

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	19 May 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Reduction of Pay and Display parking machines
REPORT NUMBER:	CHI/15/171

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report seeks approval to reduce the number of pay and display machines for efficiency reasons supporting modernisation of our parking service.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Committee is recommended to:

Approve reduction of the number of pay and display machines in accordance with the policy considerations set out below.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Reducing the number of parking machines will reduce expenditure in various ways including cash collection charges; repairs and maintenance; and ticket supplies. A machine costs around £3k to purchase hence reducing the number of machines reduces substantial potential machine replacement costs. It will also lessen financial burden associated with adapting machines for the new £1 coin in 2017.

The ground and electrical works involved in removing the proposed first phase reduction of 61 machines is projected to cost £33,500. The second phase is projected to cost a further £80,000. However, these costs would be offset against reduced expenditure costs and potentially £150k worth of reusable machines made available to replace old and unreliable machines.

All costs will be contained within the car parking trading account.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Machine parts will be re-used in remaining machines as far as reasonably possible and this will also help minimise immediate machine replacement

requirements. Similarly reliable machines removed may be used to replace defunct machines when viable.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The Council has 720 parking pay and display machines accepting coin only payment. The majority of these were installed more than ten years ago and many are increasingly unreliable and not particularly aesthetic. Presently 60 machines are out of order leading to complaints from and inconvenience to customers and local residents. Rusting pedestals has recently necessitated removal/replacement of several machines owing to safety concerns.

Each year there are approximately 1.7M car parking payment transactions. The number of mobile telephone payments is increasingly popular with our customers and it is projected that over 20% of all transactions will be by telephone during 2015 with a continuing reducing trend for machine payments.

With the availability and increasing popularity of telephone payments, it provides the option to reduce our provision of pay and display machines. Our traffic orders contain the following in respect of availability of pay and display machines:

"Ticket Issuing Machine to be installed near parking Bays

There shall be at least one ticket issuing machine within reasonable walking distance of each public parking bay in respect of which charging is applicable."

There are various benefits to our customers and the Council realised by greater use of telephone payments but while retaining a smaller number of pay and display machines.

Telephone payments are convenient and easy to use. This system does not require customers to have the correct coinage which can be a problem when paying by machine particularly for longer parking periods. Customers can be reminded when paid parking periods are due to expire and allow payment to be made without having to return to a vehicle. This helps avoid penalty charge notices having to be issued. And, City Wardens do comment that less enforcement is required as a positive consequence of the introduction of telephone payments.

The telephone system is highly reliable meaning less frustration and inconvenience to customers encountering faulty machines. Reliability is also a substantial benefit to the Council with reduced non-payment due to machine faults and less requirement to replace machine parts and repair machines. Telephone payments are kinder to the environment reducing electricity use, consumable parts, paper tickets and attendance at machines for cash collection, repairs and audits.

Administration would also be more efficient with fewer machines. The need to attend to machines to change prices would be reduced. Business intelligence is also more readily available through telephone systems.

It is emphasised that there is a need to reduce the number of machines but not remove these totally. It is vital that machines remain to offer choice to our customers. For example, visitors and other infrequent customers may prefer coin payments. It should also be considered that not everyone uses mobile telephones and many may do but may not wish to use for making payments for matters such as parking. There are examples in England where local authorities removed all parking machines but later had to install replacements.

With approval from committee there would be a gradual reduction of machines. The following criteria would be considered to determine removal of machines.

There shall be at least one ticket issuing machine within reasonable walking distance of each public parking bay in respect of which charging is applicable.

As a general rule usually a parking machine will be around 120 metres from any parking bay. However the following factors will also be considered.

1. Parking turnover and income collected at each locality.
2. Avoiding requiring customers to cross busy streets to use close machines
3. Visibility of machines from parking spaces
4. Desire to have at least one machine per street

Signs will be installed as appropriate in locations where machines have been removed giving telephone payment instructions and directing towards the nearest parking machine.

A phased approach will be taken to machine reduction. Applying the policy on machine provision requirements recommended above indicates that 61 machines would be taken out of service and removed in the first phase. We assess that no new signage would be required in these locations

The second phase would involve a further reduction of 114. We assess that 59 of these machines are suitable for reuse and would be used to replace old and unreliable machines.

All machines proposed for removal are 'on-street' and none within our 'off-street' car parks.

Reduction of machines proposed in these initial phases is approximately 24% of the total number of machines currently installed in the city. A further report would be made to committee in 2016 updating on the implementation of this proposal and setting out a plan for further modernisation of our pay and display machine provision.

6. IMPACT

Reducing machines and greater use of pay by phone parking supports various aspects of Aberdeen – The Smarter City and specifically the Smarter Environment and Smarter Mobility objectives.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There may be some customers who will find the reduction of machines slightly less convenient. However, even with the proposed reduction we would continue to provide pay and display machines within a reasonable distance of parking spaces. We also offer a more convenient means of parking through mobile telephone.

Blue badge holders may park free of charge in all of our pay for parking areas.

Checks have been made with the Scottish Government and the Department for Transport to ensure that our proposals are not outside any regulations beyond our traffic orders.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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