



**National
Parking
Platform**

The National Parking Platform

A guide for decision-makers

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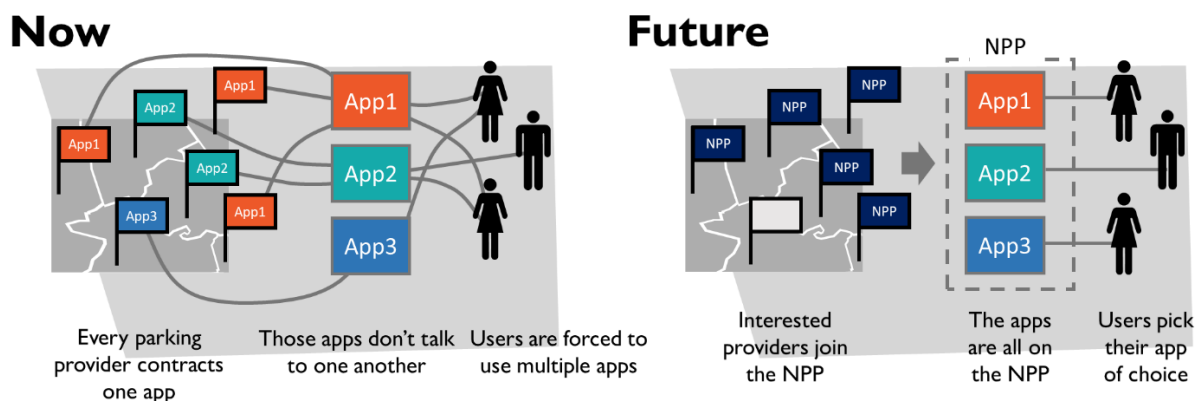
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What is the NPP?

The National Parking Platform is a hub, connecting together parking providers (organisations that allow people to park on their land in return for payment or subject to other conditions) with service providers (people who help users to arrange parking – such as parking apps).

Under the old market model, parking providers sign contracts with individual service providers, most of which tie the parking provider to a single service provider for a fixed period. This means that users trying to park are required to use a range of different apps to pay cashlessly, depending on area or provider. It also reduces the opportunities to tailor services to people – as every app is designed to be one-size-fits-all.

The NPP creates a system that sits between parking providers and service providers, so they can all connect to one another.



This reshapes how users pay for parking:

- Users can choose to pay for parking through any participating app, across a wide range of sites and operators
- Service providers no longer look to secure market share by winning procurement exercises, but by competing directly for users' business through a better service
- There is a viable market for serving special groups of users within the market, such as disabled motorists
- There is the potential to link parking services up with other kinds of transport advice, such as mobility as a service apps

It also changes how parking works on a practical level:

- Local authorities can typically put their parking online without needing to run through a procurement exercise
- Parking data becomes much more plentiful and sophisticated, able to integrate into satnavs and mapping apps as standard
- Enforcement providers increasingly plug into a single system
- Back-office functions can be centralised and automated
- Every participant resolves all their payments in a single transaction.

The NPP is being set up to simplify cashless parking. By creating the infrastructure to handle this, we are also creating a powerful tool capable of handling similar challenges. We therefore expect the NPP to develop to handle other services, such as orchestrating payments for EV charging; managing residents' parking; or providing a platform to pay for existing tolls or charges – all through the same interface.

Q - Is it an app?

No – the NPP isn't an app. It's a system that sits behind the apps, linking all of them up to a larger range of parking sites.

What the NPP does

The NPP:

- Brokers parking transactions between service providers (working on behalf of users) and parking providers.
- Delivers the legal and technical arrangements needed to allow these transactions to take place.
- Reconciles financial payments between members – particularly from service providers to parking providers.
- Provides data on parking sessions to enable back-office functionality.
- Manages and organises data relating to parking.
- Develops new services related to parking and road access.

Membership of the NPP

The nature of the NPP changes the relationship between the parking provider and service providers. Previously, the relationship was built around contracts between one parking provider and one service provider. The NPP remakes this market, so that everyone connects to the NPP in the middle of the system – so everyone gets access to everyone else’s services. That way, users can pay for *all* participating parking through *any* participating app.

