

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Bear Lane Car Park, Newbury		
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Keith Chopping	on:	1st November 2006
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1296		

Purpose of Report:

To inform the Executive Member for Highways and Transport of a proposal to introduce a pay on foot parking system in the Bear Lane Car Park and to seek authority to advertise and implement a revised tariff structure to optimise the benefits of the new system.

Recommended Action:

That the Portfolio Member for Highways and Transport resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in Section 4 of this report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

To improve the service offered in the Newbury Town Centre car parks during the impending period of development

List of other options considered:

- (a) To implement the system in another Newbury car park
- (b) To leave the car park using pay and display parking

Key background documentation:

Letter and tender from WPS (UK) Ltd

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 To recommend that the Bear Lane car park in Wharf Road, Newbury be converted from pay and display parking to payment by way of pay on foot parking.
- 1.2 To recommend that the tariff structure of the Bear Lane car park is amended as set out in Appendix B (ii) to offer greater flexibility to customers.

2. Factors for Consideration

- 2.1 In May 2005 the Kennet Centre multi-storey car park converted from pay and display parking to pay on foot parking. The new system has proven very popular with motorists as it offers parking without the risk of a parking fine and there has been a substantial increase in both ticket sales and parking income compared to the previous pay and display parking.
- 2.2 In July 2006 the Northbrook multi-storey car park also converted to pay on foot parking. It is believed that the introduction of pay on foot parking will lead to a similar increase in parking ticket sales and parking income in this car park.
- 2.3 Both the multi-storey car parks have extremely modern parking facilities offering fine-free parking and also enhanced safety features that have gained both car parks the Secured Parking status. The multi-storey car parks will play a vital role in the Council's interim car parking strategy designed to protect the Town Centre trading core until the Park Way development is completed, probably in December 2009.
- 2.4 Funding was made available at the end of the last financial year to convert one of the Town Centre pay and display car parks to pay on foot parking. Such a conversion would be a modest system without the use of the Licence Plate Recognition System and Transponder system currently available in the two multi-storey car parks. It is considered that to convert a surface car park from pay and display parking to pay on foot parking could be achieved using one entry barrier; one exit barrier; and one pay station. The equipment was purchased in March 2006. Although designed to operate in all weather conditions the pay station and the customers could be partially protected from the by placing it inside a Perspex shelter, akin to a bus shelter.

(a) Location of the new Pay on Foot Parking System

- 2.5 Of the Newbury Town Centre pay and display surface car parks that can be considered for pay on foot parking the Park Way, Jack Street and Northbrook Place car parks will close to facilitate the new Park Way development. The Market Street and Cheap Street car parks are also planned for re-development, while those car parks to the West of the Town Centre at Northcroft Lane, Northcroft Lane West and West Street are either too far away from the shops to be attractive or not large enough to justify the investment. The Pelican Lane car park is slightly too remote from the main shopping area. Consequently, attention focuses on the Wharf Road car parks and of these the Wharf car park with its capacity of 42 vehicles is popular, but too small. This leaves the Central car parks and Bear Lane car park for consideration.
- 2.6 The Central car park is in two sections, split by the coach park, and has a total capacity of 154 spaces: the Library section has 84 spaces and the "Oddbins" section has 70 spaces. However, the car park is split into two distinct sections by the Coach car park. The Bear Lane car park has 75

spaces. An analysis of ticket sales and estimated occupancy rates for both car parks over the last three financial years is shown in Appendix A.

- 2.7 The figures produced in Appendix A clearly show that the Bear Lane car park has a higher rate of ticket sales and a far higher rate of occupancy than the Central car park. Moreover, the Bear Lane car park is one compact parking area while the Central car park is currently split into two distinct sections by the Coach parking area. Another factor in favour of Bear Lane is that it leads pedestrians directly to the Town Centre area. Consequently this car park is the favoured one for the first introduction of pay on foot parking in a surface car park in Newbury. There would be a need to revise the parking layout of the car park to facilitate barrier entry and barrier exit and provision would have to be made for employees of the Royal Bank of Scotland who gain access to their car park directly through the Bear Lane car park, but these are not insurmountable problems.

