

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres
2.	Date:	1st October, 2010
3.	Title:	Proposals for the introduction of cashless parking in Rotherham Town Centre
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Consideration has been given to the introduction of a cashless alternative to the traditional coin driven pay and display machines for parking in Rotherham Town Centre. The system involves customers using mobile telephones to register their vehicle and credit / debit card details thereby paying for their parking activity without having to physically insert change into a machine.

6. Recommendations

- That the system be introduced for an initial trial period in selected locations with a view to making the arrangement permanent if successful.
 - That Cabinet Member agrees the locations for the trial as set out in this report.
 - That a further report is brought to Cabinet Member in March 2011 with recommendations for the continuance or otherwise of the scheme.
-

7. Proposals and Details

Methodology

Current “pay and display” parking arrangements in the Town Centre require customers to insert change into ticket machines and display the purchased ticket in their vehicle. Technology has progressed significantly in recent years and it is proposed to introduce a cashless method of payment.

The proposal would enable customers to pay and display in the traditional way or:

- Upon entering a car park, customers are advised of a telephone number to call (this would be a local rate cost call). An automated system then prompts the customer to input their vehicle and debit / credit card details. The customer only has to undertake this task once. Each time the customer uses the system thereafter, the data is automatically recognised.
- The customer may then choose the length of stay from the tariff.
- Payment of the tariff amount is deducted from the card by the service provider.
- The service provider adds a nominal fee (10p to 20p) to the Council’s parking charge per parking activity for their service. This is clarified to the customer on the signage and during the telephone call. It is not an increase in the actual parking charge; it is a “convenience fee”.
- The service provider pays RMBC on a weekly or monthly basis (to be agreed).

Advantages

An increasing number of customers are comfortable using modern technology. The introduction of such a system offers customers a choice of payment methods.

The Council has recently been criticised in the local press regarding the issue of pay and display machines not giving change. The introduction of this system would give a “good press” opportunity, highlighting the wider choice of payment options.

Marketing

Appropriate signs are provided and installed by the service provider. The signs clearly indicate that the system forms part of the Rotherham MBC Parking Service. It is anticipated that a press release will also be issued.

Enforcement

The Civil Enforcement Officers’ new communication hardware enables them to easily distinguish which vehicles had been parked using the cashless system, how long a stay has been purchased and how long each vehicle has remaining on that purchase. Vehicles which have been parked without using the cashless system will be checked for traditional pay and display tickets.

Proposed Locations for trial

Drummond Street car park
Civic car park

Eastwood Lane (on-street)
Moorgate Street (on-street Town Hall area)
Fitzwilliam Road car parks
Sheffield Road (on street)
Maltkiln Street (on street)
Percy Street (on street)
Wellgate multi storey car park
Masbrough Street (on street)

8. Finance

The one-off cost for installation of the system including signs, publicity, system administrator training and Civil Enforcement Officer training is £3,200. This would be funded from an existing revenue budget. However, there are significant projected full year savings associated with the scheme if the cashless system is introduced in all town centre parking places and these are detailed in Appendix A.

The trial period will not reflect a pro rata of full year savings as it will be undertaken in selected locations only. The full scheme will be introduced if the customer uptake levels prove to be successful.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are no significant risks as the proposal is for a trial period only. The uncertainty surrounds whether or not the customers will be comfortable with use of the system. However, the system has been in use in Sheffield for a number of months and the uptake by customers in that Authority has been excellent.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

N/A

11. Background Papers and Consultation

N/A

Contact Name: Martin Beard – Parking Services Manager
Extension 2929 - email: martin.beard@rotherham.gov.uk

Appendix A – Potential Benefits from Cashless System.

Annual Parking Pay and Display Income £675,000

% UPTAKE	10	20	30	40	50
	67,500	135,000	202,500	270,000	337,500
ITEM	£	£	£	£	£
Increased Revenue					
* Greater Compliance 0.75%	506	1012	1519	2025	2531
* Top up payments 2.30%	1553	3105	4658	6210	7763
* Transaction Value Uplift 5%	3375	6750	10125	13500	16875
Streamlined Banking					
Reduction in cash counting costs	675	1350	2025	2700	3375
Deferred Investments Costs					
New machines	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Efficiency Benefits					
* Reduced appeal contesting 0.85%	574	1147	1721	2295	2869
Revenue despite machine failure	8400	8400	8400	8400	8400
Reduced vandalism	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Machine maintenance 30 x 295	8850	8850	8850	8850	8850
PCN Increased Recovery	11840	11840	11840	11840	11840
Tariff changes	2700	2700	2700	2700	2700
Total full year savings	42473	49154	55838	62520	69203

* These percentages are provided by the service provider based on actual financial results in Local Authorities where the cashless system is already in use.