The membership agreement

All participating parking and service providers sign a document called the Membership Agreement (MA). This sets out what all the participants agree to do so they can work together through the NPP, including:

- The general responsibilities of any organisation on the NPP – e.g. due diligence requirements; data handling responsibilities
- The specific way in which individual NPP services operate. For cashless parking, this means setting out how data flows and what different participants are expected to do at different stages of the process.

The MA is designed to be a standard, simple set of terms and conditions, which all participants agree to. This reduces the complexity of joining – as standard terms reduce the need for legal review and as a result simplify the process of signing up. This is particularly aimed at helping smaller parking providers join the system, aiming to maximise the coverage of the system (and the quality of the joined up data that results).

Each member joins by signing a Registration Form, which agrees to the terms of the MA, and which notes the preferences (e.g. frequency of account payment) for an individual member.

The MA is a rolling 12 month contract, which renews automatically. A member can leave at any time, subject to a short notice period.

Q – what is a member expected to do?

In broad terms, the key membership obligations are:

- To agree to arrange parking between users and parking providers on an agreed minimum set of terms, open to all service provider members. (This does not preclude separate bilateral arrangements).
- To provide the NPP with information necessary to ensure the effective operation of the system, in a consistent way; as well as appointing the NPP as a data processor for the purposes of GPDR.

- To handle financial flows and communicate pricing information in a consistent way. This includes requirements for service providers to hold funds in dedicated funds, and governs how they take their fees during the transaction process,
- To keep information up to date, so the NPP remains accurate and other members can trust the quality of its data.
- To accept a standardised approach to handling back-office tasks such as managing complaints and refunds across the system.
- To make users aware that the NPP is in operation, particular through nationally-consistent branding, notices and signage.
- To meet all technical requirements and not to introduce vulnerabilities into the platform.

In addition:

- Service providers must demonstrate their financial viability
- Private parking providers must confirm their right to charge for a given site.

What kind of membership – parking providers

For cashless parking, there are three types of membership currently on offer to parking providers:

- Early access membership – designed for parking providers who want to join right away, especially if an existing contract is coming to an end. Early access means NPP services (including multi-vendor payment) can be unlocked immediately, through the existing technical systems and contractual structures. This system will automatically convert to full membership once it is available, and will operate without transaction costs until that point.
- Full membership – designed for parking providers who want to offer multi-vendor cashless parking through the NPP, from late 2024 onwards. This provides all the cashless parking services of the NPP.
- Associate membership – designed for parking providers locked into an exclusive contract, but who are still keen to take advantage of some NPP features, and have the platform ready to take them on as full members. Associate members:
 - Share their parking data through the NPP (e.g. with enforcement providers, mapping apps)
 - Receive standard national location codes for parking sites
 - Are 'ready to go' for full membership, and can move across without further technical setup
 - But DON'T handle actual payments through the NPP

Under current arrangements, local authority parking providers would not expect to pay any costs for either early access or associate membership, provided they have registered their interest in the NPP before 31/3/24.

Q – why would I wait for full membership?

Early access membership is the fastest way onto the NPP, and provides a fully-functional cashless parking system. However, full membership will mean:

- Legally simpler membership arrangements, as the MA will reduce the complexity of signing up
- Easier onboarding, with more of the work automated through a portal
- More features available – e.g. all service provider payments resolved through a single bill.

What kind of membership – service providers & equipment providers

The NPP opens up the parking market in an unprecedented way, and as a result we have a number of organisations looking to join as service providers. For those organisations not already in the system as service providers under early access arrangements, we are looking to onboard new service providers in time for the full platform going live.

Equipment providers also have an enduring role with the NPP, helping to make new functionality available on the ground. Membership will provide a route through which equipment providers to receive technical support, and help shape the ongoing development of the platform. The intention is to have arrangements in place for this soon after the full platform is operational.

We currently expect there to be one kind of membership for service providers, and another for equipment providers. We will be providing more information about fees later in the year.

