

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

28 July 2020

Northallerton High Street Parking

Report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Apprise The Executive of the findings of a review in response to a petition received from Northallerton BID Company Ltd requesting the extension of the current 30 minutes free parking on Northallerton High Street to 2 hours free parking; and
- 1.2 To seek approval for the further review of extending the free time period with in the Pay and Display Zone from 30 minutes to one hour on that part of High Street to the north of Friarage Street.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In February 2020 a petition was received from Northallerton BID Company Limited requesting the County Council reviews its existing on-street parking policies and extends the free parking allowance on High Street, Northallerton from its current duration of 30 minutes to a duration of 2 hours with immediate effect.
- 2.2 The petition was raised on the basis Northallerton BID believe the charging regime has failed to enable or encourage more people to park, has not improved traffic flows or been beneficial to the local economy as intended.
- 2.3 This petition follows the submission of a report on parking produced and submitted by Northallerton Bid Ltd in 2018, which sought the views of local retailers/business on parking and made some broad comparisons with other towns and cities in the country.
- 2.4 The specific section of High Street, Northallerton the petition concerns is that part between its roundabout junction with Thirsk Road / A167 at South Parade to the mini roundabout with Quaker Lane.
- 2.5 The petition submitted is in accordance with North Yorkshire County Council's 'Right to challenge parking policies – petition scheme'. The purpose of the petition scheme is to make it easy for local residents, businesses and other groups within the community to engage with local government and raise issues, confident that their voice will be heard.
- 2.6 The petition scheme was developed in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government Right to challenge parking policies, Traffic Management Act 2004: Network Management Duty Guidance (March 2015).
- 2.7 Minimum requirements for a valid petition:

- Where the issue relates to a single street or multiple streets then at least 20% of registered addresses within the affected area need to sign the petition.
- Where the issue relates to a whole village, town or district then at least 3% of the total population needs to sign the petition.
- All signatories, whether they are individuals, businesses or groups will be given equal weighting.

2.8 There are 203 registered businesses within the area the petition concerns (although 22 are vacant premises) of which the petition was signed by 114 of the businesses, representing over 56% of the total businesses, making it a valid petition to be considered through the due process.

3.0 The Petition

3.1 The primary focus of the petition concerns the extension of the current 30 minutes free parking to 2 hours to be commensurate with the parking offer in other nearby towns. To support this request, the petition challenges the effectiveness of the Pay and Display (P&D) operation since its introduction and raises a number of points about county council and national policy and legislative perspectives;

- *Duty to secure expeditious movement of traffic.*
- *Obligation to link parking strategies to local objectives which meet the best interests of road users, communities and businesses.*
- *Obligation to ensure local businesses have a recognised voice in the Council's exercise of its network management duty in relation to parking.*
- *Obligation to regularly review appropriateness of traffic orders.*

3.2 The petition also draws its own conclusions to the challenges it presents to the current arrangement;

- *The parking regime has failed to achieve its stated purpose of demand management to improve traffic flows to enable more people to park.*
- *The parking regime has failed to achieve its stated purpose of leading to the benefit of the local economy.*
- *The needs of the shops and businesses have not been adequately reflected in the parking strategy, and the council has not fulfilled this obligation.*
- *The strategy on Northallerton High Street is not consistent with orders along other high street in local towns.*
- *The council has a duty to keep its parking strategy under review and a review is urgently required as the council has failed in its own stated objective.*
- *The parking strategy needs to be urgently reviewed with the implementation of 2 hours free parking to be implemented immediately*

4.0 Parking Strategy

4.1 The county Council as Local Highway Authority is responsible for on-street parking only, with districts and the National Parks Authority being responsible for most off-street parking facilities. The County Council as LHA and Local Traffic Authority (LTA) has a number of statutory duties placed on it to manage its network.

4.2 Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 places a statutory duty on the County Council as Local Traffic Authority;

“It is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives:

- (a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority’s road network; and,
- (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.”

