



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

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Clive Betts MP  
House of Commons  
Westminster  
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17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 about the private parking Code of Practice and the National Parking Platform.

### **Private parking Code of Practice**

As you mention, the Government is currently developing an independent Code of Practice for private parking companies to implement the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019. If a parking company fails to follow this Code, they will effectively be banned from issuing parking charges. Produced in close consultation with private parking experts, including consumer and industry groups, the Code will set out straightforward rules that private parking companies across England, Scotland and Wales must follow.

As you will be aware, following the publication of the Code of Practice in February 2022 some private parking companies issued legal proceedings against the decisions to introduce new levels of parking charges and ban additional fees. The Secretary of State decided to concede both challenges, temporarily withdrawing the Code so that the impacts of any changes to parking charge levels and additional fees can be assessed before a decision on these elements of the Code is re-taken.

We intend to publish a draft Impact Assessment and launch a consultation on the issues of parking charge levels and additional fees before the Summer parliamentary recess. The consultation will seek views on the appropriate levels of parking charge levels and additional fees. It will also seek views on the evidence and assumptions set out in the draft Impact Assessment, which will then be finalised and published alongside the re-laid Code. We continue to work with industry and consumer groups to ensure the Code comes into effect as quickly as possible.

We continue to develop the wider framework which will support the implementation of the Private Parking Code of Practice, which includes:

- The creation of a single independent appeals service to handle second-stage appeals against private parking charges;
- Strengthening of the current system of self-regulation by producing a certification scheme, independently assessed by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), to which parking trade associations must adhere if their members wish to request access to DVLA data; and
- The establishment of a Scrutiny and Oversight Board to oversee the operation of the new system and monitor its effectiveness, including through the gathering and use of relevant

data on the private parking sector. We intend to stand up this Board soon after the Code is re-laid.

The Committee previously raised concerns with the then Minister for Levelling Up, the Union and the Constitution. We are taking these into account by:

- Regulating different types of parking arrangements: The letter the Committee sent on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 effectively summarises the debate around this. We expect the Code to apply to parking on private land, but we expect to test through the consultation for views on making allowance for different types of arrangement and contraventions through the charging system. The consultation will set out options for levels of charges, seeking views on those which will inform the decisions we then re-take on charges and additional fees.
- Improving the appeals process: The Committee raised the need to ensure fairness and proportionality within the charging system where appeals are concerned. The Code of Practice will set out the detailed process for appealing a parking charge and will require operators to use the new single appeals service, bringing consistency and raising standards across the industry. It will provide a minimum standard for the way operators handle appeals, with operators expected to develop their own more detailed policies for considering challenges, which will be scrutinised by UKAS-accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies before operators are awarded certification.
- Debt recovery fees: We plan to launch a consultation on additional fees before the summer parliamentary recess. The industry currently sets a cap of £70 on the amount that can be charged for debt recovery services.
- Education of motorists: Through the implementation of the Code we expect standards in relation to signage to improve across the industry, which we can expect to improve motorists' understanding of the nature of enforcement arrangements. Effective communication to motorists will form an important part of the Code, with issues such as information about the new appeals service clearly signposted and explained as appropriate. This should help to tackle misconceptions such as those raised by the Committee in its letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.

## **National Parking Platform**

You raise the digital divide between motorists who own a smartphone and those who do not and the role of the pilot for the national parking platform (NPP). The Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities wrote to every English local authority leader on 4<sup>th</sup> April to emphasise that adequate provisions for parking payments should be made available so that no part of society is digitally excluded. It is the responsibility for all parking operators, including local authorities, to design and operate parking systems which best meet the needs of all their customers.

The NPP proposal, which will allow motorists to use the app of their choice when parking, is designed to improve and simplify the pay-by-phone user experience. The Government recognises the importance of the NPP and has provided £800,000 for the pilot being operated by Manchester City Council. The pilot platform is a prototype and focuses only on the contractual pay-by-phone relationship between parking operators and service providers which enables data exchange, digital payments, and a potential new way of delivering better parking and mobility services to those users using parking apps.

First and foremost, the pilot has demonstrated that a digital parking service can be delivered. Furthermore, the pilot process has identified and addressed many of the technical and contractual challenges that a full production platform would need to consider. More information on the development, use-cases and benefits of the pilot are provided on the website - [National Parking Platform - \(npp-uk.org\)](https://www.npp-uk.org).

The Government is currently considering the governance and funding models which could facilitate the wider roll-out of the NPP.

We hope this provides you and the Committee with reassurance that the Government is taking these issues seriously and are making progress on our plans.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dehenna". The letters are cursive and fluid.

**Dehenna Davison MP**

*Minister for Levelling Up*

*Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R Holden". The signature is cursive and includes a long, sweeping underline.

**Richard Holden MP**

*Minister for Roads and Local Transport*

*Department for Transport*