Costs of membership

The NPP is largely funded through transaction fees, reflecting the actual costs of running the platform.

Membership fees, where they exist, are intended to reflect the fixed costs of having a particular member on the NPP. This primarily relates to due diligence, carried out to ensure that a member really is who they say they are.

As the risk of ID fraud is extremely low for a local authority or other public body, we do not expect to carry out NPP-specific due diligence checks. As such, we expect there to be no membership fees for UK local authorities or other UK public bodies.

We will be sharing fees for other bodies later in the year.

Typical costs for a UK local authority as a full member of the NPP

Joining fee - £0 if registered interest before 31/3/24, otherwise £10,000

Membership fee - £0/yr

Transaction fee – approx. 2p/transaction which is expected to be offset against wider market efficiencies

User experience & services

When the NPP goes live in an area, the transitional issues for users are expected to be minimal. Unlike when one monopoly contract gives way to another, there is no need for users to register for an alternative app and set up a new account – existing arrangements will continue to work. Similarly, geolocation functions on phones will pick up any changes to location coding automatically, without the need for user consideration.

General information to users about the ability to use the NPP is expected to primarily come through local media and communications, with signs and notices playing a secondary role. Again, as there is full backwards-compatibility with any previous system, removing outdated signage is a lower priority than at any traditional handover.

What signs will be on the road?

A revised parking sign is under development for use alongside the full national platform, noting the ability to pay by any participating app; and providing a location code for doing so. Roll-out of this sign will be voluntary, and is being designed to be deliverable by sticker rather than a full sign replacement.

Over time, notices from existing providers would ideally be removed or replaced with new notices explaining the existence and operation of the NPP. Standard patterns for notices, with the NPP logo, are being developed with the parking industry and will be available before the full system goes live.

Q – does the NPP sign include all service provider logos?

Parking providers can put up whatever notice they think best serves users. However the NPP's preferred option makes use of a recognisable sign demonstrating multi-vendor payment, and the logo of the NPP itself, as a way of communicating that it is possible to pay through many apps. Given the range of service provider uptake, we expect that users will soon expect all apps to be on the system and will not need directing towards member service providers.

What non-app options will be available?

The overall options for payment are a matter for the parking provider. This is especially true for a local authority, where decision-makers are democratically accountable for their choices.

However, the way that the NPP joins up a wider market and makes payment more efficient helps a number of different non-app payment channels work better. It can also enable payment options that would otherwise lack the necessary scale to be commercially viable.

Payment machines – The NPP does not seek to remove existing payment machines, such as pay-and-display machines. Makers of this equipment are able to integrate their systems

into the NPP, and there are significant benefits in doing so in terms of joining up occupancy and availability data.

Other cash payments – some local authorities already accept payments from companies such as PayPoint. We expect this to naturally integrate with the NPP and provide a reliable second route to cash-based payments.

The way the NPP reorganises the market also creates opportunities for people to create new methods of payment, including those based around cash. We look forward to exploring these options further with service providers.

Telephone - Currently, local cashless parking procurements frequently bundle in a telephone service. This is no longer possible under a competitive market. The limitations of signage also means that it is not possible to point users towards multiple phone payment providers.

To ensure that telephone services remain in place, the NPP expects to set up a national telephone payment line for NPP-compatible parking, with a single number, and with the management of the service subcontracted to an existing service provider or a third party.

Can the system incorporate free parking for residents?

Some local authorities offer a free parking session, or a free hour of parking to local residents. Early technical assessments suggest the NPP can accommodate arrangements like this, as the existing enforcement infrastructure already handles the necessary information.

Successful implementation will require the relevant local authority to maintain and share a list of eligible people/vehicles.

Q – must parking providers work with all service providers?

All member parking providers are expected to offer their parking to all member service providers, other than in exceptional circumstances (mainly where service providers cannot handle particular payment/tariff options).

The NPP acts as gatekeeper to the whole system, and can pick up any issues on behalf of parking operators or service providers. Failure to play by the rules of the system can lead to suspension or termination of membership.

