

**Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Transport**

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Ward(s)</b>
Executive	18 June 2015		All

Non-exempt
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**SUBJECT: Parking E-strategy Development****1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 The Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy aims to reduce traffic volumes, traffic congestion, and the negative environmental impacts of unnecessary car use within Islington.
- 1.2 This report discusses the Council's Parking E-Strategy and highlights the improvements brought in over the last few years. The report also sets out proposals to further improve the resident and customer experience.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 To note the intended future initiatives for progress, as set out in paragraph 3.8.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Over the past few years the Council has embraced IT and internet based solutions to assist residents and visitors to access parking services, whilst reducing costs.

### 3.2 **Convenient online applications**

In 2010 the Council implemented the use of intelligent e-forms. For example, as a registration number is put in, the form populates all vehicle details automatically from the DVLA and calculates permit type and cost. In addition, through the My eAccount online service, in 2014 permits became live from the moment of purchase. 96% of residents now use online e-forms.

### 3.3 **Virtual E-Permits**

The Council used to print and post paper permits and which needed to be displayed to avoid enforcement action but in 2011, we introduced virtual e-permits. Vehicle registration numbers are now used to assess whether a vehicle is parked with a valid permit in resident bays or with a valid permission in short stay parking places. Further enhancement of the system this year should see the introduction of emailed permit renewal reminders to those who use the e-account to manage their permit purchases. This should lead to further back-office administration savings.

### 3.4 **Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)**

The Council is rolling out Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) vehicles to enable a more proficient enforcement regime. In conjunction with virtual e-permits, ANPR vehicles assess whether a parked vehicle (usually in a residents bay) has a valid permit and if not, directs the closest Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) to the location in order to check the vehicle's status and decide whether a ticket should be issued.

### 3.5 **Cashless Pay & Display Parking**

Since 2009 cashless parking, card and pay by phone, have been introduced borough-wide along with cash payment option at Pay-Point outlets. In locations where multiple payment methods have been introduced, cashless payments have been shown to be preferred with pay by phone the favoured option.

Around a third of all Pay and Display machines have been removed and this has resulted in savings associated with meter maintenance and cash collections. Where Pay and Display machines have been removed, the Council has provided Pay Point services in local shops to help those who wish to still pay with cash. The latest available data from February 2015 shows there were 112,694 phone transactions and 55,694 cash transactions across the borough. This included 9,292 first time users whilst the total of first time users since launch in 2009, is now nearly half a million. Seventy percent of all transactions are now cashless.

The removal of the remainder Pay and Display machines will further reduce costs and is necessary to allow ANPR enforcement of Pay and Display bays through virtual tickets.

### 3.6 **Turning Data into Information**

In the past CEOs would use small books to make notes. Information is now captured electronically and turned into data to be used on management dashboards. This enhances the operational decision process and using data properly allows more efficient highlighting of parking hotspots and deployment of CEOs.

### 3.7 **Ticket Viewer to ensure transparency**

The availability of online Ticket Viewer self-service enables anyone receiving a PCN to view photos of their alleged contravention by entering the ticket number and registration.

### Future initiatives

There are a number of new initiatives to introduce further positive changes in resident experience and reduce costs to the Council. Some of the pilot initiatives will likely have similar outcomes to each other and thus allowing proper assessment of which initiatives are the more suitable for the borough.

i) **Introduction of a virtual visitor voucher system**

*-To compliment virtual resident permits and help improve the user experience.*

This system will benefit residents by allowing them to purchase parking time for their visitors as and when they require it. This will also have significant operational benefits as it will allow the wider use of ANPR to determine if a vehicle is legally parked as ANPR will recognise the parking time purchased in much the same way as is currently the case with paid-for short-term parking. The further cessation of paper and printing needs for these vouchers will reduce costs and the effects on the environment.

ii) **Ford parking pilot**

*-To help residents find a parking place and avoid parking tickets.*

This scheme, being developed with Ford, is aimed to help residents achieve parking compliance and is intended to be piloted in two controlled parking zones. It involves issuing devices to resident permit holders that they install in their vehicles. These devices interact with a smart phone app to provide live parking information and to help find parking spaces more quickly, to park compliantly and thus help to avoid unnecessary PCNs. Finding parking spaces more quickly will also reduce the driving time to find a space and help reduce pollution. Although the pilot is with Ford, the devices will be designed to work with all vehicle makes and be compliant with all necessary data protection issues. This potentially ground breaking approach has the ability to fundamentally shift the focus away from an enforcement to a compliance based service that is aimed to be fairer and more efficient for residents.

iii) **Direct debit payments**

*-To utilise a popular form of payment and spread costs over time.*

The Council will explore a direct debit option for residents to renew their resident & businesses permits without any effort as payment is automatically collected from their account at the time of renewal. The proposal is to send an email notification in advance to inform customers when the money will be collected. This will ensure residents never have any lapses in permit renewal and it also allows enough time to cancel the direct debit should the customer want to do so.

iv) **Cashless Pay & Display parking**

*-To improve the user experience and reduce cost to the Council.*

As discussed in paragraph 3.5 above, the majority of users of Pay & Display now use cashless forms of payment to park in Pay & Display bays. Removing the remaining Pay & Display machines would also result in a saving to the Council through reduced maintenance, no more paper tickets, and the termination of cash collection and associated banking services that the current provision requires. The Council would continue to offer choice, with Pay-Point outlets for cash transactions. In addition, without this move, ANPR will not be able to be used for all types of parking. Changes would be made on a rolling programme. This initiative will cease paper and printing needs for these vouchers and reduce the effect on the environment.

v) **Further expansion of voice recognition**

*-To further help residents and customers access our services*

A further expansion of the use of voice recognition systems for the helpful completion of e-forms and to populate the parking application system. This will extend another convenient channel for residents and customers to interact with the Council.