4.3 A major part of discharging that duty is having an effective and efficient on-street parking management strategy. The strategic approach to parking management is set out in the County Council’s Parking Strategy approved in 2011.

4.4 The main principle being drivers should be encouraged to firstly seek off street parking. This is done by making on-street parking more expensive and/or time limited, which is consistent with national best practice. Therefore, it must be developed in co-ordination with district councils off street parking provision. Any significant amendment to on-street parking must take in to consideration the impact it may have on off-street parking and how it may compromise that strategic approach.

5.0 Review

5.1 As set out above, the petition focuses chiefly on the performance of the P&D zone and the county council’s approach to parking policy. To provide a complete answer, the review has focused on performance data, strategy and policy with conclusions drawn based on the combined findings.

5.2 Performance Data

5.3 Pay and display (P&D) parking was introduced to High Street Northallerton in 2014 in response to traffic management and parking concerns raised by businesses and visitors. Prior to P&D a disc parking scheme operated allowing 2 hours with no return within 1 hour.

5.4 With limited parking enforcement, long term parking by business staff and others occurred on a regular basis resulting in reducing the turnover of spaces and drivers circulating the network as they looked for on-street parking opportunities adding to the traffic flow and congestion.

- 5.5 To resolve this, it was considered appropriate to introduce P&D to discourage long term use and better regulate parking combined with Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) operations.
- 5.6 To determine the performance of the P&D operation it is necessary to look at the statistical information available i.e.
- Transaction Data
 - Enforcement Data - Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued
 - Parking surveys
 - Traffic flows

5.7 P&D Machine Transaction Data

5.8 Understanding transaction data allows the county council to determine the performance of the P&D operation and which of the tariff bands is most utilised and if patronage has increased or decreased. Since the introduction of parking charges (at the time of writing this report) a total of 2,884,891 P&D transactions have been carried, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: P&D Machine Transaction Data			
Date	30 minutes free	1 hr – 80p	2 hrs - £1.60
2015 - 2016	401,685	87,077	88,351
2016 - 2017	412,012	85,167	88,317
2017 - 2018	434,144	86,128	92,206
2018 - 2019	397,370	78,664	89,003
2019 - 2020	384,978	74,347	85,442
Total	2,030,189	411,383	443,319
Annual Average	406,037	82,276	88,663

Table 2: Percentage of P&D Machine Transactions per Tariff Band			
Date	30 minutes free	1 hr – 80p	2 hrs - £1.60
2015 - 2016	70%	15%	15%
2016 - 2017	70.4%	14.5%	15.1%
2017 - 2018	71%	14%	15%
2018 - 2019	70.33%	13.92%	15.75%
2019 - 2020	70.7%	13.6%	15.7%
Annual Average	70.4%	14.2%	15.3%

- 5.9 Analysis of the above figures shows that transaction numbers have remained relatively static over the period P&D has been operational, there has though been a slight reduction in the latest two years.
- 5.10 In total 2,030,189 free 30-minute period transactions have been made in the 5 complete years P&D has been in operation, giving an annual average of 406,037 transactions per year.
- 5.11 Transactions in latest two years, 2018/19 and 2019/20 are marginally under that long term average at 397,370 (-2%) and 384,978 (5%) respectively. It is however important to identify that prior to this recent reduction use of the 30-minute free

period was increasing, suggesting a practical allowance. It is currently too soon though to say with certainty whether the observed reduction is the beginning of a trend or a short-term blip. The fact usage increased in the first 3 years suggests P&D is not a primary factor in any decline.