Online presence

The NPP will maintain a webpage explaining how the system works and who is participating. However there are no plans for a standalone NPP app.

User fees and payments

Historically, the cost paid by a driver has been fixed by a contract between the parking provider and the service provider. Competition law means this is not possible in a multi-vendor world. Instead, the NPP sets up a competitive market, where each participant makes a choice about the fee they charge.

- Local authorities and other parking providers set the price for parking.
- Local authorities and other parking providers make a small allowance for transaction costs (commission). This matches current practice, and will be set at the discretion of the parking provider.
- The NPP sets a transaction fee, based on its costs.
- The service provider sets a service fee, reflecting the cost of using their app.

All these fees are set independently; although the service provider's fee is set in the context of a competitive market. In the Netherlands, where a system similar to the NPP has existed for many years, service fees are lower than they are in the UK. We already have one app on the NPP that does not charge a convenience fee for parking, because it expects to make its revenue in other ways; and over time we expect to have more.

Payments flow from the user to the parking provider through three steps.

- The user pays the service provider
- The NPP bills the service provider on behalf of participating parking providers. The service provider pays the requested sum to the NPP, keeping its service fee.
- The NPP takes its transaction fee, and then distributes the parking fees to the individual parking providers through a single payment.

We expect parking providers will be able to be credited daily, weekly or monthly depending on their particular circumstances – but more frequent resolution may carry additional costs.

Setting parking fees

Parking providers set their parking fees and publish them to Service providers through the NPP's main portal, which we expect to be fully self-service. This should be as simple as filling in the existing spreadsheets that form the bedrock of cashless parking systems.

Once a parking provider hits 'send', the new rates will be uploaded, and brought into effect from the live date you set.

Q – can the cost of parking in the NPP differ from the posted tariff?

In practice, some authorities already charge a different price in apps compared to on the road. This is a matter for local authority discretion, and the NPP will continue to make this possible.

A policy of total discretion creates a risk of parking providers setting costs in the app substantially above the posted tariff. The NPP reserves the right to monitor, analyse and flag such discrepancies, and in the event of severe differences to suspend parking providers.

Q – can an LA make the Service Provider charge only the posted tariff?

The NPP cannot force a particular price on multiple service providers in a nationwide service without breaking competition law.

However we recognise that some authorities actively wish to ensure that the online price matches the posted tariff. For these cases, we are creating a mechanism so **LAs can be confident that users can park for the posted tariff**. This price includes the full parking fee, the NPP transaction fee, and an allowance for a service fee (see below).

Service providers are not obliged to sell parking at/below the posted tariff in these situations, but the NPP will record those that do and make the data publicly available.

What is the NPP’s transaction fee?

The NPP’s cashless parking service is designed to run on a cost-recovery basis. This means that we need to know more about expected uptake before we can give a definitive view about the price of the platform. However, based on our early calculations, we think that the transaction fee will be around 2p, worth 0.6% of a typical transaction.

The costs that the NPP recovers have been worked out in consultation with local authority experts. It includes core operational costs, such as software maintenance and back office staff. It also provides for the ongoing development of the platform to ensure new services become available.

Transaction fees are never paid directly by the local authority/parking provider, but are taken from the money paid by users before final reconciliation.

Q – is the NPP a new, extra cost?

The NPP has been operating for nearly two years in its pilots. In these areas, it has not been accompanied by a rise in prices.

With the switch to the NPP, the NPP fee becomes one of a number of unavoidable costs of cashless parking, similar to card acquisition fees or PCI certification costs – all of which are conventionally covered by the concept of ‘commission’ (see below). Some of these costs are reduced by the move towards the NPP, meaning that the NPP costs are balanced by savings elsewhere. Service providers will make a decision about whether or not to directly absorb the NPP fee within their existing cost structure.

In NPP trial areas, service providers are already actively competing on price. We therefore expect that typical users will be able to get prices that are the same, or lower, through the NPP. Over the long term, we expect service fees to go down as a result of competition.



