

Pay and Display machine payment options

A1. Introduce new Pay & Display machines with a card payment option

New pay & display machines could be installed so that motorists could make their payments by coins and / or debit/credit (payment) card at the machine. If this option was introduced then a contactless card reader would be available on the machines and when the motorist was ready to pay they would either insert coins and / or present their payment card to the reader. A pay & display ticket would then be issued in the normal manner for them to display in their vehicle.

If a motorist did not want to use the payment card options then they could still pay for their parking using coins only at the pay & display machine, as they can at present. A number of local authorities have converted their P&D machines to card payments only but this is not considered suitable for Hillingdon as it restricts the payment options available to residents and other users.

Whilst some of the existing pay & display machines could be upgraded to include a payment card reader, many of them could not as they are of an older technical specification which could not be upgraded. They would need to be completely replaced if a payment card option was to be installed at the P&D machines. Without doing a detailed technical site survey of each machine, it is not possible to confirm how many of the existing P&D machines could be upgraded.

Some of the pro & cons of this type of system are as follows:

Pros

- Motorists can pay by card and do not have to carry coins.
- It gives motorists greater flexibility on how to pay for parking.
- Coins can still be used if the motorist does not want to use the payment card system.
- Payment by card gives them a written record/history of when they parked and how much it cost.
- Payment by card would work seamlessly with the HillingdonFirst differential charges system.
- It would result in reduced levels of cash and would result in some savings in cash collection and processing costs for the Council.
- The motorist does not have to register separately for this system or provide any details of their vehicle/location.
- Reduced levels of cash in the machines make them less susceptible to vandalism and thefts.

Cons

- If the machine was defective, for whatever reason, then the motorist would not be able to purchase a ticket and there would still be a loss of service to the public and a loss of income to the council.
- There is a relatively high capital outlay to introduce the system.
- The council would be responsible for paying the card transaction fees which would be a percentage of the payment made.

A2. Introduce a mobile phone payment system

Whilst mobile phone parking payment systems have become quite popular these types of systems are, in fact, just systems where you pay for your parking by payment card and use your telephone to access the service.

With a typical mobile phone payment system the motorists registers with the payment system provider and gives them details of their payment card for where the parking charges should be debited from. This information is held against the person's phone number and if they ring up again, then the system automatically recognises the person. This means that they only have to register once with the payment system provider.

If a motorist does not want to use the mobile phone payment system then they can still pay for their parking using coins only at the pay & display machine, as they can at present.

Once they are registered, when they arrive at a location they type in the Location Code (normally a 4/5 digit number) and the system is then aware of the parking regulations (i.e. operating times/days, parking charges, length of maximum, etc) at that location. The motorist then confirms the location and the vehicle registration mark of their car (in case they have a different car on a particular day) and the system takes their payment and authorises them to park, without having to display a pay & display ticket. This triggers an update on central parking records system. When an enforcement officer enters the location, they get details of all the authorised vehicles uploaded onto their handheld computer so that they are aware of which cars have paid for their parking and that no enforcement action should be taken against them.

If Hillingdon was to use a mobile phone parking system then the system would have to be amended to ensure that residents still received their HillingdonFirst (HFC) preferential residents parking rates. This could be achieved by producing a process when people register so that they have to use their HFC number as part of the registration process. This information would then be stored against their phone number (or numbers as it is possible for them to register one or two phone numbers on the same account, e.g. a home number and a mobile number) and the system would calculate the parking charges based on the HFC preferential parking rates.

The charges for using a typical mobile phone parking system are 20p for each transaction on top of the normal parking charge. Some providers may offer lower rates but this would not be known until such a service was competitively tendered. This charge is normally charged to the motorist and not the council.

Users can also opt to get a text reminder when their parking is due to expire so that they can extend their period of parking (if the parking regulations allow it for that location). They are charged a convenience charge, typically 10p or 20p, for this reminder service on each occasion. No charge is normally made to the council for each transaction.

Additionally, there would not normally be much in the way of capital expenditure costs for the council as the majority of the signing required for a mobile phone system consists of vinyl labels stuck to the side of the pay & display machines (or laminated notices placed on local signposts or lamp columns).

Some of the pro & cons of this type of system are as follows:

Pros for the Council

- It would result in reduced levels of cash and would result in some savings in cash collection and processing costs.
- As no ticket needs to be obtained, this type of system reduces the wear and tear on the machines, which should extend their life and also ticket handling/replenish stock costs.
- The system is cheap to introduce.
- Introduction of a mobile phone payment system would enable the council to generate further savings by introducing virtual permits and visitor vouchers.
- Reduced levels of cash in the machines make them less susceptible to vandalism and thefts.
- In the longer term (possibly over the next 5 years), if mobile phone parking proved popular, it may be possible to reduce the number of pay & display machines in use, saving operating costs for the council and reducing street clutter.
- If a mobile phone system was introduced then this would also put in place an infrastructure that would allow the council to introduce virtual permits and visitor vouchers in the future, which would generate further efficiencies.

Pros for the Customer

- It gives motorists greater flexibility on how to pay for parking.
- Coins can still be used if the motorist does not want to use the mobile phone system.
- If a machine was defective, for whatever reason, then motorists could still pay for their parking using the mobile phone system.
- Motorists can pay by card and do not have to carry coins.
- Payment by card gives them a written record/history of when they parked in certain locations and how much it cost.
- A ticket does not need to be displayed.
- A mobile phone payment system could still operate the HillingdonFirst differential parking charges system.
- Motorists would have an option to receive a text reminder when their period of parking was due to expire, thus helping them to avoid a PCN.
- Once registered, a motorist can also pay by mobile phone in other areas where the same supplier is already providing a mobile phone parking system, e.g., in Ealing, Westminster, etc.
- If a mobile phone system was introduced then this would also put in place an infrastructure that would allow residents to use virtual permits and visitor vouchers. This would mean that they would not have to display a permit or purchase visitor vouchers in advance and display them in the vehicle.

Cons

- The motorist would have to register for an account with the mobile phone parking system provider.
- The system provider would have to amend their software to incorporate the HillingdonFirst differential parking charges system.
- Each time that the motorist parked they would need to phone the service provider and provide details of their location and how long they wanted to park.
- The enforcement officer would need to be provided with details of which vehicles had paid for their parking before commencing any enforcement.
- The council would be responsible for paying the card transaction fees which would be a percentage of the payment made.

- There would be a transaction charge made to the motorist on each occasion that they used the system. This would be in addition to the parking charge.

A3. Dual Card Payment and Mobile Phone Payment systems

It would be possible to incorporate both of the above payment systems into one system, by adding a contactless card reader to the machine and also adding a mobile payment system. This would give motorists the option to pay for their pay & display ticket by using coins or by presenting a payment card to the machine and then displaying their pay & display ticket in the normal manner.

Alternatively, they could pay for their parking using the mobile phone system, which would mean that they would not have to display a pay & display ticket and would have an option to get a reminder when their parking was due to expire.

If a dual system was introduced then it would give the motorists a greater range of payment options but would also mean that the council would incur the capital outlay costs for both systems.

If a dual card payment and mobile phone payment system was introduced and the motorists did not want to use either of these systems then they can still pay for their parking using coins only at the pay & display machine, as they can at present.

A number of local authorities have converted their P&D machines to card payments only but this is not considered suitable for Hillingdon as it restricts the payment options available to residents and other users.