

To: EXECUTIVE  
20 July 2021

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**Scheidt & Bachmann (S&B) switch out project – multi storey car parks infrastructure  
Executive Director of Delivery**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To outline the proposal to replace the existing pay on foot (on exit) S&B parking equipment in the three town centre multi storey car parks with pay by plate (on arrival) infrastructure provided by International Parking Systems (IPS).

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 **To agree the proposal to replace the existing payment infrastructure within the three Council managed town centre multi storey car parks (The Avenue, High Street and Braccan Walk). To replace existing Scheidt & Bachmann equipment with an alternative solution from International Parking Solutions.**

**3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 To provide both an enhanced customer experience and a financial saving.

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None, to retain existing infrastructure arrangements.

**5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 NSL, the Council's parking management and enforcement contractor has proposed a switch out of the existing S&B pay on exit equipment to an alternative 'pay by plate' technology provided by IPS. This alternative solution is more akin to pay and display equipment, the customer would pay up front for their parking as opposed to when returning to their vehicle. However, the system would link to a virtual ticket, not a traditional physical ticket that would be displayed on the dashboard of a vehicle. The customer would purchase their virtual ticket at the payment machine before exiting the car park and would not be required to return to their vehicle to display anything. The virtual tickets would link to the existing enforcement software in operation via NSL.
- 5.2 The Council's existing S&B infrastructure was installed during 2017 in line with the opening of the Lexicon. At the same time the Lexicon also installed the same S&B equipment into Princess Square car park (which is not the Council's responsibility) so as to provide a 'seamless town centre parking offer'. In reality due to the large availability of parking spaces within the town centre most visitors stick with one car park rather than visit different ones.
- 5.3 The S&B equipment has a maintenance arrangement based on different call out levels across the 3 multi storey sites relative to risk and need) The current maintenance contract is on an annual arrangement July to July (to coincide with the commencement of the NSL contract). Depending on the outcome of this proposal the contract from July 2021 will not be renewed. The equipment is linked to an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system and barriers on entrance and exit system. On occasion when there have been issues with the equipment or a build-up of vehicles it is not a

smooth customer journey. At peak periods, particularly around Christmas, queues can build up at the barriers and back onto the ramps which can lead to customer dissatisfaction. At busy times the barriers have to be raised to allow the traffic to move freely. A move to a pay by plate system would remove the need for barriers at the entrance and exit.

- 5.4 The existing multi storey car parking payment app is 'piggy backed' onto the Lexicon app and linked directly to the S&B equipment. Its implementation was challenging as it required direct integration into the S&B system via a development team in Germany. Currently it has very limited uptake in our car parks, less than 5% of the total transactions, it is not a well known national brand and it can be difficult to find via the Lexicon app. It is prone to technical issues and is not a robust way of cashless payment. There are issues whereby the ANPR reads the number plate incorrectly and it does not link when the customer enters their vehicle registration. Removing the S&B equipment would mean the Lexicon app would no longer function for the Council's three car parks and the Lexicon would need to make arrangements directly if they wished to continue its use.
- 5.5 The proposal with a move to the new IPS infrastructure would be to switch to the national PaybyPhone app as the cashless parking solution. PaybyPhone was introduced via NSL as their provider of choice at our surface car parks in July 2020 (The Look out, Coral Reef, Albert Rd, Wick Hill, Weather Way and Behind the Banks). This service has had a very good uptake with on average 25% of transactions via PaybyPhone and the remainder credit card with a small percentage cash. Across these sites 28,000 transactions were via the PaybyPhone app compared to 86,000 credit card and cash transactions from July 20 to April 21. At the Look Out the uptake is 30%. We would expect to see similar levels at our multi storey car parks and will be promoting the convenience and flexibility (reminder of car parking running out and the ability to extend) of the app to customers. The system is already fully integrated and provides a very good service with very little issues. We would therefore look to expand this existing service to our multi storey sites and would not seek to introduce another national option. With Covid-19 and the move towards more cashless parking the Council knows this solution works well and is popular with parkers. The move to PaybyPhone would eliminate the risk and cost of the standalone Lexicon parking payment app.
- 5.6 Currently there are a number of season ticket options for both High Street and Braccan Walk car parks and these are administered via a manual paper-based process. Whilst purchase of season tickets has diminished significantly as a result of Covid-19 the intention has always been to automate them in line with options for the Council's other sites. To do this with the existing S&B equipment there needs to be some significant integration works undertaken between S&B and NSL Apply which is currently unbudgeted.
- 5.7 NSL Apply is the Council's online system for permits in the residents parking zone and season tickets within our surface car park sites. With the removal of S&B equipment the proposal would be to just extend NSL Apply as the solution for multi storey car park season tickets. This would negate the requirement for an interface between systems as there would be no need to consider ANPR and barrier integration. All permits and season tickets are administered via the individual themselves including their online payment arrangements.
- 5.8 With the switch of equipment to NSL Apply, it could be used for staff parking. It would allow staff parking season tickets to be purchased by the day (rather than the previous system which could only work on an annual basis). This is essential if staff are only

