

Five questions to ask your parking provider

RingGo



Building trust to step up to a crisis together

With the uncertain demands of the pandemic set to continue for several months to come, the UK's mobility sector is bracing for 2021 to be another challenging year. To keep the country moving in unpredictable times has required the industry to pivot charging models and solve unprecedented problems overnight – and now in the third wave of restricted movement, it's no surprise that adopting safe *TouchFree* technology, cutting costs and optimising parking revenue lead the agenda for many local authorities and private operators. Now more than ever, they must be able to count on a strong partnership with a trusted parking solution provider to support their constituents and protect income streams until large-scale travel resumes.

What feeds into and protects that trust is well established: the size and scale of a provider to cope with demand, transparency of their profit sources, cost-effectiveness of their products, reliability of their service and up-time, their capacity and commitment to support an environmental agenda... the list goes on.

But for the first time, it's no longer enough for parking partners to 'do as they've always done before' and expect the confidence and trust of a local authority in return.

Instead, local authorities should expect resilience and adaptability from their parking partner, empowering them to respond effectively to unknowable events on constantly shifting ground.

They should expect to be supported to navigate the storm of an uncertain health crisis with behaviour-shaping innovation. And they should have confidence that their parking partner's motivations are as much about helping consumers and businesses adapt to a new normal as their own.

Providers can innovate or they can stand still

Local authorities should expect resilience and adaptability from their parking partner

When you're settled into an established partnership, it can feel tempting to go with the flow and stick with what you know. Especially when general perception is that it costs significant time, effort and money to up sticks and switch to a new solution provider.

But in a time where trust is proving more essential than ever, local authorities should feel confident that they're partnering with the right parking provider to help them achieve their strategic and economic goals.

Pairing with a provider that works for you

So, how well do you really know your provider? Can you be sure you're not with one who uses their global transaction figures instead of their UK numbers to give the impression of greater reach and scale than they really have? Are you certain your provider doesn't have a profit stream in direct competition with your own parking spaces? Now's the time to build trust with your provider or move to one you can count on.

For the forward-thinkers, the policy shapers and the movers and shakers, these are the big five questions we'd urge you to ask your parking solution provider.

And if they can't answer them to your satisfaction, we gladly will.

1.

How do you use data and how can it help us shape future parking policy?

Evidence based decision-making to inform your future policy

The enormous power of data to shape parking policy has been [well publicised](#) in recent years, with [Westminster Council celebrating a 16% reduction in polluting vehicles](#) driving and parking in the areas and London boroughs running data-led Emissions Based Parking schemes reporting a drop of 44% in recorded nitrogen dioxide levels. Data from retail and business cashless transactions is no longer just a tool to map parking usage, demand and behaviour in a town or city – it can inform precision planning, help local authorities to achieve their strategic, economic and environmental goals and ultimately, data can shape the future attitudes and behaviours of motorists across the country.

A growing opportunity

The demand for cashless payment options has accelerated as a result of the health crisis, as motorists seek out alternatives to handling cash or touching un-sanitised parking machines. And with this sprint towards *TouchFree* solutions comes a greater opportunity than ever before for local authorities to tap into the wealth of parking and behavioural data available from cashless payments – not only to inform your plans, but to help you measure and evidence their impact, too.

Your parking solution provider should be able to demonstrate how they can unlock that data for you. Whether your goals are to drive revenue, influence environmentally conscious behaviour, improve air quality or simply manage your parking landscape more efficiently, parking partners must offer simple, user-friendly tools to help you access rich insights and apply them effectively to strategic decision-making.

Insights available to you

Usage data

A clear picture of parking habits: where people park and for how long, what vehicles they drive and how they prefer to pay.

Availability

View your real-time space availability and allow drivers to do the same.

Pricing

Monitor the peaks and troughs of spending at any location

EV Usage

Understand how many motorists drive Electric Vehicles and where there's demand for charging points.

Emissions

Know the types of vehicles on your roads and their effect on the environment.

Business usage

Understand the parking patterns of the local businesses contributing to the prosperity of your area.

The big picture

All of the above, all in one place, any time you need it.