Real-world competition in Coventry

NPP does not comment on or endorse any statements made

Commission fees

Historically, service providers have collected two fees for cashless parking –

- A convenience fee – normally set as a fixed amount per transaction, and explicitly shown to users as an additional part of their bill.
- ‘Commission’ – normally charged by service providers to local authorities, and deducted from the posted tariff. This is normally held to cover procedural costs of transactions – for example fees to organisations such as VISA or WorldPay, payment processing or certification costs.

Commission means that local authorities do not receive 100% of the posted tariff (as is the case with all other types of revenue collection). The NPP pilot has made a standard 2.5% allowance for commission costs, which broadly matches market practice.

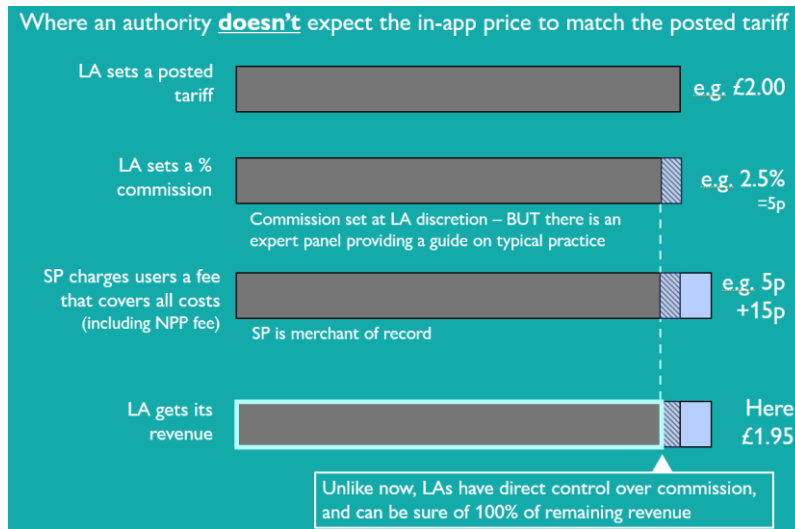
Under the full NPP, parking providers will set a standard commission rate, which will apply to all service providers. This is at the parking provider’s discretion, but the NPP will periodically make available advice on prevailing transaction costs to help make an informed judgment.

In order to make this work, this is accompanied by a standardisation of payment structures, with the service provider becoming the merchant of record consistently across the NPP.

This shift has two important consequences for parking providers:

- Parking providers are no longer at-risk for changes to transaction costs. After deducting the commission (which they set) local authorities will retain 100% of revenues.

- Parking providers are not responsible for NPP fees, and are not liable for any changes (unless they are seeking to encourage a particular price for users – see below).



Q – as a parking provider, what if I set commission at zero?

Parking providers can set commissions at whatever level they choose. However, service providers will independently decide how costs are passed on to users. Where parking providers depart substantially from preexisting practice, this is likely to result in increased costs for users.

For local authorities, we consider that local democracy provides a particularly strong basis for accountability. For the wider parking sector, competition between parking sites will depend on the price to users – so changing commission should have much the same effect as changing the price. Given that the NPP will be the fastest way to compare the cost of nearby parking options, we expect competition to be a powerful safeguard.

Q – what if I (as a parking provider) am currently merchant of record?

One of the key lessons we have learned from looking at existing multi-vendor parking payment systems around the world is that there is a real benefit to standardising how transactions work. In the Netherlands, this has led to service provider fees that are about a quarter to a third lower than typical UK practice. It also gives those same service providers much more scope to innovate their product, meaning that users get ways of paying that are better-tailored to their needs (e.g. monthly subscriptions).

Few local authorities act as merchant of record at present. Were they to continue to do so in the NPP, they would need to manage and update Merchant IDs for every service provider – creating a much larger workload than currently exists.

We expect to standardise the merchant of record as the service provider. This ensures the simplest and most innovative approach across the system. The commission mechanism should ensure that this does not disadvantage any affected local authority.