- 5.12 It is also important to understand that the intended purpose of the 30-minute free period is not to cater for 'shopping' but to provide a short term allowance for minor errands such as dropping off, collecting goods or making a minor purchase. The reason for its decline is unknown but it is not inconsistent with the reduction in paid transactions so it cannot be said it is because it is insufficient for its purpose.
- 5.13 In total 411,383 1hr transactions were made in the five-year period, giving an annual average of 82,276. As is the case with the free period, the figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are marginally below the long term average at 78,664 (-4%) and 74,347 (-10%)
- 5.14 In total 443,319 2 hour transactions were made in the five-year period giving an annual average of 88,663 transactions per year. Only in the latest year 2019/20 is the figure below the long term average at 85,442 transactions (-4%).
- 5.15 The decline in the number of free and paid transactions indicates there is not a specific issue with any particular tariff but representative of all use.
- 5.16 The percentage split between tariff band used, as shown in Table 2, has remained relatively static showing demand for the respective time allowances has not changed. Although the latest figures are showing reduced transactions, there will be a variety of explanations for this and the 30-minute free allowance is unlikely to be a causation, as P&D charges were introduced in 2014 during which time the figures generally increased or remained static, indicating turnover of spaces and parking opportunity improved.
- 5.17 Although transactions have decreased marginally in the most recent two years, the transaction data does indicate from the initial increase or static demand, that the intended benefits of P&D i.e. turnover of spaces and parking opportunity has been realised and has not been of detriment to the location. Whilst this does not necessarily equate to greater economic prosperity, it is very good evidence it did generate increased visitor numbers and foot fall to the High Street.
- 5.18 Enforcement Data - Penalty Charge Notices
- 5.19 Comparison of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued with transaction data allows us to understand trends in levels of compliance over time.
- 5.20 Since the introduction of the parking charges a total of 5512 penalty charge notices have been issued for parking contraventions, as shown in Table 3. Of those notices 3822 were for not displaying a valid ticket and the remaining 1690 were for parking after the expiry of a paid for ticket (the data does not provide information to what tariff band the expired ticket related). These are the expected contraventions typical of P&D operation.

Date	Contravention	Contravention	Total
	(Code 06) Parked without clearly displaying a valid pay and display ticket	(Code 05) Parked after the expiry of paid for time	
2015 - 2016	803	395	1198
2016 - 2017	1049	467	1516
2017 - 2018	764	360	1124
2018 - 2019	624	266	890
2019 - 2020	582	202	784
Total	3822	1690	5512
Annual Average	764	338	1102

5.21 As shown in table 3, the number of PCNs issued for non-display of a valid pay and display ticket and vehicles parked after the expiry of paid for time have both reduced over time to below the five-year average, indicating that compliance has improved as users become accustomed with the operation. This improvement can be attributed to P&D being an appropriate and accepted parking management tool for the High Street.

5.22 Parking Surveys

5.23 Parking surveys were carried out pre and post the implementation of P&D to determine what impact P&D was having on parking turnover and level of use. Table 4 below presents the percentage of vehicles parked by duration interval during the surveys.

Date	Status	0 – 30 mins	30 – 60 mins	60 – 90 mins	90 – 120 mins
28/5/13	Pre CPE	49%	23%	12%	7%
29/5/13	Pre CPE Market Day	47%	19%	12%	8%
2/7/13	Post CPE	44%	28%	17%	7%
3/7/13	Post CPE Market Day	42%	24%	15%	12%
21/10/14	Post CPE	63%	21%	9%	5%
22/10/14	Post CPE Market Day	55%	22%	9%	8%
20/11/18	Post CPE	55%	25%	11%	5%
9/1/19	Post CPE Market Day	58%	17%	16%	1%

5.24 In both the pre and post surveys, the period of 0-30 minutes is the most common interval length, with a regular reduction in the number of vehicles as the time allowance increases. It can be noted from the percentages that the demand generally halves as the tariff band increases. (It should be noted that the totals do

not directly equate to 100%, due to the format of the original surveys, i.e. the remaining percentages would be those vehicles staying over 120 minutes. This figure remains reasonably consistent at between 10% and 14% in most years). The increase in the 0-30 minute period can be correlated to improved turnover of spaces through the removal of long term parking which occurred prior to P&D.