(b) Review of the Existing Tariff Structure for Bear Lane Car Park

- 2.8 It is proposed that the existing tariff structure operating at Bear Lane car park should be reviewed to optimise flexibility in favour of the customer. However, the existing minimum and maximum parking charges and the hourly rate for parking will not be increased. The existing tariffs at the Bear Lane car park were implemented in April 2006 following a review of all Newbury car parking charges. The existing tariffs are shown in Appendix B (i) of this report.
- 2.9 It must be borne in mind that the Bear Lane car park with its immediate proximity to the Town Centre is a short-stay shopper car park. For this reason the tariffs should be structured to allow a maximum of a half-day parking before a high tariff for longer stay parking comes into effect. This will encourage a good turnover of parking spaces in the car park. The proposed tariffs for the Bear Lane car park after it converts to pay on foot parking are set out in Appendix B (ii).
- 2.10 The proposed tariffs set out in Appendix B (ii) still allow a minimum parking period of a half-hour, but protect the core 3 hour parking vends. Parking time beyond three hours is sold in half-hour segments until the five hour threshold is reached. This represents the maximum encouraged stay in the car park and parking beyond the five hours incurs a high tariff, but no higher than the current maximum charge. It is considered that this will preserve the essentially short-term parking role that this car park provides in the Town Centre. The use of half-hour parking time segments offers the customer a feeling of value for money and has proven popular in the Kennet Centre car park.
- 2.11 The proposed charges are entirely consistent with those in the two pay on foot multi-storey car parks except that parking over 5 hours is discouraged because of the need to retain this car park as an essentially short-term facility. Although customers who stay over 5 hours will have to pay a high charge, they will not incur a parking fine which currently costs £60, but reducing to £30 if paid within 14 days.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 In the early part of 2007 a series of car park closures in the Newbury Town Centre area will commence that may ultimately lead to the loss of some 622 car parking spaces. This period of Town Centre development is likely to prove to be testing for the traders and the Council has determined to do all that it can to promote and assist the Town Centre trading core during the period of development. The introduction of a pay on foot parking system at the Bear Lane car park will mean that of the remaining available parking stock some 2/3rds will be offered through pay on foot parking, which offers parking without the risk of a parking fine. It is considered that the provision of such parking facilities will do much to protect the Town Centre trading core during the period of Town

Centre development and proves that the Council is making optimum use of the available Town Centre parking stock.

3.2 There is an opportunity to convert one of the existing pay and display car parks to pay on foot parking and the Bear Lane car park in Wharf Road has been identified as the most suitable location. It is considered that another pay on foot car park will promote and protect Town Centre trade during the impending period of development.

3.3 To encourage shoppers to make optimum use of the Bear Lane car park following the change to pay on foot parking it is proposed to adjust the tariff structure within the car park to offer customers more flexibility in the purchase of parking time. However, the existing minimum and maximum parking tariffs will not be altered, nor will the hourly rate for parking.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That the revised tariff structure for Bear Lane car park as shown in Appendix B (ii) of this report be advertised and implemented when the car park converts to pay on foot parking.

4.2 That the Parking Order for Bear Lane car park be amended as necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A: Comparative Ticket Sales and Income Statistics for Central and Bear Lane Car Parks.

Appendix B (i): Existing Car Parking Charges at Bear Lane Car Park.

Appendix B (ii): Proposed Car Parking Charges at Bear Lane Car Park Using Pay on Foot Parking.

Implications

Policy:

(a) The proposal to introduce a pay on foot system in Bear Lane car park is wholly consistent with the Council's interim parking strategy to protect Newbury's Town Centre traders in the period of redevelopment.

(b) The proposed revised charges for this car park are consistent with existing charges in Newbury.

Financial:

The cost of the pay on foot system using reconditioned, but fully guaranteed equipment will be some £42,000 and will be met from approved budgets.

The costs of revised signs and amending the parking layout of the car park will be some £2,000 and will be met from approved budgets.

The cost of advertising the Parking order is estimated to be some £1,000 and will be met from approved budgets.

Personnel:

None arising from this report.

