

Carbon-Metered Parking

Case Study Richmond upon Thames



Background

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is known for its innovation in parking and particularly in the area of environmental responsibility.

In 2007, the Council became the first local authority in the world to vary the charges made to residents for parking permits, based on the carbon dioxide emissions of the vehicle being parked. The scheme proved popular and many local authorities across the UK followed suit.

At launch, Richmond Council recognised that the scheme affected only those living within the Borough. The ideal situation, the Council felt, would be to incentivise all motorists parking within the Borough to use more environmentally friendly vehicles, by levying variable charges for on and off-street parking as well.



At the time, with the out-dated analogue collection equipment in use across the Borough, there was simply no realistic way to achieve this.

Why Pay by Phone?

In contrast, digital parking technology and pay by phone in particular, offers the potential to offer bespoke pricing, as fees can be varied at the point of sale.

Part of RingGo's unique design is that it uses voice recognition to collect customer information. Once a motorist has provided their details, the service accesses the DVLA's database of vehicle details to cross check the data and ensure it is correct.

"The aim of our variable charging policy is to continue to encourage people to think about the car they drive – I truly believe that this approach is welcomed by most people and if other boroughs follow suit, as I expect they will, then this will be a significant step towards reducing CO₂ emissions in London".

Councillor David Trigg, Richmond Council's Cabinet Member for Traffic, Transport and Parking

When Richmond Council introduced residents' permits linked to vehicle emissions, Cobalt's development team quickly realised that RingGo could be adapted to use emissions data too – allowing parking tariffs to be automatically varied, depending on the CO₂ rating recorded with the DVLA.

Which Solution?



In 2008, Richmond Council issued a tender for phone parking, to cover all on- and off-street parking across the Borough. In it, the Council specifically asked suppliers if they could provide parking tariffs based on the emissions of the individual vehicles being parked.

Only RingGo was convincingly able to respond to this requirement of the tender, and so was chosen.

Implementing the Solution

Richmond Council announced their intention to launch Carbon-Metered parking in January 2009, generating substantial international media interest. A public consultation process followed which ended in March 2009.

While the initial intention had been to launch Carbon-Metered parking from the outset, delays, due to the public consultation and the barrier car park implementation, meant this simply wasn't possible.

Therefore, in March, the standard RingGo phone parking service was rolled out both on and off-street across the Borough. Within weeks of implementation, Cobalt operated a trial of Carbon-Metered parking with Council specified vehicles. The trial worked flawlessly.

Terry Powell, Parking Manager for Richmond comments:

“The RingGo trial of Carbon-Metered parking went amazingly smoothly. We selected all sorts of vehicles, including a Diplomat's car, but nothing fazed Cobalt. The system worked just as they said it would.”

On 1 October 2009, a world first was achieved, when RingGo Carbon-Metered parking was switched on and operated across the Borough. One RingGo zone, in an off-street car park, didn't change to the new tariffs, but this was spotted and resolved in hours. The move to variable emissions-based charging was effectively seamless.



For more information on RingGo, please visit www.RingGo.co.uk, phone 01256 339195 or e-mail info@RingGo.co.uk



Results

Five weeks into the scheme and Carbon-Metered parking has been well accepted across the Borough. The Council has raised the maximum charge for parking by 25% but offers substantial reductions for those with environmentally friendly vehicles. The Council has publicly stated that between 60% and 70% of motorists will pay either the same or less than they did previously.

Motorists are turning from cash to RingGo, as they realise the potential benefits in terms of reduced parking fees. In the few weeks since launch, sales of RingGo have increased by more than a fifth and the figures suggest an upward trend. A daily management report has been developed for the Council showing the breakdown of parking sessions by emissions band, enabling them to easily see the impact of the new measures.

Councillor David Trigg, Richmond Council's Cabinet Member for Traffic, Transport and Parking said at the launch:

“Two years ago we introduced CO₂-related parking charges in residents' bays – a world first. We want to build on the success of this scheme, by encouraging all road users to consider driving vehicles with low CO₂ emissions. Our investment in modern pay and display machines and the innovative way which our pay by phone system RingGo works has given us the ability to extend the scheme.”