



National Parking Platform

Introductory pack

Executive summary

A better service

The National Parking Platform is a hub linking together parking sites and parking apps. Local authorities and others that join can offer their parking to motorists on all participating apps, ending the current system of monopoly contracts.

This saves frustration, cuts paperwork and rebuilds the current market around customer service and innovation.

Easy to access

The NPP is built so it is easy for local authorities to join. We have reshaped the market, so the running costs of the NPP are well below procurement thresholds; and have created a membership model that ensures LAs long-term influence. This means LAs should be able to join the NPP without procurement.

And this is done in a way that leaves local authorities firmly in control of their policies and revenue streams.

Proven

The National Parking Platform has been piloted in Manchester, Cheshire West and Chester, Coventry and Oxfordshire, and already handles 125,000 transactions a month.

This means links to the parking industry are already well-established, with the four largest parking apps already connected. The system also automates several back-office tasks.

Action needed

Participation in the NPP is voluntary. But until Easter 2024 we are waiving joining and membership fees for local authorities who indicate they are willing to join.

LAs can do this now, even if they have existing contracts – and the NPP will be ready to take them onboard when current contracts end.

This is a costless and risk-free step, as councils are free to leave the NPP at their discretion.

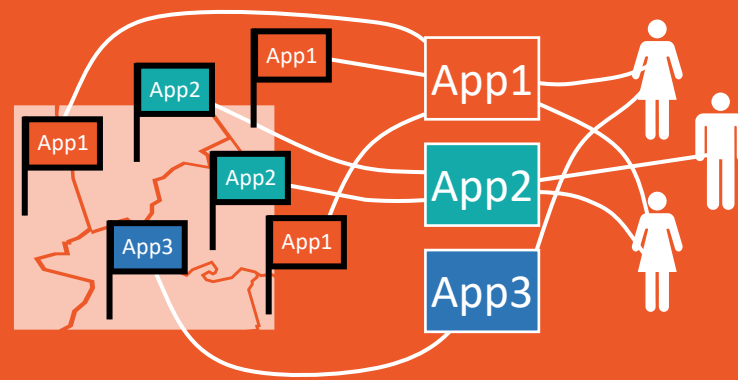
What is the National Parking Platform?

Pay-by-phone and pay-by-app services have been a growing part of the parking ecosystem since the 2000s. Users appreciate the opportunity to pay without cash, and without having to visit a machine.

However, when these services first emerged, no effort was made to organise how they worked together. As a result, the system continues to be organised through a series of procurements by local authorities and others. Each authority is tied to a single app for the length of its contract; and any user travelling around the country must contend with multiple apps.

The National Parking Platform (NPP) is being built to fix this. The NPP is not an app itself, but by creating a hub between parking providers and apps, all participating apps can offer parking in all locations. As a result, users can use their preferred app everywhere; and local authorities get access to all participating providers.

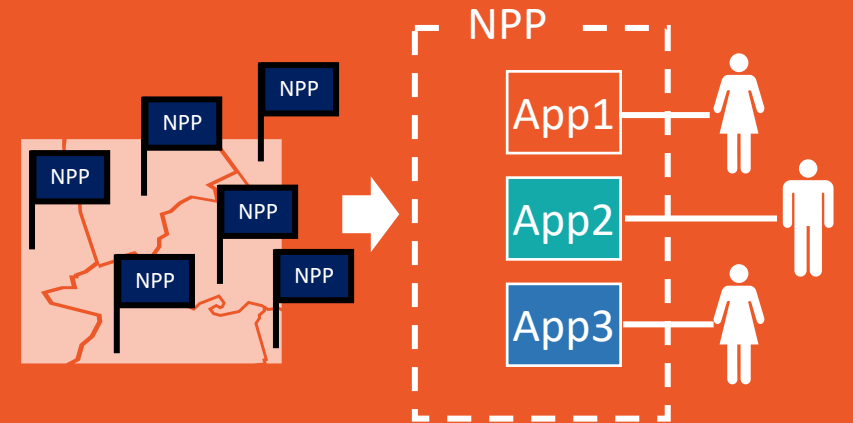
Now



Each area contracts an app on a monopoly basis

Users are forced to use a particular app to park in an area. So they must use many different apps to park everywhere

Future



Many areas are on the NPP

The apps are all on the NPP

Users pick their app of choice

Key benefits

The NPP is designed to join up different parts of the existing parking system, bringing benefits to all.

For Local authorities

- Lower costs
- Procurement no longer required
- Better service to the public
- Data to support wider policy

For App-providers

- Reliable access to the whole market
- Competing for individual users on service quality and price

For Users

- Ability to use their preferred app everywhere
- Apps compete for their business
- More services targeting special users (e.g. less digitally confident users)

The NPP will remain a neutral digital platform, ensuring fair dealing between the different participants. The governance of the NPP will ensure impartiality and trustworthiness.

