

Planning application

Pay & Display Machine Installation at Souter Lighthouse and the Leas

1. Background

The National Trust looks after a wide variety of special places for the benefit of the nation including coastlines, forests, woods, beaches, moorlands, archaeological remains, nature reserves, villages, historic houses, gardens and mills. As a charitable organisation, the National Trust needs to raise money to support its conservation work at all our properties – both built and outdoors.

The Trust plans to introduce car park charging at a number of its main car parks, including the two car parks at Souter Lighthouse and the Leas (Souter Lighthouse car park and Whitburn Coastal Park car park) and this will:

- a) Ensure consistency for our visitors – many other regions in the National Trust already charge and charging is already in place at some of our sites in the region.
- b) Raise vital funds to support our work – the upkeep of car parks, footpaths and the wider conservation work we undertake to support nature all costs money.

Whilst planning permission is not required for the principle of charging at car parks, consent is required, and hereby sought, for the pay and display machines themselves and their associated signage.

2. Proposals

2.1 Pay & Display Machine:

At the majority of our car parks, the National Trust plans to install pay & display machines. A slim-line design (1488mm high, with a 95mm solar panel top, 290mm wide, 311mm depth) has been selected (see attached brochure). The machine is equipped with the latest technology and accepts cash as well as debit and credit cards. Visitors arriving on foot or by bicycle will not be charged. Parking will remain free to all National Trust members displaying a valid car park sticker and able to present a current membership card on request.

2.2 Signage:

A timber post of a consistent height to the pay & display machines (1675mm high x 300mm wide x 100mm deep) will be placed alongside the machine; it will display signage with clear information to the visitor on the charging rates; information will

also be provided on how the revenue from the machine will be used to support the National Trust's conservation work.

The signage design is consistent with a new style of signage that has already been implemented in Wales and is planned for use across all outdoor sites in England; considerable research into the materials and design has been undertaken to ensure ease of use, legibility and sustainability.



The sign will be in this style, designed to match other new signage that is being installed across the site. The wording will read 'Welcome to Souter Lighthouse and the Leas' and 'Welcome to Whitburn Coastal Park'.

3. Local statement for Souter Lighthouse and the Leas

In National Trust ownership since 1989, Souter Lighthouse is a striking north-east icon and the first lighthouse in the world purpose built to use electricity. The lighthouse is a great starting off point for exploring The Leas (to the north and also owned by NT) and Whitburn Coastal Park (to the south) which the National Trust manages on a long term lease from South Tyneside Council. These coastal locations are very popular and offer great opportunities for activities such as walking, bird watching, rock pooling, running and cycling. Two National Trust managed car parks serve Souter Lighthouse and the Leas and Whitburn Coastal Park and the National Trust currently ask for donations to support their upkeep and the vital conservation work that is carried out across the sites. A further local authority run pay and display car park is situated to the north of the Leas.

3.1 Site Context:

The location for the pay and display machines and accompanying signage is in the middle of Whitburn Coastal Park Car Park and on the north edge of Souter Lighthouse Car Park. The locations minimise the impact on the landscape. The new installations will not be obtrusive or look out of place within the existing car parks. There will be no detrimental effect on the landscape or existing vistas from the car parks.

At the same time the pay and display machine and signage will be easily viewable from all parking areas because of their location. They will not obstruct visibility lines for drivers entering or exiting the car park.

There are no landscape or environmental designations and the site chosen is considered to be the best location to afford the least risk to traffic, visitors and intrusion on to the landscape.

3.2 Supporting Local Improvements:

The car park revenue collected will raise vital funds to support our work areas in Whitburn Coastal Park and along The Leas such as habitat management, cliff surveys and improved public access.

4. Summary:

- The location is appropriate to the site and has minimal landscape and visual impact to the overall appearance whilst being in a good location for ease of use for visitors and open area for security.
- The power source for the pay and display machine is solar. The material used for the signage post will be made from sustainable timber sourced locally.
- There is clear pedestrian access to the machine/s, with no conflict with vehicles.

