
TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF PAY & DISPLAY PARKING CHARGING

Report by Service Director Assets and Infrastructure

Executive Committee

17 NOVEMBER 2020

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes that Pay & Display Parking is temporarily suspended from the 1st of December 2020 with the intention of providing a boost to the ability of towns to attract local shoppers in the lead up to Christmas. In light of continuing COVID-19 restrictions, members are invited to consider whether pay parking charges should be suspended until the end of the financial year on the 31st March. The main rationale for introducing Pay & Display operations was to provide an efficient turn-over of vehicles in key town centre locations and to assist in providing vibrant town centres and for this reason a third option of retaining the current pay parking regime in its current operational form is also provided for consideration.**
- 1.2 Pay & Display operations currently take place in five towns across the Scottish Borders and similar operations have taken place for in excess of the last twenty-five years.
- 1.3 The operation of Pay & Display typically provides a surplus in each town and this can be utilised on roads and environmental improvements or initiatives in that area.
- 1.4 The operation of Pay & Display was suspended during the initial lockdown period but resumed again in early August 2020. There have however been requests from some areas to suspend the operation again in the run-up to Christmas and potentially for the remainder of this financial year. It is anticipated that such a move will encourage people to shop local and be particularly beneficial to Christmas trade.
- 1.5 The suspension of Pay & Display operations will result in a loss of revenue to the Council and for this reason a decision to suspend pay parking rests with the executive committee. Whichever option is chosen it is considered that there would be benefit in bringing more consistency to pay parking arrangements in Borders Towns, and possibly extending the scheme to other areas to assist with problem parking and traffic management. For this

reason it is proposed that a longer term review of pay parking arrangements should also be considered.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Executive committee consider this report and agrees either:-

- (a) To leave the current pay parking arrangements in place; or,**
- (b) Agrees to the suspension of Pay & Display operations from 1 December 2020 until 4 January 2021 over the festive period:
or,**
- (c) Agrees to the longer suspension of Pay & Display operations from 1 December 2020 until 31 March 2021 to assist businesses during COVID 19 restrictions; and,**
- (d) Authorises the Director of Assets and Infrastructure to undertake a review of the scope of pay parking, the current charging regimes and charging times for Pay & Display parking is undertaken and that a further report is brought forward within a 6 month period.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Councils are responsible for the management and regulation of both on and off-street parking in their settlements, other than in areas that are privately owned and maintained.
- 3.2 Pay and Display parking has operated in the Scottish Borders since the early 1990's in certain off-street car parks. The number of car parks operating under Pay and Display has fluctuated over the years. At the moment the scheme operates in five towns:
- Galashiels (High Street, Ladhope Vale, Hall Street, Stirling Street and Stirling Place car parks)
 - Hawick (O'Connell Street, Walter's Wynd, Health Centre, Cross Wynd and Allars Crescent car parks)
 - Melrose (Buccleuch Street car park)
 - Peebles Edinburgh Road (Eastgate) (Sat only), Greenside and Swimming Pool car parks
 - St Abbs (Harbour car park)*
- * The car park at St Abbs is operated by the Harbour Trust on behalf of the Council.
- 3.3 The rationale for introducing Pay & Display operations was, and remains, to encourage the turn-over of vehicles, particularly in busy town centre car parks, thereby helping to stimulate the local economy.
- 3.4 The main revenue from Pay & Display is generated from the purchase of parking tickets that allow users to park for an allocated period of time, but additional revenue comes from surcharges/excess charges/irregular parking charges when applicable.
- 3.5 The expenditure and income streams for individual car parks is analysed separately and any surplus generated can be distributed on a town by town basis. The Ward Members for each town are responsible for distributing any available funds to roads or environmental related projects within their area.
- 3.6 It should also be noted that in some towns the procedure is further complicated by outside interests. In Melrose, for example, Historic Scotland own part of the car park operated under Pay and Display and therefore share in any annual surplus generated. The proposals will require to be discussed with these partners who may seek compensation for the period during which parking charges are lifted.
- 3.7 The ticket price; penalty charge payment level and operational period for Pay & Display parking can be set locally by Members. There is currently a variation in some or all of these aspects from town to town and in certain locations from car park to car park.
- 3.8 Pay & Display parking operations were previously suspended as part of the initial Coronavirus lockdown but re-started on 10 August as part of the Councils phased recovery approach at that time.

