

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24 July 2019
<b>Executive Member / Reporting Officer:</b>	Cllr Warren Bray, Executive Member for Transport and Connectivity Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operations & Neighbourhoods
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF PARKING IN ASHTON TOWN CENTRE</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	<p>Following the introduction of the Cashless Parking System in Ashton Town Centre, and in accordance with the approval by Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel (9 October 2017), a review of the scheme has been undertaken and an emergency decision was made to suspend the scheme until a revised report could be submitted.</p> <p>This report looks at the options available to the Council in relation to traffic regulation orders in Ashton town centre.</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Cashless Parking Scheme be withdrawn from 'on-street' and an advertisement for the revocation of the associated traffic regulation order be published.</li> <li>2. Replace the scheme with one hour free parking and no return within two hours (Option 3), and advertise the associated traffic regulation order.</li> <li>3. Complete the installation of bollards within the town centre as a measure of security and to introduce the operation of these bollards after a communications exercise with local councillors and businesses.</li> </ol>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	This scheme aims to support economic growth and provide a safe environment for the general public in Ashton Town Centre.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	This proposal supports the Council's policies to develop economic growth and deliver a thriving retail offer in town centres by providing the necessary transport infrastructure, including the availability of affordable and accessible car parking arrangements.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	<p>If the proposals to reinstate the original scheme (Option 3) are implemented, there will be minimal further costs to be incurred relating to the fixing of the signs which will be funded through existing revenue budgets. The costs that have already been incurred relating to the Cashless Parking Scheme will not be recovered but these have already been reported in the 18/19 accounts.</p> <p>For the completion of the installation of the bollards in Ashton Town Centre, there are minimal remaining costs and these will be funded through existing revenue budgets.</p> <p>There will be no additional enforcement costs relating to this option as it will be covered within the existing contract.</p>
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	<p>The council's constitution has delegated authority to determine all highway matters of a strategic matter where there are objections received during the public consultation process.</p> <p>There is a clear rationale for doing something, however, given the</p>

reputational damage to date on this matter there needs to be a clear timetable for consultation and communication with the public. Parking is an issue where everyone has a view on a solution but it can be challenging and difficult to achieve consensus.

Members should have regard to the Council's statutory duty under S122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which is set out in **Appendix** .

**Risk Management:**

If the proposals to replace the scheme with a free hour of parking and remove the cashless scheme are approved, objectors to the new scheme have a limited right to challenge the Traffic Regulation Orders in the High Court.

**Access to Information:**

<b>APPENDIX A</b>	Table of Parking Activity in Ashton
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	Section 122 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report author Alan Jackson, Head of Highways and Transport



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A report was submitted to the Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel in 9 October 2017, which reported the objections received to a scheme to introduce Cashless Parking in 140 on-street bays in Ashton Town Centre. In the scheme, customers would use a mobile phone to register their parking requirements and pay via the App.
- 1.2 The Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel supported the introduction of the scheme with recommendations to review the scheme on a 6, 12 and 18 month basis.
- 1.3 The scheme was introduced on 1 November 2018 with a 'soft introduction' where drivers were not issued with a penalty charge notice when offending and notices were put up to inform them of the parking duration and methods of payment. The scheme came in to full operation on the 19 November 2018.
- 1.4 The income raised by the scheme was also meant to be used to fund the introduction of bollards in the town centre to offer a safer area for pedestrians to shop. The cost of these bollards has already been funded from existing revenue budgets and the final installation work is ongoing.
- 1.5 Following a series of negative comments from both residents and the business community, a decision to suspend the operation was made and came into effect at 2.00pm on 7 January 2019.
- 1.6 As a result of this suspension of cashless on-street parking, there is unregulated parking taking place at these locations and this current situation must be addressed.
- 1.7 Following correspondence from the town team outlining the damage the current model is imposing on businesses in the town centre and their preferred option to go back to a limited time parking scheme. The Council is currently suffering reputational damage as a result of the existing model and it is therefore not sustainable.
- 1.8 This report is a focused piece of work on the current parking in Ashton Town Centre and will be followed by a borough wide review.
- 1.9 The options available to the Council to remedy the issues are explored below.

## 2. OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are four options available to the Council;

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Option 1</b> | Reinstate the cashless parking system as originally designed.   |
| <b>Option 2</b> | Remove the cashless parking system and continue with unregulated parking.   |
| <b>Option 3</b> | Remove the cashless parking system and return to the free limited waiting parking (one hour, no return in two hours). |
| <b>Option 4</b> | Introduce Pay and Display machines on-street and retain the cashless system as a means of payment.                    |

This will enable any method of payment to be taken and the pricing regime to be maintained. If this is introduced it will necessitate drivers to use the machine unless it is to park for a free half hour session. Enforcement officers will need to carry out observations to check that drivers are adhering

to the single free half hour sessions. Only one session per street would be allowed within the allotted no return time period of three hours.