Legal:

The amendments to the Parking Order and the sealing of the amended Parking Order will be undertaken by Legal Services.

The contract for the purchase of the pay on foot parking system from WPS (UK) Ltd will be undertaken by Legal Services.

The completion of the Maintenance Contract for the pay on foot system will be undertaken by Legal Services.

Environmental:	The proposals within this report aim to protect and promote Town Centre trade in Newbury during the impending period of development by introducing a parking system without the risks of a parking fine.
Equalities:	Blue Badge holders may continue to use the Bear Lane car park free of charge. Parking spaces with the disabled logo will be provided within any revised layout.
Partnering:	None arising from this report.
Property:	None arising from this report.
Risk Management:	None arising from this report.
Community Safety:	None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	No response received from Councillor Graham Jones by the end of consultation period (consultation e-mail sent on 3 October 2006). Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.
Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman:	No response received from Councillor Jeff Brooks by the end of consultation period (consultation e-mail sent on 3 October 2006). Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.
Ward Members:	Ward Members for Falkland; Victoria; Northcroft; Clay Hill; St Johns. Please see Appendix C attached for a summary of the responses received from the Ward Members consulted.
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Keith Woodhams supports pay on foot parking, subject to no adverse comments from his colleagues.
Policy Development Commission Chairman:	Not Applicable.
Local Stakeholders:	Will be consulted as part of the statutory advertisement and consultation process.
Officers Consulted:	Mark Edwards, Mark Cole
Trade Union:	Not applicable.

Appendix A: Comparative Statistics for Central and Bear Lane Car Parks

<u>Year</u>	<u>Car Park</u>	<u>Tickets Sold</u>	<u>Income (£)</u>	<u>Estimated Occupancy*</u>
2003/04	Central	112,475	129,461	59%
	Bear Lane	126,187	103,108	94%
2004/05	Central	119,754	139,288	57%
	Bear Lane	106,707	103,698	80%
2005/06	Central	117,068	132,647	61%
	Bear Lane	127,835	106,903	96%

N.B. Occupancy has been estimated by:

- (a) Maximum parking availability is 8 hours per day multiplied by 305 pay to park days multiplied by the number of pay to park spaces in each car park)
- (b) Occupancy is calculated by assuming each ticket sold at each tariff level parks for the maximum of the parking time purchased)

Appendix B:

(i) Existing Car Parking Charges at Bear Lane Car Park.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Charge</u>
Up to ½ hour	£0.30
Up to 1 hour	£0.70
Up to 2 hours	£1.40
Up to 3 hours	£2.10
Up to 4 hours	£2.80
Up to 10 hours	£11.00

(ii) Proposed Car Parking Charges at Bear Lane Car Park Using Pay on Foot Parking.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Charge</u>
Up to ½ hour	£0.30
Up to 1 hour	£0.70
Up to 2 hours	£1.40
Up to 3 hours	£2.10
Up to 3½ hours	£2.50
Up to 4 hours	£2.80
Up to 4½ hours	£3.20
Up to 5 hours	£3.50
Up to 10 hours	£11.00

Appendix C: Summary of Consultations with Ward Members

The Ward Members for Falkland; Victoria; Northcroft; Clay Hill; and St Johns wards were consulted in the preparation of this report. All ward members were consulted by e-mail sent on 3 October 2006.

The result of the consultation with Ward Members is:

Clay Hill Ward

Councillor Trevor Banning had not replied by the end of consultation period. Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.

Councillor Phil Barnett had not replied by the end of consultation period. Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.

Falkland Ward

Councillor Val Bull has no problem with the proposal.

Councillor Caroline Suggett had not replied by the end of consultation period. Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.

Northcroft Ward

Councillor Sue Farrant supports the proposal.

Councillor Tony Vickers had not replied by the end of consultation period. Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.

St Johns Ward

Councillor Sally Hannon is happy with the proposal.

Councillor Emma Webster supports the proposal.

Victoria Ward

Councillor Michael Rodger had not replied by the end of consultation period. Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.

Councillor Roger Hunneman had not replied by the end of consultation period. Any subsequent comments will be verbally reported when the decision is made.