

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 9

meeting date: 15 MARCH 2016
title: OFF STREET PARKING - PAY BY PHONE
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: ADRIAN HARPER, HEAD OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To look at current issues affecting parking in the borough

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley

Corporate Priorities – To ensure best use of Council resources in the provision of parking

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In December, there were presentations made to RVBC by two companies that offer the above service. They were Ringgo, the preferred supplier for LCC, and Chipside, our current provider for back office parking services.

2.2 The facility allows an owner to either pre-pay for a parking space, in a car park where they know there is no mobile signal, or pay for a space by phone if they have no change. Once registered and / or having downloaded the app, they can also pay for a reminder text informing them that the time is about to expire, allowing the option to top up so they don't have to rush back and face the prospect of a fine.

2.3 Both companies were very similar in their offering in that they both offered free signage. The charges for texts to the public were 10p each, but the convenience charges were different: Ringgo 20p per transaction, and Chipside 10p per transaction.

2.4 The only charge to the Council would be the merchant banking fee, as both companies paid all the money to the Council, and invoiced monthly for the convenience charges and 10p for any reminder texts requested.

2.5 When a virtual permit is purchased through the scheme, a message is sent electronically to the Enforcement Officers informing them of the purchase, including details of the vehicle covered and the permit expiry time.

3 ISSUES

3.1 Chipside currently provides the back office support for parking services. The Pay by Phone is another service that they offer as part of their framework agreement. This allows us to call off the extra service without having to go out to tender.

3.2 It has been agreed that the trial will last for 12 months, and then be reviewed as to its degree of success. The trial will cover all the car parks in the borough, and the trial will also point out where the service is most used, and where it is not suitable for reasons of poor telephone signal.

- 3.3 As previously stated, the charges will be paid by the customer with the only fee to be paid by the Council being the charge from the chosen merchant banker for dealing with credit/ debit cards over the normal cash transaction.
- 3.4 It is difficult to estimate the charge at this stage as the uptake on the system cannot be known. However, it has been estimated that, if the uptake is 5% on last year's parking income, the charge to the Council would be in the region of £250.
- 3.5 The service is being introduced as a benefit to the general public. It provides an alternative option for payment for parking, and for the public not carrying change for the pay and display machines.
- 3.6 The Council may, indeed, benefit by more people parking in car parks by this system, rather than realising they have insufficient change for the machine, and having to search around for on-street parking.

4 RISK ASSESSMENTS

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

Resources – The scheme is on a trial basis running at a minimal cost.

Political – The scheme shows the Council to be moving with the times.

Reputation – The scheme should only enhance the reputation of the Council.

Equality&Diversity – The scheme to be implemented throughout the borough's car parks.

5 CONCLUSION

Although take up may be modest during the trial period, we will be introducing a system that is becoming quite commonplace throughout the country. As the trend is, for residents and for visitors, towards electronic payment systems in many areas of life, it is appropriate for the Council to make available the same options that drivers might be accustomed to seeing in other areas.

ADRIAN HARPER
HEAD OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For further information please ask for Adrian Harper, extension 4523

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