How you can influence parking policy

Intelligent data and analytics help you generate revenue, drive down costs, improve the environment and increase satisfaction through informed, reliable insights.

Reduce traffic congestion by 30% by helping drivers to find empty parking spaces without having to circle.

Set your tariffs at the right level to maximise your revenue and inform enforcement.

Guide your infrastructure planning with a clear understanding of where to place EV charging points.

Identify areas of need to focus clean air initiatives and actively reduce carbon levels in your area with Emissions Based Parking (EBP). Then, measure your success.

Businesses using RingGo Corporate tend to represent between 3–5% of all transactions in a town or city where they're typically also resident. With that data, you can build the parking needs and strategies of local businesses into your policy planning.

Monitor the impact of everything you do with ease and harness intelligent, data driven, insights to improve your mobility strategy and inform your decisions.

Protecting public trust demands ethical, responsible data handling

In a post GDPR world, the public's demand for transparency and accountability when it comes to the management of their data can't be underestimated. Local authorities must be confident that beyond basic compliance, drivers' data is treated with respect, responsibility and zero appetite for compliance breaches or data hacks.

Local authorities and private operators can and should challenge their parking partners to supply them with reliable insights, ethically sourced with permission from motorists and managed responsibly. For a true parking partner, it's a simple ask to prove accredited certification and compliance with ISO regulations, payment and [data security standards as well as GDPR and data privacy rules](#).

In our case, RingGo's roots as a technology-led mobility service since 2003 have driven our values of keeping in close step with industry-leading privacy and data security methods as technology evolves.



2.

What happens if your service goes down – and how often could it happen?

Intelligent risk mitigation and a reliable, resilient service are two of the 'must haves' of any parking partnership. That's because loss of revenue, a rise in PCN challenges, complaints from unhappy motorists and, ultimately, reputational damage are steep costs to cover if your provider's service goes down.

That's why it's fair not just to challenge your supplier to prove their system reliability, but to be transparent about the measures they have in place to handle any problems. Knowing where their technical and customer support teams are based and how large they are can give you an indication of the help that's in your corner should the worst happen.

Intelligent technology and the human touch keep our service unmatched

We're proud of our industry-leading uptime of 99.98%, and the suite of supporting measures that makes our service unrivalled.

Constantly monitored by a series of innovative automated tools, technical issues are detected fast and escalated before they can develop into a service risk – with complete transparency for our local authorities.

But building on the technology is a growing team of UK market specialists, building and managing solutions for the UK market.

Our UK-based Technical Helpdesk and Customer Support Helpdesk don't only support to resolve questions and issues online, on social media and over the phone from our Basingstoke Head Office, but they actively play a role in spotting any potential disruption and flagging it for fixing.

Reliable, responsive services that prioritise your needs in a crisis

2020 trained us all to expect the unexpected. As the national lockdown came into effect in March to reduce the spread of Covid-19, it presented our local authority customers an unprecedented challenge: the need to adapt their parking offering overnight.

And of course, different local authorities took different approaches initially, depending on the needs of their local areas. Some needed to switch parking charges off entirely, others kept charges in place with a dispensation for NHS and Social Care workers and volunteers. All of them needed a responsive, reliable provider to help them do it quickly, without risk of any technical or operational issues.

Within 48 hours, RingGo contacted our 140+ local authority customers to give them a choice of the two agile options to help them stay up and running in the toughest of situations:

1. They could adopt our tried and tested Corporate Journal solution. All local authorities needed to do was send us a list of vehicle registrations exempt from parking charges, and our teams built a database for them.
2. Or they could opt for a rapid roll out of our vibrant new signage at selected parking locations. We also created in-app and back systems messaging for users allowing NHS, care and volunteer workers to have physical exemption notices in their vehicles.



When the rest of the country was locking down, our ability to adapt and create solutions allowed local authorities to keep key workers and local residents moving.

3.

Other than our car parks, where else do you direct motorists to park?

It's a thorny question, but at a time when maximising parking revenue and saving on costs is so essential to operators and local authorities, a necessary one. Because the reality is that the parking world is diverse, with no two providers alike.