Existing pilots

The NPP has been undergoing real-world trials since late 2021. This took the underlying concepts and standards, and united them into a working technical system.

Having started in Central Manchester, the pilot has now rolled out to a further three locations, confirming that the concept is able to scale up. Over 125,000 parking transactions are handled through the pilot every month, using four existing apps. More authorities are coming onboard at present.

The announcement that the NPP is expanding to work nationally means we are now building the infrastructure so systems tested in the pilot can operate at the scale required to manage the nation's parking payments.



Growing ecosystem

The NPP pilots have built and tested the links necessary to make the NPP function. This began with integrating a number of existing parking apps into the system; and now covers all of the key functional interfaces that are necessary to manage the situation on-street.

The architects of the NPP include the former Chair of the British Parking Association and current President of the European Parking Association. This means that the links with the rest of the parking system have been crafted by experts, with buy-in from the top management of relevant companies.

Many in the parking industry, including both large and small app providers, have been pushing for an open market and are firmly in favour of the NPP.

NPP

App providers

The four largest parking apps are hooked up. More want to join

Enforcement providers

Three main providers are already connected; two more are committed to join

Equipment manufacturers

Integrating to enable pay on arrival and departure

Data analysts

Looking to use the feeds from the pilots to create new dashboards and toolkits

Potential to evolve

The NPP creates a joined-up system to pay for parking. However, the way it is built means that it has the potential to do more. In the future, it has the capacity to join up payments for:



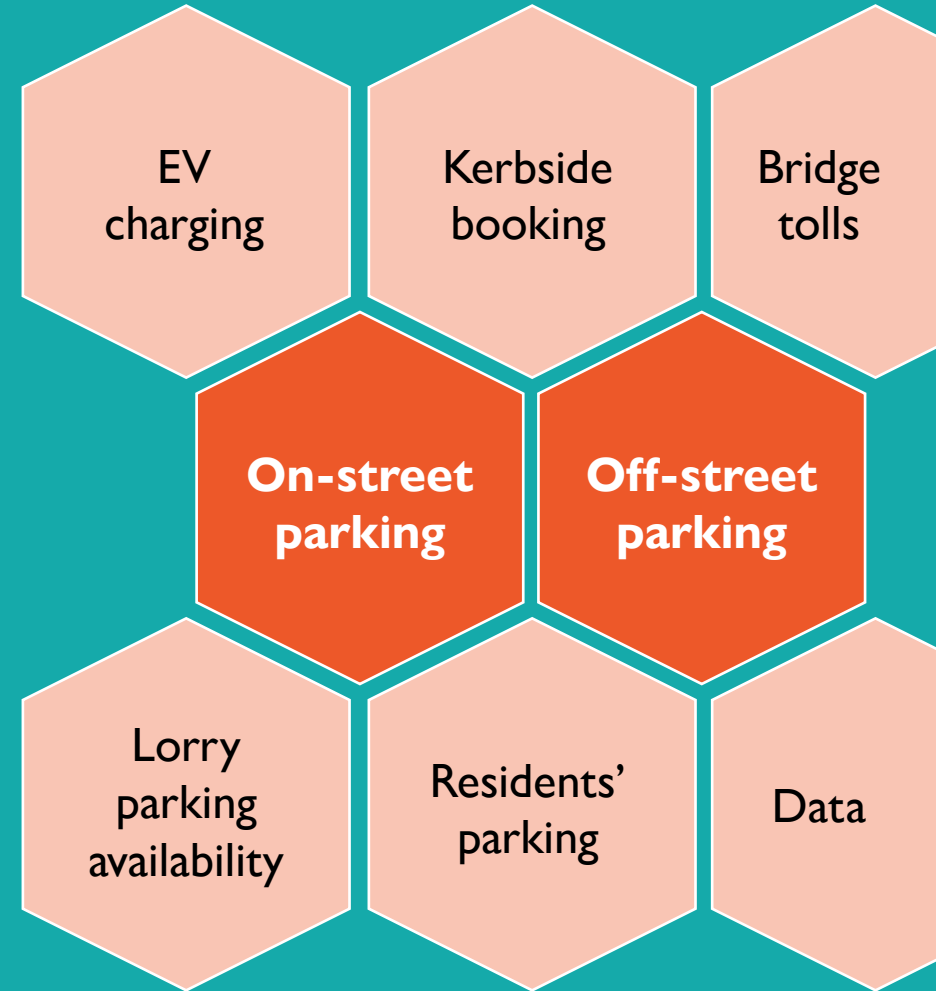
Electric vehicle charging points

Longer-term parking (e.g. residents' parking)

(Existing) charges and bridge tolls

Once the main NPP platform is established and in wide use, NPP should continue to develop, and bring these features onboard.

