

The British Parking Association, Local Government Association and London Councils are calling for ANPR technology to be enabled to support the High Street and to respond to COVID-19.

We call upon the UK Government and the devolved nations to fully enable and encourage the use of cameras and remote monitoring technologies like ANPR, delivering substantial benefits for communities across the UK, support our high streets and help underpin a safer economic recovery from COVID-19.

Enabling technology to support an increasingly mobile society and help the High Street

The parking sector is transforming rapidly, with smarter and more effective management tools to deliver a better experience for motorists, greater availability of parking spaces, and a mobile society. The impact of COVID-19 has further shifted behavioural change and exposed the urgency to better manage journeys and destinations in a smarter and more holistic way. The UK Government recognises this in its 'Gear Change' programme too. The use of cameras and other remote monitoring technologies must now be enabled to their fullest extent (through legislation) to allow Local Authorities to innovate and meet the needs of their communities. A comprehensive UK-wide opinion study shows this has strong public support.

Response to COVID-19. The use of cameras and other remote monitoring technologies allows:

- **Improved management of traffic and parking** Media reports of 'hordes of visitors' descending on England's beaches recently captured the scale and impact of antisocial behaviour, including cars dumped at roadsides, thoughtlessly blocking access for emergency vehicles and wheelchair users, with littering at unprecedented levels across beauty spots. With many local residents taking to Twitter and other social media channels calling for better and more effective enforcement.
- **Safer redeployment of Civil Enforcement Officers** who are on the front line, working to keep the UK's roads clear of illegally parked vehicles. In carrying out their key role they are facing being abused, spat at and reviled. The use of camera technology provides flexibility to remotely manage problem areas, as used by the Police and Local Authorities for security and public order, for parking, enabling smarter, more targeted patrolling and would help reduce some of the risks posed to our incredible front line colleagues.
- **Freeing up vital resources** Civil Enforcement Officers can also be redeployed [from patrolling car parks to identify non-payment and over-stays, for example] to better manage anti-social and inconsiderate parking e.g. Blue Badge spaces, in problem areas and in places identified by the public where a lack of enforcement has a detrimental effect on people and society.
- **Supporting social distancing** Vehicle location guidance systems enable effective management of traffic flow and prevent overcrowding in major public sites by identifying pinch points, allow for a 'Touch-free' parking experience and links to contactless payment terminals.

Delivering for the consumer and high street – camera technology

As destinations begin to re-open and businesses and shops start to welcome back their customers to help kick start our economy, places where social distancing measures are observed and can be easily maintained will once again grow and thrive, whilst town centres may fall further behind with a more cumbersome ‘hands tied’ experience that cannot compete. The evidence is clear:

- **Greater consumer satisfaction.** Public research conducted before the start of lockdown shows satisfaction levels with parking are higher at locations where cameras are fully enabled because the experience is hassle-free, seamless and meets public expectations.
- **ANPR enables a range of new services that benefit communities.** Park now/pay later, improved kerbside management, free-flow access for people with disabilities, removing the need to predict length of stay - all are benefits meeting increasing expectations of both business and the public. Sir Greg Knight MP has noted the need for a ‘touch free’ experience for drivers, enabling safer automatic access and payment and thus fewer penalty charges.
- **Lower Congestion.** Camera technology improves compliance and increases turnover of traffic by getting it to its destination faster and more efficiently, thereby easing congestion and reducing pollution.
- **Safety,** With an increasing reliance on private cars a number of softer measures are required to discourage car use - during school runs for example - that are publically and politically supported across the UK. Use of staff operated and automated ANPR systems provides a mechanism to help reduce the significant impact the school run has on local communities and improve road safety, as well as having a positive impact on helping to reduce pollution around schools, providing children with a safer and cleaner environment to work and play in.
- Many argue that much of this can be done now, which may be so in some cases, but local authorities are reluctant to invest in ANPR and other technologies without unfettered support of parliament and government and in the knowledge that the ultimate sanction of enforcement - serving penalty charges through the post using evidence gathered by ANPR - can be used if necessary.

Moving forward...

We welcome The Government’s announcement that it is committed to commencing the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. We note that it also intends to increase combined authorities’ powers over their key route networks, similar to those that apply already in London and enable integrated highways and transport authority status at Combined Authority level for these roads. ([Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking, July 2020](#))

Moving Traffic Contraventions can in the main only be managed using cameras and remote monitoring technologies, like ANPR. It seems incongruous to allow local authorities to manage moving traffic but continue to prevent them from managing stationary traffic in the same way.

The opportunity to use camera technology with associated guidance, which can ensure that any enforcement action is fair and proportionate, will add to the Local Authorities’ tool kit to better manage increasingly complex and challenging public spaces and places.

Finally, local Authorities are publically accountable and their use of camera technology is not only required by this sector but demanded by the public and local politicians alike.

About the British Parking Association

The BPA is the leading authority for parking with 50 years' experience.

As a not-for-profit organisation we promote the sector by advancing knowledge, raising standards and professionalism. Parking is a dynamic sector and it's changing more rapidly than at any other period during our 50 year existence. We have always placed the consumer at the heart of our thinking and will continue to provide strong leadership in the sector, working closely with Government and all key stakeholders to achieve excellence in parking for all.

We represent around 750 organisations in the parking and traffic management profession. Our members include local authorities, car park operators - including those managing parking on private land such as retail parks, healthcare facilities, universities and railway stations - suppliers, manufacturers, learning providers, and consultants.

This briefing note represents the views of the BPA and is supported by the Local Government Association, London Councils and the Positive Parking Agenda.

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