Knowing where your provider's interests lie can help you not only to build trust with an essential supplier, but it makes it possible to build a sustainable and profitable partnership.

Some providers, for example, offer a simple 'no-frills' cashless parking payment service for minimum cost to help you tick the box of accessible payment methods. All well and good, but if it likely means they aren't making a profit on this service, it suggests two things:

1. They're making their profit elsewhere
2. They aren't reinvesting in journey-focused experiences for motorists through feature development.

And both are answers that should worry a local authority or private operator, or at the very least, call for some clarity.

Peer-to-Peer parking spaces could be in competition with your own

If a parking space isn't in use, Peer-to-Peer or P2P apps allow people and companies to list their available spaces for hire. Sort of like Airbnb, but for parking spaces – and commonly, with a higher profit margin for listing. It's a clever solution, though it could come with a downside if your parking provider offers this service on their digital app.

There may be a greater interest for providers in directing motorists to fill these more profitable spaces than to available parking at your locations. Over time, this could add up to a dent in revenue.

Motorists' experiences matter

Beyond offering a route to pay for parking, what additional features does your provider offer in comparison with their competitors?

Great journeys don't start at the payment machine. They begin with support to find parking locations, available spaces, and being directed straight to them. They include a variety of accessible options to pay, whether by IVR over the phone, by SMS, in app or online and even In-Car. They include nudge reminders and the ability to extend parking in seconds, and a customer care function trained to handle the service queries of customers and minimise complaints.

Journeys are changing, and parking partners need to keep step with shifting attitudes and technology to remain relevant to the public and bring in revenue for their clients. Take the growth of environmentally conscious appetites among consumers, for example. The reality is that more and more motorists care not just about finding a convenient place to park, but about finding an available EV charging point near their destination... a demand which will only grow with the projected rise in electric vehicle sales.

So, as drivers seek out apps that simplify and improve their door-to-destination experience, now's the time to make sure that you're working with more than just a payment processing supplier, and instead you're partnering with a true mobility partner.



4.

Are you ready to adapt to changing regulations and stay compliant?

Local authorities and private operators rely on their parking partners to stay alert to changing regulations. Staying abreast of the rules and developing responsive solutions that ensure compliance with minimal disruption is an essential part of any service operating in regulated environments.

It should be a proactive process, with solutions designed to make the transition to compliance frictionless and simple, and communicated to clients in plenty of time. But the consequences of non-compliance are severe, so nothing should be taken for granted – raise the compliance question with your provider to be sure you're covered.

Providers need to be regulation-ready to make sure you don't lose revenue

The plainly named 'Payment Services Directive 2 – PSD2' is an EU regulation that may not have caught everyone's attention when it was announced a few years ago but make no mistake, it's as wide-reaching and serious as the GDPR rules that prompted the overhaul of data management practices in 2017. It's likely to have a similarly positive effect for consumers, but not before a major upheaval of payment security processes across the UK.

The change affects all cashless parking providers and if yours isn't PSD2 ready, it means neither are you. Given that **80% of all retail spending is now on cards**, and the cost of non-compliance could be declined card payments, now's the time to pitch the question to your provider and expect a robust response.

Extra checks to keep payments more secure

The rules come with a number of extra safety measures and technical requirements but at its heart, PSD2 is a shake-up of the way online payments are processed. It's designed to make paying online or by phone more secure than ever for customers and the guidance suggests that whatever the outcome of Brexit next year, the UK is committed to playing by these rules.

The cost if your provider gets it wrong: rejected payments from January 2021

Banks and card issuers have had a few years' head start in preparing for PSD2, which means they're ready to decline payments that don't go through the appropriate checks.

With use of cash inexorably declining in the UK (**predicted to make up just 9% of all payments by 2028**), it's critical for providers to have arrangements in place to continue seamlessly payment processing without interruption. Covid-19 has only furthered this trend, with germ-conscious motorists favouring *TouchFree* payment options over having to handle cash or touch a parking machine.

Meaning that to avoid major disruption for motorists and the complaints that follow, as well as lost revenue, providers' PSD2 arrangements must cover all cashless options for payment; whether by contactless Pay & Display or by phone.



