CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Executive   **28 November, 2019**

Report of the Corporate Director for Economy and Place

Portfolio of the Executive Member for Transport and Planning

Parking Update

Summary

1.   Parking provision and management is a key element in the delivery of the Council's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality and enhance residents, businesses and visitors experience and wellbeing by providing a future proof, fluid and efficient transport network.

2.   The historic nature of the geography of York, with narrow terraced streets in the City Centre, presents challenges in terms of managing passage along the highway and it is vital in achieving the desired outcomes to ensure that policy acts as enabler to allow the City to grow and for residents, businesses and visitors to thrive.

3.   This report reflects on the recommendations of the Resident Parking Scrutiny Review Task Group of the 5th March, 2019 (see Annex A).

4.   Advances in technology present new opportunities in terms of parking and kerbside management. Online services and virtualisation can provide a better customer experience and much greater efficiency and allow services to focus on customers with the greatest need. This report explores these opportunities and seeks Executive approval to implement these where possible

Recommendations

5.   Executive are asked to:

   i)   Note the progress of streamlining the process of extension of existing residents parking zones

   Reason: to speed the process of implementation residents' parking schemes in line with the scrutiny reports recommendations

   ii)   To request officers implement options to allow residents to either purchase shorter term permits or develop pay-monthly options.

   Reason: to help customers to spread the costs of permits in line with the scrutiny reports recommendations.

   iii)   Note the progress of recruiting additional staff to process applications for new residents parking zones.

   Reason: to speed the process of implementation of residents parking schemes in line with the scrutiny review recommendations.

   iv)   To note the procurement of a new parking system that will introduce online self-service for customers to become the principle channel for online application and payment for parking permits and visitor vouchers, same day online payment for parking tickets, and to automate the requirement for evidence.

   Reason: to improve the customer experience in line with the scrutiny review recommendations.

   v)   Executive are asked to approve the council implementing paperless virtual parking permits starting with resident parking permits, season tickets and visitor permits and rolling out across all permits in time. This will be supported by a compliant checking system to allow residents to see if a vehicle is authorised to park in a resident parking zone. Each implementation will be subject to a separate decision session of the Executive Member.

Reason: to improve efficiency of the parking service in line with the scrutiny review recommendations.

vi)   Executive are asked to approve a move towards cashless parking by agreeing to:

   A. The roll out of the Pay By App/Phone Service to on street parking machines to allow customers to pay for their parking by phone.

   B. In line with corporate policy agree that cash will no longer be accepted in council offices for parking permits and all penalty charge notice (PCN) cash payments to be made through an external service, the same service operates for Council Tax and the resident does not pay more for this service.

   C. To agree to the pilot of providing a cashless system in Marygate car park, given most people now use card. This will be subject to the integration of permits (e.g. Minster Badge and Season tickets) into the Pay on Exit technology.

   D. To report back to the Executive Member for Transport in a year's time with a view to rolling out cashless parking across the parking estate.

Reason: To positively respond to the March 2019 parking scrutiny report and its recommendations around efficiency.

Background:

41. The Council has agreed to move to carbon neutrality by 2030. A significant element of the city's carbon footprint is transport and the movement of vehicles around York.

42. Implementation of physical measures, such as the Clean Air Zone for buses, and technology, through the Smart Transport Evolution Project (STEP) and the Hyperhubs Electric Vehicle charging project

are helping make strides. Alongside this sits the authority's approach to parking and kerbside management and how these are managed.

43. The Economy and Place Policy Scrutiny Committee undertook a review into York's Residents' Parking Priority Scheme. The objectives of the review were

- To examine different or simplified processes that can be used, e.g. the use of new technology;
- To consider the size and extent of York's ResPark zones and whether there would be value in increasing the size of some zones;
- To investigate best practice and different resident parking models in use elsewhere.

44. This report is a response to the scrutiny recommendations seeking Executive approval to progress options for implementing changes.