2.2 For all of the options, the recommendation is to complete the installation of bollards within the town centre as a measure of security and to introduce the operation of these bollards after a communications exercise with local councillors and businesses.

2.3 The table below summarises the issues both for and against each option and associated risks and financial implications.

**Table 1 - Options Appraisal**

	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Costs</b>
<b>Option 1 - Reinstate Scheme</b>	It can be re-introduced quickly.  Income to support safety measures.	Unpopular with residents and businesses.	Reputational risks.	Costs already incurred. There will be some minimal costs for re-fixing the signs.
<b>Option 2 - Remove Scheme</b>	Currently in operation.  Provision of free parking.	Free parking could be used all day – preventing a turnover of shoppers.  Loss of potential income.	Unpopular – all day free parking does not provide turnover for businesses	Costs already incurred will not be recovered.
<b>Option 3 - Remove Scheme &amp; Introduce Limited Waiting</b>	The public would welcome this option.	Removes the idea of paid parking on-street.	Potential for objections to scheme.	Costs already incurred will not be recovered. There will be minimal costs for the fixing of signage but this would be funded through existing revenue budgets.
<b>Option 4 - Reinstate Scheme &amp; Introduce Payment Machines</b>	It would only require machines to be introduced.  Income to support safety measures.	Cost of the machines, and difficulties locating machines on footways due to footway width.  The unpopular scheme would still be continued.	Damage to machines on-street.  Increased potential for personal attack to officers when emptying the machine cash boxes.	£162,000 initial set up costs or approx. 7.3 years to repay – see Table 3 in Section 3 below.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS – COSTS AND INCOME OF THE SCHEME

3.1 The changes to the original tariff were supported in the report to Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel. The report indicated that the scheme would pay for itself within the first year, however the scheme would run at a loss if the vast majority of drivers made use of the first free half hour only.

- 3.2 The costs that have been incurred in introducing and running the scheme are in Table 2 below, together with the associated income that was received while the scheme was in operation.
- 3.3 The income figures from the scheme cover the period between 1 November 2018 to 7 January 2019. These indicate that there were three times as many people parking for free than paying for parking in the first 37 days of the scheme being on-street, with full details of the schemes operation included in **Appendix 1**.

**Table 2 – Scheme Expenditure Costs and Actual Income  
(Income split into time periods/costs of parking)**

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>Item</b>			<b>Cost</b>		
Signs + Posts + Lining			£28,486		
Handheld machines			£460		
Publicity (photocopies)			£30		
Training			£200		
Removal of signs			£180		
Traffic Regulation Orders			£2000		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b>£31,356</b>		
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>Period</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Number of sessions booked</b>	<b>Parking Fee</b>	<b>Actual Net Income*</b>	<b>Projected Annual Income (if parking levels stay the same)</b>
Up to 30 mins	£0.00	4798	£0.00	-\$575.76	-\$4,191.00
Up to 60 mins	£1.00	1502	£1,502.00	£1,321.76	£9,621.18
Up to 120 mins	£2.00	1216	£2,432.00	£2,286.08	£16,640.54
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7516</b>	<b>£3,934.00</b>	<b>£3,032.08</b>	<b>£22,070.72</b>
<b>Net Cost To Date (total expenditure less actual income)</b>				<b>£28,323.92</b>	

\* There are transaction charges for each use of the app. For 30 minute parking slots which are free to the driver, a 12p transaction cost is incurred by the Council.

- 3.4 The scheme therefore has a current net cost of £28,323.92 at this point, but would be expected to return an annual income of approximately £22,000 if continued as per Option 1.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS – COSTS OF THE OTHER OPTIONS**

##### **Options 2 and 3 (Removal of the scheme)**

- 4.1 If there was a return to the previous free parking system, the scheme would have a net cost of £28,323.92 with no chance of any further financial recovery.

##### **Option 4**

- 4.2 Table 3 below contains the repayment details if the Pay and Display machines are introduced on-street with the existing payment regime.

**Table 3 – Repayment period for cash machines**

	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Initial Set Up Costs</b>		
Pay & Display Machines x 28	£5,000	£140,000
Traffic Regulation Order	£2,000	£2,000
Operational Costs		£20,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£162,000</b>
<b>Annual Costs (not incurred in 1<sup>st</sup> Year)</b>		
Maintenance / Replacement (20%)		£28,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£28,000</b>
<b>Projected Annual Income (based on current income figures)</b>		<b>Income</b>
Up to 30 mins		-£4,191.00
Up to 60 mins (at £1.00)		£9,621.18
Up to 120 mins (at £2.00)		£16,640.54
<b>Total</b>		<b>£22,070.72</b>
<b>Repayment period in years</b>		<b>7.3 years</b>

4.3 The period of repayment for introducing cash machines (i.e. 7.3 years) makes the scheme cost prohibitive and it is not proposed to take this option forward. The cost of annual maintenance would not be partially offset during the repayment period and after that, when assessed against the projected annual income, would result in an annual net cost for this scheme.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS / PREFERRED OPTION**

5.1 As part of the initial support for the scheme, the Panel asked for the scheme to be reviewed at 6, 12 and 18 month periods which indicated the willingness to provide the most appropriate solution for parking options in Ashton and this is why this report has been brought forward.