- 5.25 Table 5 below shows that the average proportion of spaces occupied for the P&D Zone on the High Street decreased between the two survey periods from 68% in 2014 to 47% in 2018. Although 62% of bays were occupied during the latest surveys on the selected market day, a comparison with 2014 could not be made as no figure was recorded during the previous surveys for the reason set out in the table. Although The in the number of spaces occupied can be correlated to increased turnover of spaces through the removal of long term parking which occurred prior to P&D.

Table 5: Average %age of parking spaces occupied at any one time		
Date	Status	% of spaces occupied
28/5/13	Pre Pay & Display	85%
29/5/13	Pre Pay & Display Market Day	80%
2/7/13	Pre Pay & Display	80%
3/7/13	Pre Pay & Display Market Day	75%
21/10/14	Post Pay & Display	68%
22/10/14	Post Pay & Display Market Day	*Unable to obtain data due to farmers market
20/11/18	Post Pay & Display	47%
9/1/19	Post Pay & Display Market Day	62%

- 5.26 Table 6 below shows the number of vehicles parked in the P&D zone on High Street to the north of Friarage Street pre and post introduction. This indicates a decrease in the number of parked vehicles and that this area is less used, most likely due to it being located slightly away from the main retail area on High Street.

Table 6: Vehicles in Pay & Display area North of Friarage Street		
Date	Status	Number of Vehicles
28/5/13	Pre Pay & Display	464
29/5/13	Pre Pay & Display Market Day	468
2/7/13	Pre Pay & Display	501
3/7/13	Pre Pay & Display Market Day	686
21/10/14	Post Pay & Display	354
22/10/14	Post Pay & Display Market Day	505*

20/11/18	Post Pay & Display	344
9/1/19	Post Pay & Display Market Day	283

(*Figure may be artificially high as a number of bays on the section of the High Street south of Zetland Street not usually taken up by the normal market were taken up by the farmer's market.)

5.27 Traffic Flows

- 5.28 Table 7 below shows traffic volumes have remained relatively static on the High Street with the daily average in 2013 being 13,506 compared to 13,185 in 2019. By remaining static at the same time that parking generally increased in the first 3 years of P&D applying, this suggests fewer motorists are making multiple journeys along the High Street looking for a parking space, which is because there is sufficient parking capacity as evidenced in Tables one and two above.

Year	Daily Average (Vehicles)
2013	13,506
2014	13,547
2015	13,616
2016	13,795
2017	13,524
2018	13,378
2019	13,185
Annual Average	13,507

- 5.29 For comparative purposes, figures for Hambleton District Council's Applegarth short stay car park have been obtained to determine if on-street parking demand has declined only. Table 8 sets out the figures below.

Date	1 Hour Free	2 hr Paid	Total
2015 - 2016	142,751	101,754	244,505
2016 - 2017	139,461	100,382	239,843
2017 - 2018	147,512	100,570	248,082
2018 - 2019	146,064	99,620	245,684
2019 - 2020	145,712	99,964	245,676
Total	721,500	502,290	1,223,790
Annual Average	144,300	100,458	244,758

- 5.30 It can be seen that demand for the off-street parking has remained broadly static but the use of the 1-hour free parking allowance has increased above the five-year average in each of the latest three years. This indicates that the strategic approach of encouraging motorists to find off-street parking is working and so the lower use of on-street parking is simply a displacement to the off-street car park, which is wholly in keeping and consistent with and the intension of the NYCC parking strategy objectives.