45. The recommendations in this report will help to address the issues identified by the scrutiny panel. Please see scrutiny report attached at Annex A for further background to this report.

46. The replacement of the back office IT system used by parking officers gives significant opportunity to enhance the recommendation of the scrutiny review to create a more connected and online self-service solution for parking customers.

47. It is also worth highlighting the partnership with other Local Authorities, assisted by the British Parking Association and the development of the Positive Parking Agenda (PPA).

48. The PPA is a national initiative to push a positive view of parking by delivering a consistent approach to parking management across the UK. This work undertaken by Scrutiny and the recommendations contained with the report will contribute towards improve the parking experience and deliver a better service.

49. The review made 7 recommendations which are as follows:

i. Reviews the current pattern of ResPark zones with a view to rationalising them and identifying the most logical extensions into surrounding streets that suffer from non-resident parking;

ii. Rationalises parking permits so there is more standardisation on permit length (i.e. the current 3, 6 and 12 month permits) by offering a choice of annual or monthly permits.

iii. Seeks to ensure residents' petitions for new zones are investigated and (if agreed) implemented as soon as possible, aiming for within a year.

iv. Introduces an online self-service for customers to encourage online application and payment for parking permits and visitor vouchers, same day online payment for parking tickets, and to automate the requirement for evidence;

v. Investigates the transition to a system of virtual permits, initially within a trial zone, to eliminate the need for paper permits through Automatic Number Plate Recognition and better links to DVLA to help enforcement;

vi. Investigates digital options once virtual permits are in operation that will enable residents to check a registration number so if a vehicle is illegally parked the information is electronically passed to enforcement officers.

vii. Examines the implications of allowing residents of new properties within existing ResPark zones to purchase a limited number of visitor vouchers.

Analysis

50. **Scrutiny Review Recommendation i**
Reviews the current pattern of ResPark zones with a view to rationalising them and identifying the most logical extensions into surrounding streets that suffer from non-resident parking;
In response at the Executive Member Decision Session on the 19th September a number of decisions were made to streamline the extension of residents parking. Three different approaches were used:
   - it was agreed in that reviewing the petitions received for residents parking zones that discretion be applied to consult

larger areas than had petitioned, although the responses would be considered separately
- Combining consultation where appropriate
- Extending Existing Zones rather than creating new zones.

51. To date no work has been undertaken to rationalise existing zones, it is suggested that rather than a top down approach any rationalisation of existing to in effect merge them into a single zone is considered in a bottom up approach. If this was to be considered a pilot would need to be undertaken and the process by which residents were consulted upon the approach would need to be agreed.

52. **Scrutiny Review Recommendation ii**
Rationalises parking permits so there is more standardisation on permit length (i.e. the current 3, 6 and 12 month permits) by offering annual or monthly permits.
This reflects some of the customer issues around the varying lengths of time some permits validty. Customers are keen to find ways to spread the cost of a permit. Options exist to explore pay monthly options either through shorter permit lengths such as a monthly permit, or direct debit options. Both of these need work to develop so it is suggested to delegate to the Assistant Director of Transport Highways and Environment the agreement of how this will be implemented. Subject to other recommendations the new parking system would automate the administration of this making it much simpler for the council and residents such as automated reminders when a permit is expiring.

53. **Scrutiny Review Recommendation iii**
Seeks to ensure residents' petitions for new zones are investigated and (if agreed) implemented as soon as possible, aiming for within a year.
Through the Supplementary Budget proposals additional resource has been agreed to recruit additional staff into the Transport Team to work on the residents parking projects. The recruitment of the additional staff is now in progress.

54. **Scrutiny Review Recommendation iv**
Introduces an online self-service for customers to encourage online application and payment for parking permits and visitor

vouchers, same day online payment for parking tickets, and to automate the requirement for evidence;
Officers from across the council have come together to specify a new parking back office system. One of the key parts of the specification of this was a much improved customer experience. This is in line with the Local Digital Declaration that York has agreed in order to deliver service transformation through the use of technology.