5.2 Option 3 is the preferred option due to the level of complaints received against the scheme. This option proposes the reinstatement of the one hour free parking (with no return in two hours) and no necessity for the App based system.

5.3 This option also proposes to complete the installation of bollards within the town centre as a measure of security and to introduce the operation of these bollards after a communications exercise with local councillors and businesses.

## **6.0 FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

- 6.1 Whilst there is a national trend towards cashless purchases, it is worth future consideration whether to have the cashless option alongside current payment methods via cash machines on the pay and display car parks throughout the borough.
- 6.2 This will be considered alongside various options in a further report regarding a borough wide review of Council car parks following appropriate consultation.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 As set out at the front of the report.

# APPENDIX A - Heat Map of Parking Activity in Ashton

Date	Hour of Day														Grand Total	
Hour	0	1	5	6	7	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Grand Total
<b>2018</b>																
19-Nov						5	14	13	18	9	17	11	13	4	2	106
20-Nov						9	8	12	16	11	6	10	14	9	7	102
21-Nov					2	8	14	5	11	10	13	12	13	9	4	101
22-Nov					1	5	14	14	11	9	23	9	10	14	6	116
23-Nov					2	6	17	18	17	20	16	16	18	13	4	147
24-Nov					1	4	18	18	21	26	18	21	14	13	4	158
26-Nov					2	11	26	21	21	18	12	19	17	19	11	177
27-Nov		1			2	10	17	19	26	17	15	13	15	9	4	148
28-Nov		1			1	7	15	9	15	16	16	21	14	14	4	133
29-Nov					2	11	18	18	17	13	23	15	19	10	10	156
30-Nov					2	11	15	21	20	20	18	18	16	12	4	157
01-Dec						5	18	19	17	24	18	13	11	6	4	135
03-Dec						6	9	11	13	19	17	11	19	11	7	123
04-Dec						7	8	17	18	22	17	9	18	15	5	136
05-Dec					1	10	12	16	17	23	20	16	14	13	11	153
06-Dec				1	1	5	21	18	17	11	15	21	11	10	7	138
07-Dec						7	19	24	27	13	19	15	17	19	6	166
08-Dec				1		4	13	24	27	17	21	19	14	13	1	154
10-Dec					3	10	27	17	20	26	24	15	13	16	8	179
11-Dec				1	1	18	29	22	29	23	24	23	20	20	17	227
12-Dec					1	9	16	30	35	22	45	29	18	17	13	235
13-Dec					2	10	17	22	33	30	29	26	33	21	11	234
14-Dec					1	16	26	19	34	25	42	25	25	21	13	247
15-Dec		1			2	4	25	23	31	21	29	21	16	5	2	180
17-Dec					2	12	37	27	33	30	35	17	16	14	12	235
18-Dec					1	15	24	31	28	35	24	26	23	18	10	235
19-Dec					1	14	27	34	27	39	34	21	25	23	10	255
20-Dec					2	17	32	36	44	25	30	21	27	15	14	263
21-Dec					5	13	35	39	41	38	48	42	45	23	9	338
22-Dec				1	3	9	29	33	30	31	31	34	19	17	5	242
24-Dec					2	10	28	36	38	34	30	19	7	4		208
25-Dec								1	1	1			1			4
26-Dec						1	3	3	9	5	4	9	1		1	36
27-Dec					1	7	10	11	13	18	25	28	12	8	3	136
28-Dec						7	16	16	27	22	32	25	14	7	4	170
29-Dec						12	16	19	23	21	30	23	18	9	4	175
31-Dec					1	7	17	24	38	35	29	27	20	4	3	205
<b>2019</b>																
01-Jan										1	1	3		1	1	7
02-Jan		1			2	5	18	24	31	31	24	32	25	14	12	219
03-Jan					4	6	18	26	39	35	36	23	29	16	16	248
04-Jan		1		1	1	11	26	25	50	34	43	28	41	17	6	284
05-Jan	1				6	20	40	43	42	35	36	23	9	7		262
07-Jan					4	11	31	19	39	35	28	8	6	3	2	186
<b>Grand Total</b>	1	3	1	7	56	361	803	874	1065	957	1016	830	744	515	284	<b>7516</b>





# APPENDIX B

## Section 122 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

- (1) It shall be the duty of every local authority upon whom functions are conferred by or under this Act, so to exercise the functions conferred on them by this Act as (so far as practicable having regard to the matters specified in sub-section (2) below) to secure the expeditious convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.
- (2) The matters referred to in sub-section (1) above, as being specified in this sub-section are:
  - (a) The desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;
  - (b) The effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run;
  - (c) The strategy prepared under Section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (national air quality strategy);
  - (d) The importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles; and
  - (e) Any other matters appearing to ...the local authority.... to be relevant.