The NPP brings data and information together, which can support local traffic management functions and provide live information on matters such as parking availability.



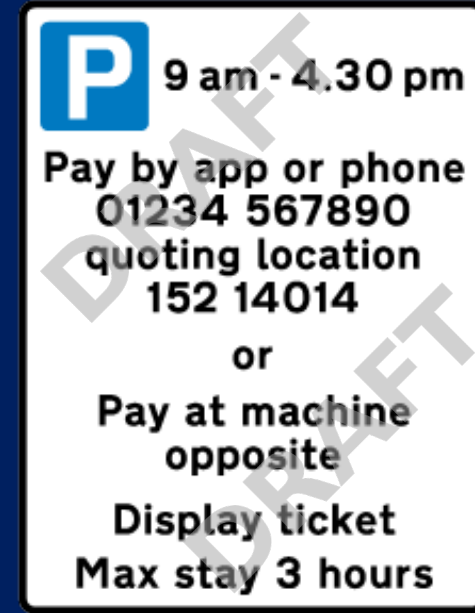
What happens on the street?

Very little will change on the street

Users will simply use their favourite app to pay for parking in any participating area. The arrival of the NPP will not affect the availability of conventional parking meters (which remain the responsibility of the parking provider).

Most people who park by app use the geolocation functions on their phone to identify where they are. This means they automatically take advantage of the NPP where available

To help those who park using the parking codes on signs or notices, the NPP will ultimately create a central set of codes for parking bays. This will be implemented over a period of time, and changes to signs will be limited.



...But links to new technology are built in

The NPP's design makes it easy to connect the latest generation of parking sensors and ANPR.

Barrierless parking, automated payment, online booking and other features are available as soon as the relevant equipment is installed at the site.

What happens behind the scenes?

Currently, parking providers (such as local authorities) connect to a single service provider (app). Under the NPP, parking providers connect to the NPP, which then connects to all the participating service providers.



Behind the scenes, the NPP uses the internationally recognised APDS data standard to relay key information about parking sites to apps:

- Price
- Availability

Parking providers can update this online, whenever they need to.

Using this information, apps broker parking agreements for their users, which are recorded through the NPP.

The NPP organises regular billing across the sector so that service providers pay the right sums to parking providers.

How are revenues shared?

Currently, contracts for pay-by-app services fix how much each local authority and service operator can make from each parking transaction. The move to the NPP replaces this direct relationship with an open market.

Based on conversations to date, the NPP team understand the top priority of local authorities is control and stability of revenue. The new model is built to provide that certainty.

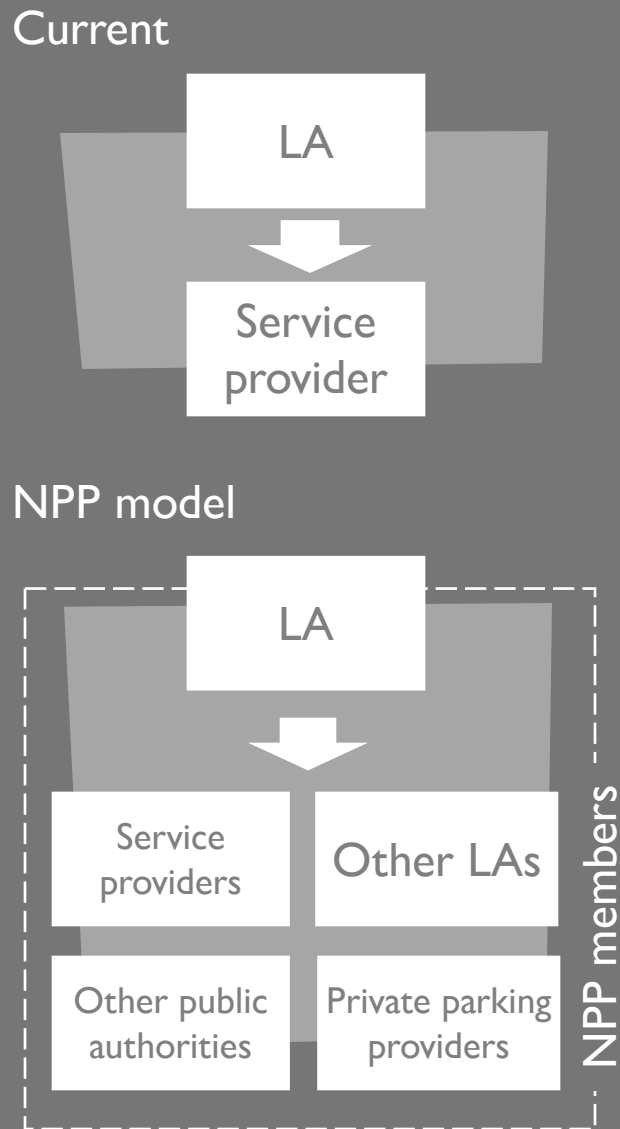
The NPP records the numbers and values of transactions and manages payments. Local authorities get their revenues in a regular single payment consolidating what different service providers owe.