55. The new parking back office system will provide significantly improved functionality for customers online, in turn providing more clarity and transparency. This is in line with the national Positive Parking Agenda to ensure consistency and a more positive experience with parking.

56. This dovetails with the corporate customer strategy to shift modes of engagement with Council from face to face to online, and is consistent with the majority of customers' desire to perform online transactions. 50% of interactions in the Customer centre at West Offices are Parking services related. The online functionality along with the corporate push for cashless transactions will mean a significant reduction (38% approx.) in footfall in the customer centre.

57. **Scrutiny Review Recommendation v.**
Investigates the transition to a system of virtual permits, initially within a trial zone, to eliminate the need for paper permits through Automatic Number Plate Recognition and better links to DVLA to help enforcement;
In the same way that vehicle excise duty has become paperless and is linked to a number plate, it is proposed that residents parking does the same. The Scrutiny Committee heard from other authorities that this transfer had been undertaken successfully through Virtual Permit Projects. This will see the significant reduction and the elimination of paper including paper based permits. Virtual permits are seen as a significant benefit of the project where Members are asked to support the system roll in line with the implementation of the new system later next year. An example list of some of the Councils that use virtual permits is attached at Annex B

58. For clarity it is not proposed to use static Automatic Number Plate Recognition for enforcement. A Civil Enforcement Officer will still

issue all tickets and be able to use a hand held device to check vehicle authorisation.

59. A trial zone is not really practical as the investment in the infrastructure to make this happen means that a city wide approach needs to be adopted. It is recognised that some permits will be easier than others. It is therefore recommended we start with those that are easier to roll out and provide the most benefit to customers. This includes:-
   - All resident parking permits
   - Car park season tickets
   - HMO permits

60. Subject to the success of the roll out other permits will be made virtual in due course.

61. The current policy of the Council is that the first parking permit is not registration number specific. If members wish to maintain that policy there are options for technology to allow residents to switch which vehicle has the permit.

62. Scrutiny Review Recommendation vi.
Investigates digital options once virtual permits are in operation that will enable residents to check a registration number so if a vehicle is illegally parked the information is electronically passed to enforcement officers.
One of the challenges of moving to virtual permits is that through the elimination of paper based permits residents will not be able to see if a vehicle is legally parked. Should a decision be made to develop virtual permits we will work with our supplier to develop a replacement for the parking hotline so that a registration number can be reported electronically along with its location and if it is parked illegally it will be passed to the enforcement team.

63. Annex B show some Local Authorities who currently operate virtual permits.

64. The Council will only launch a virtual permit once a workable solution for those without access to IT has been developed.

65. The Council has a focus through its digital work to address the digital divide and in designing this service will ensure those that do

not have access to IT or may lack the skills needed in to transact online are accommodated.

66. **Scrutiny Review Recommendation vii.**
Examines the implications of allowing residents of new properties within existing ResPark zones to purchase a limited number of visitor vouchers.
The current policy position is designed so that new developments within existing residents parking schemes do not add to the parking pressure in the existing zone by preventing the occupiers of new developments from buying residents parking permits or visitor vouchers. Those permitted can purchase a maximum of 6 books per calendar month and 40 books in a year. The request is to consider allowing those occupiers of new developments a limited number of permits for instance to facilitate a plumber. It is recommended that this is considered as part of the parking strategy review to be developed as part of the next review of the Local Transport Plan.

Further Development and Next Steps

67. A parking strategy will emerge as part of the next review of the Local Transport Plan which will have a significant consultation plan. This will lay out the parking management policy and forward look for York where parking needs to be in the future with recognition of the part parking plays in vehicle emissions, congestion and benefits to the local economy.

68. However, through the specification of a new IT system three additional options have emerged which officers would like to start to adopt around the method of payment.

69. The Council has trialled a pay by phone service covering Toft Green parking bays. Parking officers has received a number of comments both written and verbally about their desire to see the service rolled out to all on-street locations. In addition the Toft Green trial saw a revenue increase of about 15% on previous years. This will require a review of the current contract arrangements and would be supported by a communications exercise to promote this and how to use the system.

