The process of producing design plans and seeking detailed quotations from contractors for this redesign has not been considered at this stage. However, the Authority's engineers estimate a figure of around £50,000. There would naturally be an element of disruption and loss of revenue whilst these works were being carried out.
- 6.6 Members will also be mindful of the current study taking place on the possible redevelopment of Websters Way Car Park. Any decision taken in the future regarding a change of parking control in Websters Way Car Park must take into consideration the outcome of the Working Group.
- 6.7 Consideration must also be given to the cost of installation together with the increase in staffing levels required in case of equipment malfunction. One of the contractors suggested the Council might increase their charges in this particular car park to help offset the cost of installation. Authorities who use barrier-parking systems tend to have large staff resources that can easily absorb any absence of Patrol Officers. Members will be mindful of the current Patrol Staff establishment which is one full-time Officer and three part-time Officers who work different shifts throughout the day.
- 6.8 Representatives from the equipment supply companies approached all stressed the need for sufficient manpower to be available should a driver need assistance or in the event of a barrier/machine malfunction. In the case of Rochford, unless the barriers were left open at night, this would mean 24 hour support.
- 6.9 The way in which the Authority controls disabled persons parking would also need to be reconsidered. At present, provided a valid disabled persons badge is displayed in the vehicle, disabled motorists are permitted to park free. One option, should a barrier entry system be adopted, would be to issue the registered users with a pass card. Likewise, season ticket holders would be issued with a similar card to allow entry to the car park. All systems have a 'pass-back' detector to prevent season ticket holders from allowing another motorist to use their card. In short, the card would not allow another vehicle to enter the car park until the card has been read by the exit reader station. However, there could be some abuse by cardholders allowing other motorists to use their card when not in use by themselves.
- 6.10 Entry-barriers would need to stay in operation after 7.00 pm to ensure that motorists are in possession of a ticket to exit the car park should their stay last beyond 7.00 am when charges recommence. As an

alternative to this, most suppliers offer the facility for motorists to obtain an entry ticket at any point during the charging period but this would always show the time of entry as 7.00 am (i.e. the time charge commence).

- 6.11 On a positive note, aside from the desirable aspect that motorists would not be rushing back to their vehicles for fear of overstaying their time, the Council could expect an increase in revenue of between 5-10%. This equates to approximately £11,000 - £22,000 per annum. Naturally, Pay on Foot/Exit ensures every motorist entering the car park pays to park but it also stops ticket transferral between drivers and improves vehicle security. Balanced against this would be an expected drop in Penalty Notice income for this car park. Websters Way accounts for 42% of Penalty Notice issues across the District producing £14,000 of revenue for the Authority.
- 6.12 Websters Way Car Park is the Council's busiest car park with around 550,000 visitors in 1999/2000. During this period only 830 penalty notices were issued for overstays. This represents just 0.15% of visits made to the car park or one motorist in 662 receiving a penalty notice for overstaying their purchased time.

7 PROPOSAL

- 7.1 Five of the foremost companies in the industry were approached to provide a quotation for 'Pay on Exit/Foot' parking. Two failed to respond and, significantly, PARKING EQUIPMENT & SERVICES, the largest operator in the UK, advised that due to the lack of demand for automated 'Pay on Exit' systems they no longer manufacture them as standard. They could, however, custom build a system and the quotation is detailed below.
- 7.2 The prices quoted are for basic systems and none of the quotations listed take into account the following conservative estimates of increased expenditure/lost revenue:

Loss of Penalty Notice Income – £14,000
The appointment of 2 Part-time Patrol Staff – £16,000
Loss of c. 25 parking spaces – c. £3000
Loss of revenue during engineering works – c.£2000

8 PAY ON EXIT QUOTATIONS

8.1 Alfia Services Ltd

System

2 In, 3 Out, Pay at Exit

Equipment

2 No. Ticket issue machines	
2 No. Barriers	
2 No. Barrier mounted FULL signs	
3 No. Pay at exit machines	
3 No. Barriers	
1 No. Central cashier station	£51,400.00