Matching the in-app price to a posted tariff

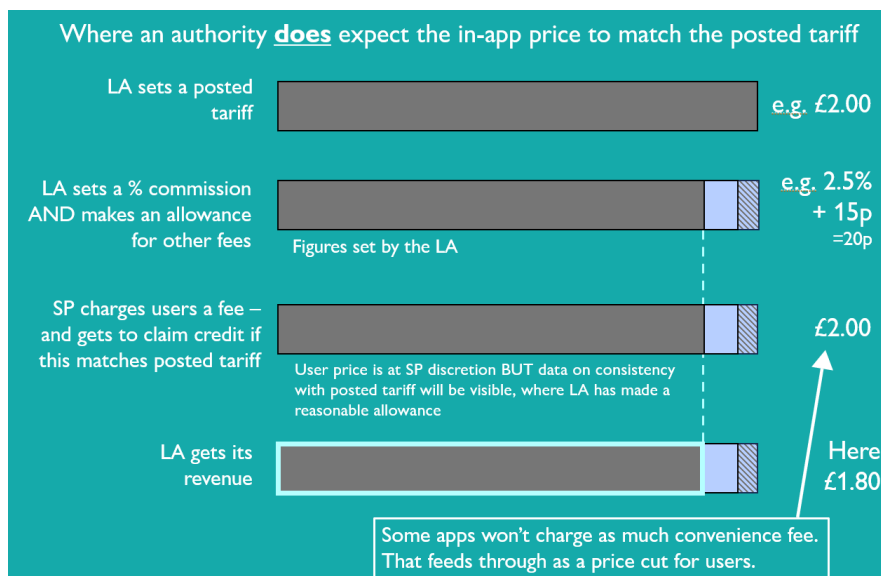
Many local authorities aim to ensure that the in-app price matches the posted tariff for a location, and historically have absorbed the costs of a service provider's convenience fee in order to ensure parity.

Competition law prevents direct setting of the price in a multi-vendor system. However local authorities can use the systems on the NPP in such a way as to be confident that users can secure parking for the posted tariff or even less.

In order to achieve this:

- The local authority sets a commission rate that aims to cover all likely costs of cashless parking – both the traditional 'commission' costs associated with costs of transactions, and the more-visible convenience fee. It may choose to follow general advice provided by the NPP to help achieve this in their specific circumstances.
- Service providers choose whether or not to match the posted tariff.
- The NPP records which service providers do match the posted tariff, and makes this information available to the relevant local authorities, as well as to others interested in making price comparisons.

Based on the current range of pricing policies among service providers, it is likely that typical users will be able to secure parking at the posted tariff, and some may be able to secure it for less. In the latter case, the saving goes directly to the user as a price cut.



Q – will all service providers be measured on how they match the posted tariff?

Where local authorities are actively trying to match in-app prices to the posted tariff, and making reasonable allowances for relevant costs in order to achieve this, we expect the NPP to monitor whether service providers have made the match.

Elsewhere, we expect to focus on more general data to help people make price comparisons.

Revenue-shares

Some authorities have arrangements with service providers that see parts of the convenience fee shared, or contributions made towards other causes.

The financial structure of the NPP is designed to be simple, without unnecessary charge-backs or side-flows. Instead, the core tools for setting the parking charge allow you to achieve the same outcomes. Both can be duplicated through setting either a) the main parking charge; or b) the commission rate per transaction.

Other parking revenues

Some authorities currently realise revenue from parking through payments that are not part of the main charge - such as a share of fees generated by a service provider from reminder texts. These fees are usually relatively small in the context of wider parking revenue, but can play an important role in the financial situation of a local authority's transport team.

The biggest source of revenue for a local authority parking team comes from getting people to park at their sites, and our analysis suggests that one new parking session for a parking provider is typically worth more than dozens of reminder texts. The NPP is designed to focus on increasing the use of parking sites, by making them more attractive, more accessible, and easier to use. By driving up revenue, it maximises an authority's opportunity to make money.

This is especially true for early adopters of the NPP, who will have a significant advantage over other parking sites in their area – as the extra person they can attract could easily be the existing user of another nearby car park.

Q – what controls are there on a service provider setting their fees?

