



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Nigel Coltman
UK Chief Executive
Smart Parking Limited
Unit 43, Elmdon Trading Estate
Bickenhill Lane
Birmingham B37 7HE

12 December 2018

Dear Mr Coltman,

Thank you for meeting John Baron MP and myself recently to discuss the grievances our constituents have over your parking operations at the Westgate Shopping Centre car park in Basildon, Essex. We appreciate your constructive engagement and commitment to consider our reasonable proposed solutions.

During our discussions, John Baron and I raised the following matters with you:

- Car park signage
- Parking grace periods
- Ticketing machines
- Handling of appeals
- Effects of Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) on vulnerable people, including the elderly and disabled.

As you are aware, we have examples evidencing the problems outlined above sent to us by our constituents. In line with your request, we will email cases separately to your Client Services Director.

It is our expressed view that Smart Parking should take a fairer and more reasonable approach to the management of the Westgate car park. We were shocked to learn that you have issued 2000 Parking Charge Notices per month since your new ANRS linked pay and display camera system was implemented at Westgate in July 2018.

In line with our discussions, we invite you to implement the following to alleviate the problems experienced by our constituents and prevent further such cases occurring unnecessarily in the future:

1. Extend the grace period (currently 10 minutes) to allow more time for people to park and leave before PCNs are automatically issued.
2. Improve signage to indicate exactly where the ANRS camera system tracks vehicles from and consider painting a clear line at the site entry/exit.

Member of Parliament for South Basildon & East Thurrock

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3. Ensure that no persons are issued PCNs for site entry/exit without parking, including taxis.
4. Increase the flexibility for appeals of PCNs issued over incorrect entry of Vehicle Registration Numbers (VRNs).
5. Clarify the overnight tariff, including its operation over the weekend.
6. Ensure all payments received from incorrectly issued PCNs are refunded, such as those issued due to confusion over the overnight tariff or those requesting the incorrect charge amount of £100, instead of £90.
7. Review the procedure and culture of charge appeals and establish a separate procedure for vulnerable persons, such as the elderly and disabled.
8. Carry out further investigation of claims of incorrect ticketing machine function.
9. Ensure no PCN escalation letters are sent by Smart Parking, or third parties, while charges are under appeal or people are waiting to hear back from Smart Parking.

Finally, as you are aware, the investigation into your parking operation practices at Westgate by the British Parking Association (BPA) resulted in Smart Parking making some operational and site changes. We discussed this represented a fair indication that operations at Westgate did not represent best practice. Therefore, we invite you to:

10. Refund monies received as a result of PCNs issued, from the application of the new ANRS pay and display system on 26th July 2018 until the implementation of the last BPA recommendation following their investigation of your practices.

We very much hope to continue our constructive dialogue to alleviate the concerns of our constituents and await your response.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Metcalfe



John Baron