

To: **Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee**
21 March 2022

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

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To appraise Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee (BTCRC) of the outcome of the independent parking review report commissioned by BFC and to update on next steps.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To agree to retaining the S&B infrastructure for the remaining lifespan of the equipment.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 There are pros and cons in relation to switching out the existing car parking technology. Whilst the pros are easily quantifiable (cost saving, improvements in app technology etc.) the cons are less structured. The impact on the customer experience, particularly in the Avenue car park, is significant and is a potential risk. As such it is recommended that the switch is not made at this time.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 No further proposals considered at this time.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 In order to provide service improvements and savings options during July 2021 a proposal was brought forward to switch out the existing S&B pay on exit parking infrastructure and replace with IPS pay in advance equipment. The key benefits being a potential improved customer experience and financial savings.
- 5.2 This proposal met with some resistance from partners who had concerns that the change in equipment would in fact create a negative customer experience and reduce shopper dwell time in the town centre. A report was commissioned a report from a chartered surveyor consultant which was submitted to BFC in August 2021.
- 5.3 At this point the Council took the decision to place the project on hold, to pause and reflect and to commission our own independent report. The Council did not want to progress with a change that would not deliver benefits and/or create more problems. In order to be completely transparent, BFC utilised the services of Park Consult. A consultant that the Council hadn't worked with previously and one who was affiliated to the British Parking Association. The brief was very simple, to consider the proposals for remaining with S&B or switching to IPS and provide recommendations

based on the assessment of information and previous experience as to which would best suit the needs of all parties.

- 5.4 The report was received in January 2022 and is attached as confidential Appendix 1.
- 5.5 It provides recommendations as to next steps. Whilst not progressing with a switch out of the infrastructure there are still options that can be pursued which will allow a review of capability five years since the equipment was installed and halfway through its operational life span. The main recommendation being that a working group is established with Council Officers, NSL (Council parking contractors), the Lexicon and S&B (equipment providers). There is a need to reengage, reassess the infrastructure, and work with what the Council has to make improvements, at all times a positive customer experience remains key. The working group will focus on issues such as maintenance cover and first line response to equipment, options for banking transaction fees, cashless app options etc. The intention is to ask Park Consult to assist with this process.
- 5.6 The Council are five years post implementation and the timing to undertake such a review is timely and appropriate. The expectation is that potential savings could still be realised from a reduction in maintenance contracts and a review of banking transaction charges. Any significant changes will be considered by the Bracknell town Centre Regeneration Committee and /or the Executive
- 5.5 To summarise the pertinent points of the report:
- Remaining with S&B leaves the Council with a set of operational 'niggles' that we are familiar with and will continue to manage. Moving to IPS will bring another set of 'niggles'. The scale of which is unknown. No system is perfect.
 - There are more cons and unknowns than pros and therefore the risk of change is too great, given the potential scrutiny from the partners and potential damage to relationships.
 - Removal of the barriers at the Avenue may alleviate the queuing on the highway and in theory cars can move more quickly in and out of the car park but it can also be more chaotic inside and create greater congestion and disruption internally. Removing barriers potentially enables motorists to stay and leave without payment and therefore greater enforcement is required which could be viewed negatively by customers. Retaining the barriers can also be seen as providing a more secure site.
 - A decision will need to be made with regards to the Lexicon app. Further exploration is needed by the new group to see whether alternative solutions are possible. It should be noted that most of the national providers are linked to pay in advance systems. Certainly, the question of further investment into the Lexicon App should be considered.
 - Traffic management issues at the Avenue are due to parking demand at peak times and site design issues rather than suitability of the existing equipment. There is an imbalance in parking demand across the town centre and at peak times there needs to be a way of spreading demand across all Council car parks.
- 5.6 Remaining with S&B will also mean that season tickets for High Street and Braccan Walk will need to remain being processed manually. Staff parking arrangements will

also remain with the process being managed by HR/Payroll and vehicle details linked to ANPR as currently. No options are available for daily charging for staff parking.

- 5.7 Planned developments within the town will also have an impact on supply and demand. This needs to fit into a longer-term town centre development parking strategy and climate change strategy which will require consideration following on but outside the scope of this particular project element.

Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There is a potential of a future savings from this report but additional work into the equipment maintenance level required and reduced banking charges is needed before this can be incorporated into the Car Parking budget.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 No change to service.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 The risk of relationship damage with partners could impact on ongoing negotiations linked to the town centre. Choosing to remain with the existing equipment and work more closely with partners will reduce that risk.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 No impact with current proposal but future work will include a focus on climate change and any options to reduce the impact will be considered as they are bought forward.

Contact for further information

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