6.0 Integration of Parking Strategies to Local Objectives and Circumstances.

- 6.1 The County Council's Parking Strategy 2011 sets out its approach to parking management and how contributes towards achieving Local Transport plan (LTP) and national policy objectives. The Strategy also links to other policy areas such as disabled parking and development management.
- 6.2 The Strategy is clear that parking management measures should reflect local needs and the need for continual monitoring. The strategic approach to on and off-street parking recognises there is no one size fits all arrangement. Local shops and services differ from area to area, so what may be appropriate and sustainable at one location does not make it so for another.
- 6.3 The petition states that the existing parking structure on Northallerton High Street differs from other high street locations across the county (Thirsk, Stokesley, Bedale and Richmond) on the basis they have longer free parking periods available. Whilst correct, the differing local conditions in the business/retail offer and the physical highway layout and use determine the parking management structure. Where free on-street parking exists it is similarly restricted in time to 1 or 2 hours and typically managed via a disc parking arrangement. In locations where on-street parking charges apply, any free parking allowance relates to off-street parking. It is important to note that Northallerton High Street is the only location in the county where on-street parking charges apply that also provides a free parking allowance.
- 6.4 The on-street P&D operation in Northallerton is entirely consistent with NYCCs strategic approach as set out in its Strategy document. It contributes towards meeting a range of policy objectives, for example changing the parking management arrangements in Northallerton from disc parking to P&D in order to better manage demand and use has made it easier for visitors and shoppers alike to find parking and improve traffic management in the Town.
- 6.5 More widely, NYCC is acutely aware of its role in helping to contribute towards the health of the local economy and is committed to supporting local businesses through the Council's Plan for Economic Growth which includes the commitment to, 'Create the right conditions for business growth and investment by promoting the County as a vibrant high value location with distinctive places and an excellent quality of life offer.'
- 6.6 NYCC has supported Northallerton by helping to deliver Tour de Yorkshire Cycle events, supporting the development of the new Treadmills Centre on the old prison site and helping to reconfigure the Town's pedestrian area and roads to enable shops to re-open during the current coronavirus crisis.
- 6.7 The petition makes reference to the Future High Streets Fund bid opportunity. The bid is being led by Hambleton District Council with notable input from NYCC from a highways perspective, though this is not the main focus of the bid criteria. This bid is due to be submitted in the very near future.

7.0 Other Influences

- 7.1 There are multiple external influences affecting the economic performance of the 'High Street' not just the parking management operation. Structural changes in the retail sector for example have been brought about by the growth of internet shopping. The majority of growth in retail floor space over the last decade has been in out of town centre locations that have drawn trade away from town centres. Consequently, town centres have found themselves having to compete more intensely with other town centres over remaining retail expenditure.
- 7.3 The issues that impact on the health of a town centre can vary. The size of the centre, the public transport alternatives, consumer demographics, the composition and quality of the retail and leisure offer, the proximity of competing destinations and many more issues all influence consumer decision making.
- 7.5 The National Travel Survey is a household survey of personal travel by residents of England travelling within Great Britain, from data collected via interviews and a seven-day travel diary. The NTS is part of a continuous survey that began in 1988, following ad-hoc surveys from the 1960s, which enables analysis of patterns and trends. Some key uses of the data include describing patterns, for example how different groups of people travel, monitoring trends in travel, including sustainable modes, assessing the potential equality impacts of transport policies on different groups and contributing to evaluation of the impact of policies. Data provided within the National Travel Survey last carried out in 2018 states that 64% of shopping trips are by car with the average shopping trip lasting 17 minutes.
- 7.6 Overall National survey data from 2014 -2018 shows that travel trips, distance and time has gradually decreased over the four-year period. Trips by car for retail have increased very marginally overall however time and distance travelled by car for retail purposes has remained constant.
- 7.7 From a national perspective there is limited information carried out by The British Parking Association, which last produced a report in 2013 'Rethink Parking on the High Street'. In the 2013 report the BPA detailed that footfall and parking charges are at best only weakly related and that a number of other factors may be more important to the high street.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The statistical data shows that when P&D was introduced the number of transactions generally increased in the first three years but in the latest two-year period decreased below the five-year average. The number of PCNs issued has also reduced which could be correlated with the reduced transactions but also linked to improved compliance, which in turn can be attributed to P&D being the appropriate parking management mechanism with correctly applied times and tariffs.
- 8.2 Traffic flows have remained generally static throughout which could indicate that drivers are able to find parking much easier without the need to make several trips along High Street to find a parking space and thereby reducing potential congestion.