70. The current corporate policy is to go cashless in council offices. This particular recommendation asks Members to agree that all

parking permits will go cashless and all PCN cash payments, that we legally have to cater for, could follow the council tax solution of customers using the Paypoint service. In addition officers would work to look at options such as invoice to phone technology.

71. Officers are working with York Business Improvement District on a project to turn Piccadilly Car Park into a pay on exit car park before investigating rolling this technology out to other car parks. One of the challenges around car park operation is coin payments are expensive to collect and the machinery needs regular payment.

72. Data shows most payments are now taken by card with cash falling further behind, where off-street car park income was:

	Transactions	Income
Cash	43%	31%
Card	34%	42%
Phone	23%	27%

73. This shows that 57% of payments are cashless across the car parks equating to 69% of income. There is a strong trend downwards of cash payments where non cash payment in 2014/15 were only 24% (33% of income). Furthermore this is supported by observations from retailers through York BID where they report cashless payments far outweighing cash. In turn this will eventually save the council significant money in cash collection services as well as breakdowns of these machines due to the mechanisms for cash getting frequently jammed by coins and paper money. In addition the council has had a number of parking machines stolen or damaged to steal the cash inside of them. By going cashless this should significantly reduce or eliminate the risk of thefts and damage by going cashless where the costs per machine are circa £5k. The car park with the largest proportion of card payments is Marygate where only 30% of transactions are made in cash. It is therefore proposed to trial a pilot for a cashless offer at Marygate Car Park.

74. It has been identified through the operation of Marygate Car Park that issues have arisen in terms of the use of the Pay on Exit technology and it's compatibility with the Minster badge and other permits, such as the season ticket permit. Resolution of these issues will be implemented through the improvements to Pay on Exit at Marygate and the proposed Pay on Exit at Piccadilly as well

as through the permit approach in the new ICT system and integration of the systems.

75. Following the implementation of the new parking system, some working processes could change and will provide further opportunities to look at the way we work and operate. These changes are based on current processes in Parking Services and the supporting services that in turn will inform the new systems configuration.

Council Plan

76. This report is supportive of the following priorities in the 2019/23 Council plan:
    - getting around sustainably
    - an open and effective council

Implications

77. The following are the identified implications.

    Financial – There are no specific direct financial implications to the report. The proposed approach will lead to back office efficiencies. There are costs involved in dealing with cash transactions and the move to cashless parking would enable a saving to be made. This would ultimately need to be across the whole parking operations.
    - **Human Resources** – The new parking system will create an online self-service system that will lead to efficiencies and freeing up of back office staff to be able to focus on other work. This will include if virtual permits are agreed that will see a reduction in administration and posting out of paper based parking permits.

    - **Equalities** – In moving services online, we will ensure those who are digitally deprived are supported and still have access to services through options such as West Offices and York Explore.

    - **Legal** – Some of the recommendations may require changes in the traffic regulation orders.

- **Crime and Disorder** - None

- **Information Technology (IT)** – A new ICT system for parking covering penalty charge notices and permits will be rolled out later next year, following the recent awarding of this contract. This will be both for customers and officers to use.

- **Property** - None

- **Risk Management** – Given the move to develop an online self-service system for parking customers covering parking permits and penalty charge notices there will be a cultural shift that most customers will welcome but may disadvantaged those without their on IT facilities or skills leading to digital exclusion. A communications plan is being develop to not only inform people how to use this system but address the other issues such as digital exclusion and making use of services such as those at York Explore and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Business continuity has been integral in the development of the plans.
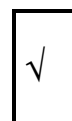
Contact Details

Author:	Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Dave Atkinson Head of Programmes and Smart Place	James Gilchrist Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment

Report Approved	√	**Date**	15/11/19

Wards Affected: All

Annexes

Annex A – Scrutiny Report to Executive
Annex B – List of Authorities using virtual permits