



## CABINET

Tuesday, 05 December 2023

<b>Subject</b>	Parking Collection and National Pay Platform
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Toby Hammond Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport
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Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
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### Purpose and high-level overview

#### **Purpose of Report:**

To seek approval on changes to the terms and conditions of the RingGo contract in readiness for the National Payment Platform (NPP).

The report also sets out to explain the NPP in section 2 below.

#### **Options:**

1. Not to sign up to the updated terms and conditions. This would mean that ESC would not have a contract to accept cashless payments as an early adopter of the NPP. As over 50% of the Council's parking income is derived through the cashless app, Ringo, this would have a significant impact on the council's income.
2. To sign up to the terms and conditions – in line with the new National Parking Platform initiative - which will allow visitors and residents to continue to use Ringo to

pay for parking and put the Council in a position to easily move over to the NPP, allowing users to pay through a cashless parking provider of their choice.

**Recommendations:**

1. That Cabinet approves Option 2 to agree changes proposed by RingGo to the terms and conditions of the current contract.
2. That Cabinet approve ESC joining the National Parking Platform ideally as part of the pilot scheme.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

Regular review meetings with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Transport.

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

Climate Emergency Declaration 2019

East Suffolk Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024

**Environmental:**

This proposal contributes to the environmental and carbon neutral aims of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan 2020-2024 where we promise to put environmental issues at the heart of everything, we do by providing a cashless parking solution, reducing the carbon emissions generated from collecting coins from machines and banking them.

**Equalities and Diversity:**

There is no impact to the proposed changes. ESC remains committed to providing motorists with a choice of whether to pay using cash or a cashless app in its car parks.

**Financial:**

In 2022/23 the 20p convenience fee charged by Ringo for each parking event cost the Council some £177,700. The estimated convenience fee cost for 2023/24 is £208,659.97.

Moving to the new terms and conditions required to join and take advantage of the benefits of the National Parking Platform would mean parking customers paying this small fee (as would happen with all other parking operators on the Platform) and result in an estimated saving of over half a million pounds over three years.

**Human Resources:**

No impact.

**ICT:**

No impact.

**Legal:**

No impact.

**Risk:**

If Cabinet decide not to approve the change to terms and conditions, then the Council will not be in a position to participate in the NPP at this time. Additionally, visiting customers wishing to park in East Suffolk car parks would have to download the Ringo App in addition to the NPP App/any other App they use in their home location (See Section 2.1 below).

<b>External Consultees:</b>	None required from the recommendations of this report.
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

This proposal recognises the importance of delivering enhanced services via digital transformation, whilst at the same time providing an alternative cash payment choice that satisfies our customers' demands.

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The Council operates a total of 96 car parks across the district, offering cash and cashless payments at all.
1.2	A full review of cashless payment service providers was completed during 2019/20, and RingGo was determined the most appropriate partner at that time.
2 Current position	
2.1	Currently, people parking in car parks across the country must use the app that is favoured by the car park operator. This creates a situation where motorists may have to download and log into many different apps, based on where they are parking. This creates inefficiency and inconvenience. The government's policy response is to establish the National Parking Platform (NPP).
2.2	The National Parking Platform (NPP) is a government facilitator for the open market. This means that, under the scheme, any app could be used to park in any car park. The motorist would only need to use one app – and the market would need to 'compete' to provide the best offer.
2.3	Authorities can join the platform by becoming 'members' of the NPP. Whilst it isn't mandatory, the Department for Transport are encouraging local authorities become members.
2.4	Currently East Suffolk Council absorbs the 20 pence convenience charge payable for each Ringo administered parking event directly, a decision taken previously to support the start up this cashless carparking service. This will need to change to the customer paying this fee as this is the wider expectation of NPP.
2.5	Therefore, under the updated terms and conditions of RingGo – and in readiness for the NPP – this will no longer be permitted, and motorists will have to pay the convenience charge themselves if they use this online service.
2.6	This 20 pence fee will not apply if a motorist is using cash to pay for their parking.

### 3 How to address current situation

3.1	East Suffolk Council has an opportunity to apply to be one of the pilot areas for the National Parking Platform.
3.2	App providers are making changes to their terms and conditions in readiness for the migration to the NPP. All apps – such as RingGo – will need to comply with a common set of terms for the platform. One of these terms relates to the payment of the ‘administration fee.’ That is the fee that the motorist pays when they are using the app. In the case of RingGo – the convenience fee is 20 pence per parking event.
3.3	Currently East Suffolk Council absorbs this 20 pence charge directly and as explained above this will need to change to the customer paying this fee as this is the wider expectation of NPP.

### 4 Reasons for recommendations

4.1	It is recommended that the council participates in the NPP scheme.
4.2	Joining the NPP provides more choice to users, making parking easier for residents and visitors.
4.3	ESC is required to adopt the change to terms and conditions with RingGo, its current provider. This is the result of the national policy change.

## Appendices

### Appendices:

None.

### Background reference papers:

None.