The primary control on service providers and their fees is that they operate in a competitive market. Charging users excessive amounts will put their market share at risk; while cutting costs may give them an edge over their competitors. In the Netherlands, where a similar system has operated for over a decade, service fees are significantly lower than the UK.

In order to ensure transparent pricing, the NPP will also set procedural requirements for service providers:

- They must maintain a transparent pricing policy, available online.
- They must inform users when relevant service fees are changing.
- They cannot price discriminate based on e.g. what car a person is driving.

Pricing information will be available for consumer affairs advocates and price comparison websites, and we aim to make good use of the UK's existing suite of market and price comparison services.

Q - how can users compare service fees / prices?

The UK is a world-leader in terms of price- and service-comparison websites. We are building the NPP to take advantage of this.

We are already talking with organisations like Transport Focus about how we can help them to bring their skills on product comparison to this new marketplace.

We are also aware that by creating an open market we are making it easy for people to offer live price comparison services between different app providers. Indeed, we recognise that some service providers will actively wish to make such comparisons available to show how their apps are cheaper than the competition.

If this is not enough, the NPP will take further steps to help people compare the market.

Financial reconciliation

One consequence of setting up the NPP is that it consolidates financial payments between different members. We expect that service providers will only need to make one payment to the NPP to resolve all accounts; and that parking providers will only deal with one payment from the NPP per period.

Timescales

The timescales around reconciliation are based on the desire for some larger parking providers to arrange frequent payments. It also recognises that for other parking providers this may be an unhelpful and expensive way to handle transactions.

Parking providers currently reconcile on a variety of timescales – monthly, weekly or daily. We expect to be able to offer similar reconciliation windows, but the NPP may pass costs of frequent transactions (e.g. banking transaction fees) on to the parking provider.

The reconciliation periods of service providers and the NPP will need to reflect the wider speed at which the market clears. We expect to confirm the precise mechanics of this as the software platform is completed.

Reconciliation data

The NPP automatically records the split of payments between different service providers and different parking providers. Parking providers will be able to access reports on the breakdown of parking sessions and revenues by service provider. Service providers will be able to access reports on the breakdown of parking sessions and revenues by parking provider.

This information is commercially sensitive, and NPP members agree to handle it with appropriate care. The NPP will not disclose service provider shares of the overall market without prior consent.

Data flows

The NPP provides a central report-generation system that provides the following services:

- Basic information about parking sites, such as prices, terms and the number of spaces
- More sophisticated information (where available) such as occupancy levels

In order to allow the auditing of payments between members, it also keeps a record of parking transactions that have been undertaken.

Live data

The NPP also provides live data about parking sites that can be used by providers of journey information and others. By doing so on a consistent basis, we expect to make this useful and attractive to satnav providers, major technology companies and more.

The NPP expects to provide live information on:

- The size and capacity of parking sites
- Live occupancy (where equipment allows)
- Exceptional closures and other key information

DPIA

The NPP avoids the use of personal data where possible, focusing instead on a vehicle's numberplate. This minimises data protection issues. Personal data is held by either the service provider (on behalf of the user) or the parking provider (normally to confirm eligibility for a particular parking right).

We hope to provide a template DPIA later in the year.

GPDR

The NPP operates by default as a data processor, using numberplates rather than personal data. This is set out in the Membership Agreement. By becoming a member, a service provider or parking provider commissions the NPP to process data on its behalf.

Joining the NPP – parking providers

The precise process for getting a parking provider onboard the NPP varies slightly depending on the type of membership; but generally follows a similar pattern:

Stage 1 – registering interest

All interested organisations should register their interest with the NPP, by emailing npp@dft.gov.uk. UK local authorities registering their interest before 31/3/24 will have NPP joining fees waived (and are not required to join the NPP to secure this discount).

Following this email, the NPP team will be in touch with a short survey, designed to ensure effective communications and to allow for work-planning.

Stage 2- choosing a membership type and signing a membership agreement

As discussed in the ‘Membership’ section, there are three types of NPP membership. An organisation will need to decide which it seeks to make use of – early access, full, or associate.