How are prices set?

- Local authorities set a 'wholesale price' that all apps must pay to use the parking. The question of how this relates to an on-street price would be for the local authority to decide.
- The NPP charges a small fixed fee to cover its costs
- Apps charge a convenience fee to their customers as they judge fit, in the context of a competitive market.



Getting onto the NPP



The NPP will change the way in which local authorities get access to pay-by-app services. **There will no longer be a need to procure the services of a single company** – instead, authorities join the NPP simply by signing up.

Authorities do not need to wait for existing contracts to end before becoming NPP members. Once existing contracts expire, they are able to go to multi-operator arrangements automatically.

Members of the NPP will get access to all participating apps as soon as the system goes live in their area and existing contracts lapse. Those already on the pilot projects will also switch by default.

Membership lasts indefinitely, although a local authority is free to leave at their discretion.

The relationship is still governed by a formal contract, and therefore fully accountable. Members also have a dedicated route through which to make their views heard about the long-term direction of the NPP.

Becoming a member

Nothing stops you joining the NPP now

**Until Easter 2024
joining is free**

Membership of the NPP is designed to be a no-barriers, no-regrets choice.

- ▶ Becoming a member of the NPP does not compel you to use it immediately. That means existing contracts can expire without creating legal problems, but you have the NPP waiting for you as your next option when those contracts expire.
- ▶ The NPP provides its services on standard terms, meaning there are few legal hurdles to jump before using the platform.
- ▶ Members can leave at their discretion.

Until Easter 2024 we are waiving joining fees for all those who tell us they intend to become members*. There are no annual fees for local authorities.
So authorities on the 'early bird' list will pay no fees.

*Official membership is a later, separate step

Types of membership

We recognise many local authorities are currently in contracts that have years left to run. We still want to make it possible to join the NPP now, and get access to at least some of the benefits. One way of doing this may be through having different tiers of membership.

Full membership

- Using the NPP for all pay-by-app parking services,
- Multiple vendors
- Live data on the platform

Associate membership

- Parking data included in the platform;
- Finishing existing contracts
- Ready to switch to full membership when the contract ends

Membership will also be open to non-local authority parking providers, in both the private and public sector.

The joining process

Intention to join

Membership

Information gathered

Ready to go

Live

Onboarding

With more than 300 local authorities in the UK with an interest in parking, we cannot bring everyone onto the NPP overnight.

We expect to prioritise those authorities whose existing contracts are expiring. After that, it is likely the first priority will be those authorities that join first.

Onboarding will require support from parking managers in the member authority, to convert data about parking in your area into the formats used by the NPP.

Next steps

Timeline

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- October 2023 – NPP announced
 - December 2023 – LA briefing
 - Early 2024 – 1st batch of new members on-boarded
 - Easter 2024 – last date for early bird registration
 - Mid 2024 – pilots incorporated into main system
 - Late 2024 – Target date for NPP full operation

Learning more

The NPP team plan to hold an online briefing session for local authorities in December. This will be a chance to run through more detailed questions of how the platform works, and how it might interact with your local circumstances.

There are also existing groups for interested authorities at the BPA, and also at the Traffic Technology Forum. Trade events such as Highways UK also expect to have sessions on the NPP.

Register your interest for events, or ask the project team detailed questions via npp@dft.gov.uk

Email npp@dft.gov.uk to begin the process

FAQS

Is the NPP England-only? LA only?

The NPP is designed to accommodate all types of parking, everywhere. Authorities outside of England have already been discussing joining the pilots.

It is also designed to handle both publicly-run and privately-run parking. This means it can bring together a uniquely powerful set of parking data.

Do I get parking data from the NPP?

Yes. Baseline data similar to what LAs receive from existing contracts will be automatically available. We also want to enable more sophisticated data via third-party analysts.

Can I mandate a particular price?

The NPP creates a competitive market, so it cannot fix prices. However it will allow LAs to set a 'recommended' price, if e.g. they wish to match prices to on-street rates.

Do I need to replace signs?

We aim to reuse existing signage and location codes where possible, at least in the short term. Any necessary changes will be through stickers rather than new signs where possible.

Will this reduce the ability to pay in cash?

The NPP will improve the customer experience for those who choose to pay by app; it does nothing to reduce access to cash-based services. We also hope that it will allow innovators to create previously-impossible services for those who prefer to pay by cash.

Will the NPP have its own app?

No. The NPP works through existing apps.