Finding solutions to keep payments compliant

RingGo's answer to the PSD2 challenge

Like banks in the UK, RingGo spent years preparing for PSD2 so that when the time came, the solution to make payments compliant was efficient, simple and seamless for motorists and customers alike.

We're ready to offer motorists easy two factor authentication through Apple Pay and Google Pay. And if they'd rather pay another way, we've arranged with our acquiring and payment service partners that only the highest risk transactions would be asked to take the extra security steps. So, the vast majority of motorists will continue to enjoy a frictionless payment experience.

We've answered the key questions for local authority and private operators in our [full roundup of the rules](#), including all your options for getting PSD2 ready quickly. You can also [watch our expert panel respond to direct to our clients' big questions](#) in our Webinar.

5.

Are you giving us a cost-effective solution?

Cost-effective pricing is often high on the agenda when choosing a parking solution provider. But to make sure that cost never compromises quality, conversations about money should challenge providers even harder than they already do; looking beyond just price per transaction to truly interrogate the value your parking partner can bring you.

There are three key areas you need to consider to understand whether your provider is offering you the value for money you should expect.

1. Talk to them about the efficiency of their costs
2. Ask them where they can bring you savings
3. Quiz them on the quality of their solution

Three predictors of value from your parking provider

1. Talk to them about the efficiency of their costs

For a provider to guarantee the value you're looking for, they need to offer a reliable up-time, compliant processes, secure data and payments, innovation capability and expertise to help you adapt to challenges and give motorists the experiences they're seeking. That long list tends to come at a price, unless providers are big enough to scale up their service.

People often assume that because RingGo is the UK's no.1 parking app, it means our service will be more expensive than our competitors, or that it'll cost a lot of time and money to switch to us from another provider. Neither are true.

When it comes to cost-efficiency, we believe bigger is better. As a large provider with established reach, economy of scale helps us to stay competitive on price – but we will deliver much more for your money. Given that over 75% of motorists are already carrying our app in their pockets, the transition to our service is quick, simple and painless – ready to launch in as little as two weeks – with no loss in revenue for you. If you're a brand-new operator, you can even try the service for free.

2. Ask them where they can bring you savings

Central to any parking partner's offering is the cost savings they can support you to achieve, quickly.

Machine removal services like ours help you to avoid any lost revenue from broken or vandalised machines and cut down your overheads straightaway: new machine purchases, electricity, servicing and repair, cash collections, costs of processing card or contactless transactions, gartering, stationery and signage... the potential savings add up to a significant boost to your bottom line.

You can challenge your provider to demonstrate how data can help you trim the financial fat, too. In our case, we make it easy to inform decisions about where to trial machine removal with our behavioural data insights, collected from more than 100 million parking transactions a year.

3. Quiz them on the quality of their solution

Above and beyond the savings, local authorities have a right to expect a lot from their parking provider. It's why we invest heavily in our solutions to make sure that we don't underdeliver.

With our accessible RingGo Retail option for people who still want or need to pay with cash, no motorist, and no revenue, gets left behind. Likewise, we've invested in In-Car payment technology too, preparing our solution for the convenience payments of the future. Our Emissions Based Parking solution is the proven leader in its field, supporting local authorities to meet their environmental aims and improve air quality for everyone visiting, working and living in the area.



If you'd like to ask us these or any other questions, get in touch.

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About RingGo

RingGo is the UK's no. 1 cashless parking solution. We're driven by one thing: making our cities healthier, cleaner and more liveable. Transforming cities into places where people can move around freely, with easy-to-use mobility solutions, while reducing congestion and pollution. How? By unlocking the power of technology to make parking simple, quick and effortless for drivers, operators and cities.

We're proudly representing our UK and European brands including RingGo, PARK NOW, Parkmobile, and Park-line. Our team of 500 parking pioneers serve clients throughout Europe from our offices in Germany, the UK, France, the Netherlands and Belgium.

RingGo is part of YOUR NOW Group, the global joint venture in mobility solutions founded by BMW and Daimler. NOW Group offers car sharing, ride-hailing, charging and parking solutions to help people navigate their urban journeys with ease while being environmentally conscious.

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