- 8.3 It was however clear that the observed number of vehicles parked has reduced post implementation. Nevertheless, this does not directly correlate to fewer visitors or users, but that turnover of spaces is improved with long term parking removed. The most popular transaction being the 30 minutes free parking indicates that most drivers are staying short term, therefore freeing up spaces quicker.
- 8.3 On that basis there is no clear or direct statistical evidence to suggest that the existing charging structure in Northallerton has been detrimental to either the available on street parking resource or the economic vitality of local shops and services. Indeed, taken collectively, this information indicates that the P&D operation on the High Street is in fact working as intended in terms of generating turnover of spaces and parking opportunity allowing motorists to locate a parking space without needing to make multiple trips along High Street. This demonstrates the Council is meeting its parking strategy objectives.
- 8.6 In regard to the concerns raised that the 30 minutes free does not provide enough time for customer's needs, this free period is designed to cater for short stay demand such as dropping off or collecting goods or making a minor purchase. The transaction data analysis demonstrates that this tariff band is used by 70% of users therefore indicating the majority of visitors intend only to do so for a short time. Those visitors wanting to stay longer than 30 minutes are able to do so up to 2 hours on-street and there is a range of alternative long term off-street parking facilities available in the town. Increasing the on street free period to 2 hours would likely reduce the number of people able to park on the High Street and would also take away the incentive to park off street and the traffic management benefits P&D brings.
- 8.7 Figures for HDC's short stay Applegarth car park which offers 1 hours free parking and close to the retail and business on High Street is also showing relatively static demand with a slight increase in the use of the 1-hour free period. Therefore, it cannot be proved that increasing the free period would be of any notable benefit and would only serve to have a detrimental impact on parking opportunity, congestion and the strategic approach to parking. On the basis Hambleton District Council offers one-hour free parking in its Applegarth Car Park, to remain consistent with off-street parking policy, this would need to be extended also.
- 8.8 In summary, the existing P&D arrangements are considered appropriate and fit for purpose for the High Street and are in accordance with the strategic approach and policy objectives, therefore no changes to the current arrangement are proposed at this time. Nevertheless, the situation will continue to be monitored as part of the ongoing management of on street parking throughout the county.
- 8.9 The section of High Street to the north of Friarage Street though could be considered for an extension of the free time period as it is generally less used and not in the immediate vicinity of the main retail area where there is the greatest demand for on-street parking. It is proposed to consider this option in more detail.

9.0 Equalities Implications

- 9.1 There are not considered to be any equality implications arising from the existing parking structure remaining in its present format and operation. However, any amendment to the section of High Street north of Friarage Street would be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment as and when proposals are drawn up.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications should the existing parking tariff and structure remain. However, it should be noted that an increase of the free time allowance from 30 minutes to 1 hour, on that part of High Street to the north of Friarage Street would reduce income from parking charges and Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) which would have some impact on the level of future investment.
- 10.2 The permitted uses for any surplus arising from CPE are set out in Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Act limits how local authorities can spend any surplus income in respect of parking places, once expenditure and the costs of the enforcement operation have been met. The surplus can be used for parking, or alternatively where parking is unnecessary or undesirable, the surplus can be used for public transport, highways or environmental improvements. The surplus can be spent anywhere in North Yorkshire as the whole county is a designated Civil Enforcement Area.

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 There are currently no implications on the existing Traffic Regulation Order providing for charges in the Pay and Display zone(s) ("the TRO"). Any further considerations in respect of the free time period would require consideration if proposals were looked at in more detail.

12.0 Recommendations

- 12.1 It is recommended that The Executive approves:
- i. The existing Pay and Display arrangement and tariffs remain unchanged.
 - ii. A review is carried out to consider increasing the free time allowance to that part of High Street to the north of Friarage Street.

DAVID BOWE
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