Tickets

550,000 @ £11.55 per thousand	£6,352.00
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Maintenance (per annum)	£12,000.00
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Civils/Redesign of Car Park	£50,000.00
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TOTAL	Capital	£101,400.00
	Annual Revenue (inc. staff)	£34,352.00

8.2 Parking & Equipment Services

System

2 In, 3 Out, Pay at Exit

Equipment

2 No. Entry lanes with passcard entry system	
3 No. Exit lanes with Pay at Exit machines	
1 No. Central Cashier Terminal	
1 No. Master Intercom unit	
1 No. Remote Data Concentrator	£82,652.00

Tickets

550,000 @ £11.27 per thousand	£6,198.00
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Maintenance (per annum)	£12,518.00
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Civils/Redesign of Car Park	£50,000.00
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TOTAL	Capital	£132,652.00
	Annual Revenue (inc.staff)	£34,716.00

9 PAY ON FOOT QUOTATION

9.1 **Cale Briparc Ltd**

9.2 The Cale Briparc system differs from most other 'Pay on Foot' systems in that it uses Smart Card Technology generating cost savings when compared to magnetic strip tickets. The principle is straightforward in that the motorist is dispensed with a card instead of a ticket at the Entrance Machine. The motorist will insert the card into the Pay on Foot Station at the end of his stay which will indicate the amount to be paid. This will validate the card for lifting the barrier at the Exit Machine. The card is retained by the machine in a hopper within the carousel for future use. The cards have a five-year operating life.

System

2 In, 3 Out, Pay on Foot

Equipment

2 No. Entry Smartcard Dispenser	
2 No. Barriers	
2 No. Barrier mounted FULL signs	
2 No. Pay on Foot Stations	
3 No. Exit Smartcard Acceptors	
3 No. Barriers	
1 No. Central Computer	£77,098.00

Smartcards

2000 @ £4.50 per card (5 year life)	£9,000.00
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Maintenance (per annum)	£10,000.00
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Civils/Redesign of Car Park	£50,000.00
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TOTAL	Capital	£146,098.00
	Annual Revenue (inc.staff)	£26,000.00

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- 9.3 For Members guidance, an extract from the 2000/2001 Budget Book is produced on page 6.9. The current ticket machine maintenance contract with METRIC Group PLC costs £5440.00 per annum.
- 9.4 Henry Booth & Co supply the Authority's Pay & Display tickets at a cost of £6500.00 per annum subject to a discount should the advertising space on the reverse of the ticket be sold.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Pay and Display would appear to remain the most cost effective and efficient way of managing relatively small, town centre, surface car parks and with a suitable set of tariffs available to the motorist, the incidence of 'overstayers' can be reduced. On the basis of the financial information now available, it is difficult to make a financial case for the introduction of Pay on Exit/Pay on Foot at Websters Way car park, acknowledging too, the relatively low level of penalties issued for 'overstays'.
- 10.2 Conversion to a barrier system car park would present operational and highways difficulties and such a system would be ineffectual without sufficient staffing levels to maintain the high levels of reliability and customer care currently provided.
- 10.3 Members will recall that this Council has recently given its support to the County Council for the introduction of a Decriminalised Parking regime for Essex. The requirements of this new service still need to be fully investigated at operational level and integrated in our own parking service. However, at the County Council meeting of 5th December 2000 it was agreed to proceed with a Decriminalised parking regime for Essex over a two year time scale.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Concern has to be expressed that car parking barriers could be a target for vandalism in the evenings.

12 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Members are reminded that Car Parking is the only major trading initiative of the Council and therefore has an impact on the overall budget and consequently, the level of Council Tax Levy.

13 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 If a change of Parking control was introduced in Websters Way Car Park the District of Rochford (Off-Street Parking Places) Order may need amendment.

