

Devon County Council (DCC) On-Street Pay and Display (P&D) Schemes

Notes of meeting held on 16 August 2023 at 11am via Zoom.

Present: Cllr Marguerite Shapland (MS), Chairman of BPC
Tracey Lovell (TL), Parish Clerk BPC
Christopher Rook (CR), DCC Officer

Apologies: Cllr Pru Maskell, DCC

The DCC Cabinet on 9 November 2022 agreed a budget of £250k to implement on-street P&D schemes in 8 communities including Braunton. The town and parishes were chosen as they were busier and less deprived communities. Also, retail vacancy rates are low and not in significant decline. It was considered by the County that they would have a higher turnover of traffic and footfall in their high streets (main shopping areas).

No decision has yet been made to go ahead with any of the proposed schemes. The County intend to go out to Advert in the autumn. Depending on the response to the County's public consultation the County will decide whether or not to proceed with proposed schemes or modify them.

In Braunton the plan is to provide on-street P&D parking on Exeter Road for a stretch of approximately 126 meters, primarily outside of the shops. The County had also considered the lay-by in Caen Street outside Cawthornes but as this would only provide three parking bays they have decided not to proceed with this proposal.

There will be one P&D meter provided at a cost of £4,500 in the middle of Exeter Road (usually placed every 100 meters). TL explained that the County had previously refused the Parish Council permission to install public seating on Exeter Road as the pavement was already cluttered with street furniture.

It is proposed that the first 30 minutes will be free but you still need to obtain a ticket from the P&D machine and display it in your vehicle. It will be one pound (£1) an hour with no return in one hour. Charges will apply 7 days a week including bank holidays from 9am to 6pm. Blue Badge holders are exempt and will have no restrictive parking times.

CR explained that the purpose of implementing on-street P&D schemes is not to generate revenue. The aim is to assist in managing parking stock effectively, to minimise congestion and assist in ensuring the right parking opportunities are available to support town centres.

TL explained that there was not an issue in Braunton with turnover of vehicles in parking bays along Exeter Road. With regards to congestion Exeter Road leads to the busy four-way traffic lights on The Square and is often congested with queuing traffic. Implementing an on-street P&D scheme would not improve this situation. The current parking opportunities already support our village centre. The implementation of this scheme will only make it less convenient for vehicles to stop and shop locally.

CR further explained that the current setup is very labour intensive for the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) as they have to photograph each vehicle and note the position of valve caps. They then need to return at the end of the parking period (currently 2 hours) and repeat the process. The proposed P&D scheme will enable the CEOs to quickly check if any parked vehicles have not paid and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). The CEO will then be free to move onto the next community. TL expressed concern that Braunton would be at a disadvantage if this scheme was to be implemented. At present they have to spend 2 hours locally checking for parking infringements across the whole parish i.e., parking on double yellow lines etc. MS had only seen one CEO in Braunton in the last 7 months and requested how often they visit Braunton? CR assured the Council that CEOs would still check other areas in the parish when visiting Braunton. At present there is not two hours of work for CEOs to carry out in Braunton which means they are wasting time waiting around. The implementation of the P&D scheme means that they will not longer be timebound.

TL requested an evaluated implementation cost, projected income and proposed expenditure plan specific to Braunton.

There are limited parking spaces along Exeter Road and it is difficult to see how implementing this scheme would be cost effective for the County. Although the County say this is not to generate income, the County also claim that they need to make the on-street parking fund sustainable. The 303 bus service in Braunton and annual grant (approximately £4k) to cut visibility splays is subsidised from this fund. Any surplus money raised from on-street P&D schemes will go back into this fund to prevent further costs coming direct from the County. TL was

of the opinion that the scheme would not wash its own face let alone subsidise other services. The cost to implement the scheme, enforcement, legal costs to fight appeals, collect cash, electronic payment charges, ticket rolls, P&D machine maintenance contact would all need to be met before any surplus funds would be available.

CR explained that the County are not concerned that the scheme will run at a loss in Braunton. In Ilfracombe 75% of P&D on-street parking is free as people do not stay beyond the first 30 minutes. The remaining 25% who do pay, raises enough money for the Ilfracombe scheme to wash its own face and subsidise other services by putting surplus funds back into the central on-street funding pot. MS stated that you cannot compare Braunton with Ilfracombe, Ilfracombe has a long High Street with many more shops than Braunton.

Questions:

Where is the evidence that the proposed P&D scheme in Braunton is needed?

How many times in the past two years has a CEO visited Braunton?

How many FPNs have been issued to parked vehicles on Exeter Road in the past two years?

Other matters

Directional signage - BPC explained that it had contacted the County on numerous occasions to improve directional signage to the Caen St. Car Park. CR agreed that the signage was poor from both directions on the A361 and non-existent in South St. He agreed to look into improving the signage to help prevent unnecessary congestion whilst people hunt for the main long-stay car park in Braunton.

Loading Bay – The local shops/businesses on Exeter had requested a loading bay. The County had approached NDC regarding converting the existing taxi rank into a loading bay will this be going ahead? CR will investigate and report back.

Higher Park Road Double Yellow Lines – When will the double yellow lines be implemented? CR to investigate and report back.