With this decision made, the organisation will need to secure any necessary internal agreement to proceed.

Q – as a UK Local Authority, what internal agreement do I need to join the NPP?

Each LA makes its own choices about it handles decision-making. However, experience to date suggests that a typical decision-making process involves:

- Internal discussions at a working level to confirm that the service provided by the NPP is desirable on policy grounds, and is financially acceptable.
- A governed decision within the organisation confirming readiness to be a member

LAs joining the pilot have not needed to go through procurement, and we expect this to continue to be the case as we move to the full platform as a result of the way in which services are organised. In particular, a) the NPP’s services are a cost to users not to the LA; b) the NPP is built on a non-exclusive basis, meaning that it qualifies as a concession agreement; and the NPP’s total transaction fees fall well below the baseline thresholds set by local government; c) the NPP provides a technically unique service.

However the final assessment of the need for procurement is a matter for the individual LA.

With this agreed, the organisation usually signs a Registration Form, signing up to the NPP Membership Agreement. The exception to this is early access membership, where a series of standardised bilateral contracts with participating services providers will need to be signed.

With this complete, the parking provider is formally a member of the NPP.

Stage 3 – coming onboard

Once a parking provider is a member, a target onboarding date will be set. Where relevant (and in particular when an existing contract is due to end), the NPP onboarding team can arrange a target date ahead of membership, and begin working through the technical steps in this stage in advance of formal membership.

Technical onboarding revolves around the assembly of relevant data about relevant parking sites and the terms, conditions and tariffs that apply. In most cases, this will work from existing cashless parking data; in some cases it will require this information to be assembled for the first time.

In particular, the onboarding team will require:

- A list of the relevant parking sites and their key characteristics (number of spaces; type of payment in use)
- Tariffs live at these sites, and the conditions under which these apply
- Existing parking location codes (which the NPP can normally obtain centrally from an existing service provider)

For full or early access membership, the onboarding team will also require the following types of financial information:

- Banking information
- A commission rate through which the parking provider allows for basic transaction costs

A full breakdown of relevant information is available as part of the Membership Agreement

In some cases, it may be necessary to recode some sites where the existing code is in use elsewhere. The parking provider can also decide if it wishes to recode its other sites to create consistency for the user. The NPP and parking provider will agree a recoding list on this basis; and the NPP will allocate a stock of location codes to the parking provider.

Once the relevant data has been assembled, the onboarding team will begin the technical task of bringing the parking provider's sites onto the system. In early access, this process has typically taken 8-12 weeks, but this is expected to increase as the full platform (with its streamlined onboarding process) becomes available.

The onboarding team will enable the necessary arrangements for live access to the system, including:

- Providing logins for staff,
- Providing an API key for enforcement operations

They will also provide staff training to prepare for the platform coming into use.

During this time, the parking provider may wish to begin to prepare arrangements for going live in stage 4. In particular, they may wish to plan out any changes to signage or notices taking place at go-live.

This stage ends when the onboarding team and the parking provider both confirm that the NPP is ready to go live for this parking provider.

Stage 4 – going live

With the necessary arrangements confirmed as ready to go, the NPP and the parking provider will confirm a go-live date.

At this point:

- Service provider members are informed of the go-live date
- Any on-street alterations (e.g. replacement of location codes, alterations of signs or notices) take place
- Communications plans to explain changes to local people begin – in particular press notices for local media, and any communications information for posting at affected parking sites.
- For local authorities, local councillors and/or MPs are notified of the go-live date, using a standard form letter.

On the go-live date,

- The NPP activates the relevant payment arrangements.
- Service providers and the relevant enforcement operators confirm that the system is working online and on the street.
- Parking providers confirm that reporting functions are working effectively.

At this point, the NPP contacts the parking provider to confirm the system is in operation. This is confirmed following the first financial reconciliation.

Special circumstances – early access members

Early access members join the NPP using different legal arrangements to the full platform. They will need to confirm their acceptance of the NPP membership agreement in order to continue using the NPP once the full platform is in operation.