14 RECOMMENDATION

14.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee RECOMMENDS:-

That no further action is taken regarding Pay on Foot/Pay on Exit systems until the outcome of the Rayleigh Town Centre Working Group and the implications of managing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement are known. (HRHM)

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Background Papers:

None

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Transportation and Environmental Services

CAR PARKS	CODE	1998/99 ACTUAL £	1999/2000 ESTIMATE £	1999/2000 REVISED £	2000/2001 ESTIMATE £
* Salaries	13 670 01 000	53,074	58,200	58,400	60,400
* Car Allowances	13 670 25 100	-	700	-	-
Protective Clothing & Uniforms	13 670 06 100	619	400	300	300
Training	13 670 03 200	-	400	-	100
Travelling & Subsistence	13 670 35 110	790	1,000	1,000	1,100
Repairs, Alterations & Maintenance	13 670 10 400	4,197	9,000	9,000	9,300
* Repairs Administration	13 670 10 000	1,855	2,400	2,100	2,000
* Rent & Rates (See Note)	13 670 18 100	24,466	55,100	53,000	54,600
Lights & Power	13 670 11 100	2,146	2,000	2,200	2,400
Water & Sewerage	13 670 12 000	4,013	4,400	4,400	4,800
* Transport & Plant	13 670 25 000	3,008	3,000	2,600	2,700
Equipment, Tools & Materials	13 670 xx xxx	1,106	2,900	2,800	2,800
Machine Maintenance Contract	13 670 16 050	7,589	8,000	8,000	8,300
Machine Upgrades	13 670 16 070	2,678	2,200	2,800	-
Printing	13 670 30 000	6,182	6,800	6,800	6,800
Transmo	13 670 00 985	-	2,000	-	-
S/I Arboricultural Work	13 670 00 132	70	2,200	2,200	-
* Re-charge - Woodlands Unit	13 670 38 250	2,303	2,500	2,500	2,600
* Re-charge - Property Maintenance	13 670 38 900	-	-	12,200	12,700
* Re-charge - Council Tax	13 670 38 720	-	34,900	-	-
* Re-charge - Revenues Client Account	13 670 38 810	5,511	9,500	16,600	17,400
* Re-charge - Cashiers	13 670 38 315	538	2,000	600	1,200
* Re-charge - Computer Services	13 670 38 785	4,366	5,000	4,800	5,500
* Re-charge - Telephones & Reception	13 670 38 112	1,203	1,100	1,100	1,100
* Re-charge - Postal Services	13 670 38 113	2,822	2,800	2,800	2,800
* Re-charge - Financial Services	13 670 38 820	1,056	1,200	1,400	1,400
* Re-charge - Land Control/Land Charges	13 670 38 450	3,006	3,500	4,000	4,300
* Re-charge - Audit and Process Review	13 670 38 780	-	2,700	-	-
* Insurance	13 670 40 000	1,004	1,800	900	900
* Asset Rentals	13 670 00 025	119,576	136,900	122,200	125,300
Total Expenditure		253,428	364,600	324,700	331,000
* Re-charge - Elections	13 670 89 300	(100)	(100)	(100)	-
Parking Experiment	13 670 00 805	43,828	52,000	28,000	28,000
Parking Fees	13 670 81 xxx	(426,927)	(420,900)	(426,900)	(489,800)
Market Rents	13 670 80 040	(4,500)	(4,500)	(4,300)	(4,500)
Permits/Season Tickets	13 670 81 270	(42,397)	(41,200)	(40,000)	(40,800)
Costs Awarded	13 670 84 160	(1,393)	(1,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)
Excess Charges	13 670 83 230	(34,796)	(34,800)	(34,800)	(34,800)
Total Net Income:		(212,859)	(91,900)	(156,800)	(213,100)
Note: Included in Actual are refunds relating to previous financial years					

* Financial Services use only