spending a day or two a week in the office as part of any new ways of working. The requirement would be for individual staff members to administer their own parking permits for High Street car park, similar as residents do within the Residents Parking Zone. This removes all the interface with HR and Payroll.

- 5.9 The proposed arrangement for staff permits could be expanded to any organisation that wishes to use some form of season tickets (other partners in Time Square for example).
- 5.10 NSL Apply links to the existing enforcement software and handheld devices used by the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO), the intention being that the new IPS equipment would link in the same way. Once a customer has parked and entered their vehicle registration details and paid for their stay their parking effectively links to the handheld system. A CEO is able to patrol the car parks and scan their handheld across the numberplate of a vehicle as they are walking past. Any vehicle that hasn't paid will be flagged up. Currently with the system as it is a 'pay on exit' approach the CEOs can enforce against 'out of bay' and 'inappropriate use of a disabled bay'. With the move to pay by plate they will be able to enforce for non-payment of a ticket (albeit virtual). There will be a requirement to change the Traffic Regulation Order as such.
- 5.11 There is no evidence to suggest that making a payment in advance for a stay as opposed to on exit reduces the amount of time that people stay for. In the event that customers need to add 'extra' they can return to top up if needed or can add extra time remotely via the PaybyPhone app.
- 5.12 There are some challenges that would need to be worked through as part of the project implementation. Most notably with the management of customer expectations, the switch out process and the change of equipment and getting used to it will bring. Timing will be crucial to ensure that any installation is at a 'quieter' time of year and there is plenty of time to embed before any busier times or key event dates. The lead in time for the purchase of the equipment is around 2 months and installation time around 2 weeks. NSL will be able to support the Council with all these challenges. In reality and from a customer perspective they will notice very little difference as the Variable Messaging System, visible at entry points to the town, will remain with some adjustments to the data feed and software. Parking tariff payments through the Lexicon App would no longer function for Council sites, although the Lexicon may wish to continue with their app usage for Princes Square.
- 5.13 Smaller more operational matters need to be considered, we have two parking validator units in Fenwicks and Bracknell & Wokingham College which link to S&B and they would need to be replaced/exchanged.
- 5.14 There may be some sale value to the old S&B equipment which will be explored as part of the project.

## **6. Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

- 6.1 The proposal to replace existing Scheidt & Bachmann equipment with an alternative solution from International Parking Solutions through variation of the S&B parking centre equipment contract is considered to be compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

This is because the increase in price of the contract (taking account of the existing

variation to procure town centre Covid marshals) would not exceed 50 per cent of the value of the original contract. There is also evidence that without varying the contract in this manner this would result in significant inconvenience and duplication of costs meaning that Regulation 72 (1) (b) of the PCR 2015 can be relied upon.

#### Financial Advice

- 6.2 Based on the information provided the scheme qualifies as an Invest-to-Save scheme and would represent the first call on the £1m 2021/22 budget that Council agreed in March 2021

#### Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 A discussion on the proposal took place with the Lexicon partners on 08-06-21 and Scheidt & Bachmann on 09-06-21 and 17-06-21

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 This will improve the options available for residents and visitors through the use of a national parking payment app and enhanced permit options.

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 As with any change there is a risk in relation to implementation. This project is seen as providing a smoother journey through the Council controlled town centre car parks with an enhanced system and a national parking payment application being introduced. NSL, who will be responsible for the implementation along with the Council's parking team have a record of excellent project delivery and as such the strategic risk is small.

#### Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to:

Reduce vehicle emissions due to the smoother flow of traffic through the car parks, particularly at the entrance / exit barriers where a reduction of vehicle idling time is expected. As such the project should reduce vehicle emissions. Additionally, the Civil Enforcement Officers will be less exposed to exhaust fumes than currently particularly as they often have to intervene at the barriers.

#### Background Papers

None.

#### Contact for further information

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