4 IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSPENDING PAY & DISPLAY PARKING

- 4.1 The suspension of Pay & Display operations has been requested from a number of quarters and is likely to be popular with the general public. This is particularly likely to be the case in the run-up to Christmas where it is hoped that it will be an encouragement for people to shop local and therefore not to travel out with the Scottish Borders area.
- 4.2 As outlined in the Financial Implications section in 3.5 there will be a loss of revenue associated with a decision to suspend Pay & Display operations.
- 4.3 Resident and visitor permits are also available at certain locations and currently 177 people avail themselves of these. Some form of refund, or extension of applicable period, will need to be considered for these users.
- 4.4 The Council has contracts for the collection of cash from its 17 machines and for the cashless application that can be utilised for payment. Both of these will need to be reviewed to see if there are charges that apply for cancelling facilities.
- 4.5 When parking charges were suspended previously the Pay & Display the machines had black bags put over them, as a temporary measure, to show that they were out of use and to discourage vandalism. Unfortunately, this measure proved fairly ineffective as the bags ripped easily and people pulled them off. A more robust system of proper covers will be required (particularly as they will be required to withstand winter months) and initial investigation of this indicates that they retail at £117.00 plus vat each. 17 covers will be required.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the 1 full time and 1 part time Parking Attendants will continue to undertake periodic checking of the car parks and the machines in order to review the impact on parking behaviours, but that they will also be available for redeployment within the Council to assist with COVID-19 related priorities.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

	Do Nothing	Suspend 1/Dec - 4/Jan	Suspend 1/Dec - 31 Mar
Lost Income Est	£0	£7,042	£56,732
Costs of Staff Not recovered	£0	£5,090	£20,361
Vehicle costs not recovered	£0	£120	£600
P & D Covers	£0	£1,989	£1,989
Compensation	£0	£450	£3,100
Total Cost	£0	£14,691	£82,782

- a) The total cost of suspending pay parking I lost income and additional costs during December is estimated to be £14,691. The total cost of a 4 month suspension to 31 March is estimated to be £82,782.
- b) The cost of suspending pay parking which cannot now be covered by charging will be funded within the COVID 19 reserve. This cost totals £7,649 to suspend for the one month festive period and £26,050 over a four month period to 31 March 2021.
- c) Income after costs lost over the period of any suspension will clearly not be available as usual to fund town improvement works. Normally this income pays for the costs of administering the scheme, with any net surplus available to towns. In the case of a 4 month suspension, the net income loss to towns compared to the "do nothing" option would be £30,682.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a concern that the removal of Pay & Display controls will lead to reduced turn-over and availability of spaces in the car parks as a result of increased users and people parking for much longer periods. This was a complaint during the earlier suspension of operations, particularly from resident and season ticket holders who found it harder to find spaces. This will be mitigated by continuing parking controls

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken in regards to the content of this report and no adverse findings have been observed requiring a fuller IIA to be undertaken.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

No adverse economic, social or environmental effects have been identified as a result of the proposals. The proposals are aimed at enhancing trading conditions in Borders Towns over a difficult trading period for the retail and hospitality sector

5.5 Carbon Management

It is not anticipated that this decision will have any material impact on the Council's carbon emissions.

5.6 Rural Proofing

There are no rural proofing impacts resulting from this report.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes which are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications

are being consulted and any comments received will be provided verbally at the meeting.

Approved by

John Curry **Signature**
Service Director Assets and Infrastructure

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Background Papers: N/A

Previous Minute Reference: N/A

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