

Agenda Item No:

Report to: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 20 March 2017

Report Title: Hastings Off-Street Parking Infrastructure Improvements

Report By: Mike Hepworth
Assistant Director Environment and Place

Purpose of Report

To request funding for essential upgrades to off street car parking infrastructure located on Foreshore Trust land.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the request for funding is approved.**

Reasons for Recommendations

The infrastructure improvements set out in this report are an essential element of the Council's digital transformation and customer first programmes. They will facilitate even greater use of cashless payments options, which will help drive channel shift in line with the Council's customer first and digital by design principles, as well as generating efficiency savings as we move from partly paper based parking administration systems to wholly digital systems.

The costs associated with them are amongst those which the Council can offset against income generated from the off street parking service.

Improvement of the infrastructure located on Foreshore Trust land is essential and integral to the overall success of these improvements to the whole of the off street parking service operated by the Council.

Background

1. In recent years there have been significant developments in the use of cashless payment methods, and further developments are necessary to improve customer service and drive more channel shift in relation to the administration and payment processes associated with borough wide off street parking services.
2. Many of the pay and display machines have been in circulation since at least 1999. Out of a total of 45 machines, 35 are a model which is no longer being manufactured and will now only be supported for spare parts for about another 6 months. These 35 machines have been in use for more than 16 years. In order to transform the way the Council works, make use of new technology, and improve the way that customers can access Council services, the old machines need to be upgraded to take cash, accept chip and pin, and contactless card payments. The Council will then be offering customers a total of four payment methods, including Ringo pay by phone, with three of these being cashless.
3. Consequently, the Council now need to implement a major programme of improvement and replacement of the out dated pay and display machines and the associated signage.

Works Required

4. The current provider for pay and display machines is Cale Access UK limited. It is possible to upgrade the machines using the existing pedestals and main machine casings if the Council remains with Cale, at a cost of £2,562 per machine. There are other suppliers of pay and display machines such as Metric and Parkeon, but because they could not use the existing pedestals etc. the cost per machine would be in the region of £3,500 to £3,750 per machine.
5. Rather than just upgrading all of the machines to this new style the Council plans to only purchase 22 machine upgrades at a total cost of £56,364. If the Foreshore Trust agrees these proposals, they will need to bear some of the costs. Namely those associated with the machines needed in Pelham Place and Rock a Nore car parks.
6. This approach will enable the Council to spread the new machines across all of the different car parks initially alongside an old machine. They will then have spares from the upgraded machines which can be used in the old machines to prolong their life. Some of this work will be carried out by the Council's in-house maintenance technician, which helps reduce the cost of the works required.
7. Nationally there is a trend for fewer pay and display machines as more customers move to cashless options, and our replacement and upgrade plans take account of this. By extending the life of the older machines alongside a reduced number of upgraded machines we don't need to replace as many, and have the opportunity to assess how many machines we will need in each car park in the future, as the shift to cashless payment methods continues.

8. The tariff boards are old and include the old Hastings Borough Council logo, and the Council regularly receives complaints from people who find them confusing. It is therefore also proposed that new tariff boards will be installed, with the latest Council branding and also making them clearer and easier for customers to understand. Each tariff board will cost about £453 and there are 30 making a total borough wide cost of £13,590.

Urgency

9. The Council has prioritised this work and hopes to carry it out as a matter of urgency to improve the range of payment options and customer service in time for the summer season.
10. The Council's Cabinet approved the capital expenditure for this work at their meeting held on 6th March 2017.

Consultation

11. The Coastal Users Group was consulted on these proposals at their meeting on 7th March 2017. They appeared to be generally supportive of the proposals. One member of the group asked whether pay on exit could be considered. It was explained that this was not feasible, or indeed necessary for the following reasons:-
 - High capital cost and need for ongoing maintenance arrangements;
 - The car parks would need an access lane to accommodate queuing through barriers, which would be costly and reduce the number of spaces available;
 - Queues would develop during peak times causing additional traffic congestion. This would be extremely problematic on busy summer weekends;
 - Ringo pay by phone allows for easy remote extension of the original parking period, meaning that customers aren't under pressure to leave a restaurant or tourist attraction by a specified time.
12. A member of the group representing the disabled community advised that pay on exit would be problematic for him, and also asked that when the pay and display machines were renewed we should ensure that they were accessible for disabled customers. It should be noted that he hadn't experienced any access issues with our car parks, and was simply saying that this was an ideal opportunity to check access was satisfactory.

Financial Implications

13. The Council's 2016/17 revised budget included a sum of £70,000 in the Capital Programme for the purchase of new parking machines and boards. The annual borrowing costs are estimated at £9,100 p.a. (based on a ten year life expectancy and an interest rate at 3% p.a.).
14. There will be some off setting savings arising from lower cash collection costs due to fewer machines – these have yet to be fully quantified.
15. There would be significant financial consequences should the machines become unreliable and unserviceable.

16. As some of the car parks are on Foreshore Trust land (Pelham Place and Rock a Nore), if approved, the costs will need to be shared. Pelham Place Car Park and Rock a Nore Car Park are the two largest and busiest car parks operated by the Council and there are currently 10 machines. One is in the small Rock a Nore Car Park, which is not Foreshore Trust land. The Council is proposing to upgrade 7 of those on Foreshore Trust land (3 in Rock a Nore and 4 in Pelham) to the new style machine, which will cost £17,934. Plus the associated signage upgrades which will cost £3,171. Making a total cost for work within the Foreshore Trust area of £21,105. There are agreed standard recharging protocols between the Council and the Foreshore Trust governing how the costs are recharged.

Wards Affected

None

Area(s) Affected

Central Hastings, East Hastings

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	No

Background Information

None

Officer to Contact

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