- vi) **Introduce a resident vehicle checker**  
*-To empower residents and assist with reducing parking congestion.*  
Via an appropriate smartphone app, this will allow residents to check if vehicles in their road have a valid permission to park and therefore assist in directly enforcing parking through contacting the Council to direct a CEO to these vehicles.
  
- vii) **Pilot bay sensors pilot**  
*-To develop a pilot to ascertain if bay sensors can assist in identifying available parking.*  
This pilot would assess the feasibility of using parking bay sensors to provide information to residents and Pay and Display users to find available parking spaces more quickly via a smartphone app. This could also reduce circulating traffic and help to reduce unnecessary pollution.
  
- viii) **Provide permit renewals automatically**  
*-To help permit holders to renew their permits more conveniently.*  
This proposal will give residents and customers the option of increased convenience when renewing permits and would provide a more seamless service for permit renewals.
  
- ix) **Further roll out of Automatic Number Plate (ANPR) enforcement**  
*-To expand ANPR services to cover all required bay types, including Pay & Display.*  
This initiative requires an e-permit system to work with Pay& Display bays, which itself requires the removal of a paper permit system. This compliments the cashless pay & display parking proposal above to ensure ANPR is used effectively and help reduce enforcement costs.
  
- x) **Ensure online representations can be made to Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) appeals**  
*-To ensure that parking correspondence is received in a timely manner and responded to in a cost effective manner.*  
This option will allow required and additional requested documents to be uploaded via the My eAccount service rather than emailed or posted. This will promote a more effective and streamlined service and have the added benefit of My eAccount users being able to view their correspondence history in one place.
  
- xi) **Pilot sponsored parking**  
*-To ascertain if businesses wish to sponsor parking for their shoppers.*  
This initiative will help determine the viability of sponsorship by businesses wishing to offer to purchase Pay & Display time for their shoppers. This could support the local economy.
  
- xii) **Removal of the multiple vehicles residents permit**  
*-To develop a draft policy for replacing the current permit pricing structure with an escalating multiple vehicles permit fee.*  
The proposal would be to introduce a system of escalating resident permit costs for each additional vehicle and is aimed at discouraging car use and reducing parking stress. Some other Boroughs already operate such policies.

xiii) **Introduce virtual e-permits for all permit types**

*-To provide all present and possible future permits as virtual e-permits only.*

Following the success of virtual resident permits, it is proposed that all remaining and possible future permit types be virtual permits. No significant negative issues have arisen from e-permits and this proposal will further enhance the user experience and reduces costs to the Council.

xiv) **Allow online automatic refunds for permits**

*-To introduce a system that automatically refunds permit holders if they are entitled to refunds.*

This proposal will remove the requirement to contact the Council for permit refunds and if a permit holder is entitled to a refund, allow that this takes place automatically. This will mainly cover resident and business permit holders.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial implications:

4.1.1 The cost of the initiatives detailed in this report will be met from the parking account revenue budget and will increase the efficiency of the service. This has been accounted for within the Council's medium-term financial strategy with any surplus generated from managing parking re-invested in highways related repairs, initiatives and improvements.

### 4.2 Legal Implications:

4.2.1. The Council is responsible for the management and administration of on street parking in Islington (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) and enforcement of parking regulations (Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2006). In carrying out these functions the Council must also have regard to its network management duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004, that is a duty to manage the road network so as to secure, so far as may be reasonably practicable, the expeditious movement of traffic. The council may make use of information technology to assist with parking administration and information. Detailed legal advice will be provided as the various proposals in the report are developed.

In determining its policy in relation to parking the Council is exercising powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Section 122 of the 1984 Act sets out the purposes for which those powers must be exercised (Section 122(1)) and the considerations which, must be taken into account when exercising the powers for those purposes (in Section 122 (2)).

The purposes are to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and to provide suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. The considerations are set out below:

- (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;
- (bb) the strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (national air quality strategy);
- (c) 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
- (d) any other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant.

Parking policies need to be integral to the Council's transport strategy. Further, the Council must have regard to the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy (sections 142 and 144(1)(a) Greater London Authority Act 199)..

The Council has power to set and review charges for parking places on the highway (section 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984). This power would enable the Council to charge a higher amount for second or subsequent permits/vehicles provided it is exercised for the purposes of section 122 and not for the purpose of generating additional income.

#### **4.3 Environmental Implications:**

The initiatives proposed are designed to allow for a more convenient and efficient interaction with the public, and will also reduce paper consumption along with reducing pollution.

#### **4.4 Residents Impact Assessment:**

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

It is recognised that some of the above Parking E-Strategy initiatives will require access to the internet and/or use of a smartphone, and resident impact assessments will be undertaken as part of the implementation of the individual measures.

Different residents and service users will have varying levels of digital skills and so the Council will continue to provide alternatives to a cashless service with Pay Point cash or card services in local shops. Voice recognition will also be utilised to ensure those who cannot use an online option are not disadvantaged. Contact Islington will also still remain available for callers.

## **5. Conclusion and reason for recommendations**

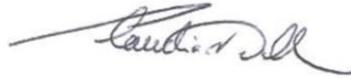
- 5.1 The proposals in this report will further assist with the Council's E-Strategy and deliver a more convenient and efficient parking service.

**Appendices – none**

**Background papers - none**

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



3.6.15

Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Date

**Received by:**

Head of Democratic Services

Date

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