

How an Open Market is transforming parking across the UK



What is an Open Market for parking?

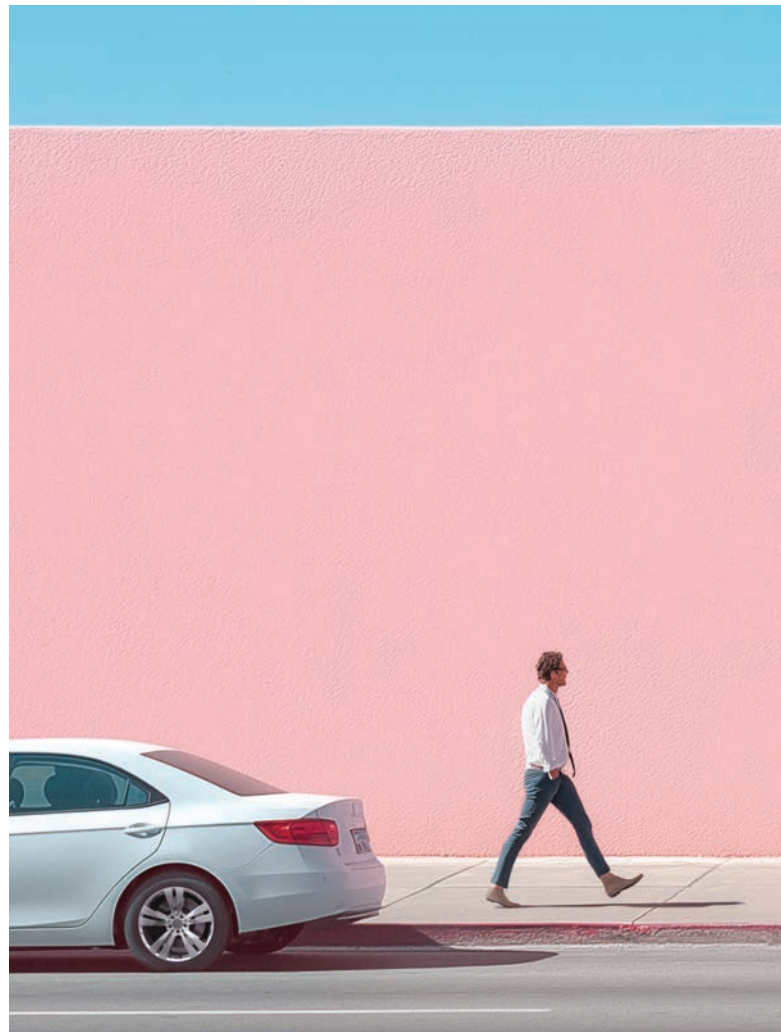
The biggest shift in UK parking is happening. The Open Market unlocks competition between apps – cutting costs for parking operators and delivering better choice for motorists.

No long tenders. No exclusive contracts. No complex legal arrangements. The Open Market brings multiple providers into a single system. You stay in control – with full visibility across sites, services and data.

Motorists can choose the app that suits their needs based on service quality, user experience, features, price or convenience. One simple process. Every time they park.

A proven model working in many European countries. Now transforming parking across the UK.

Only 1 in 3 councils say the tender model is cost- or time-efficient. The Open Market changes that.



How it works

The shift from a tender-based procurement process to an Open Market model is powered by the National Parking Platform (NPP) – a centralised system connecting multiple car parks to one shared platform.

The NPP impact:



For parking operators

Faster onboarding, improved resilience and better access to parking insights for more confident, more efficient, more impactful planning.



For motorists

Greater choice and convenience. No need to download a new app for different locations. Payment is simple. Features are familiar. And the experience stays consistent, wherever they park.

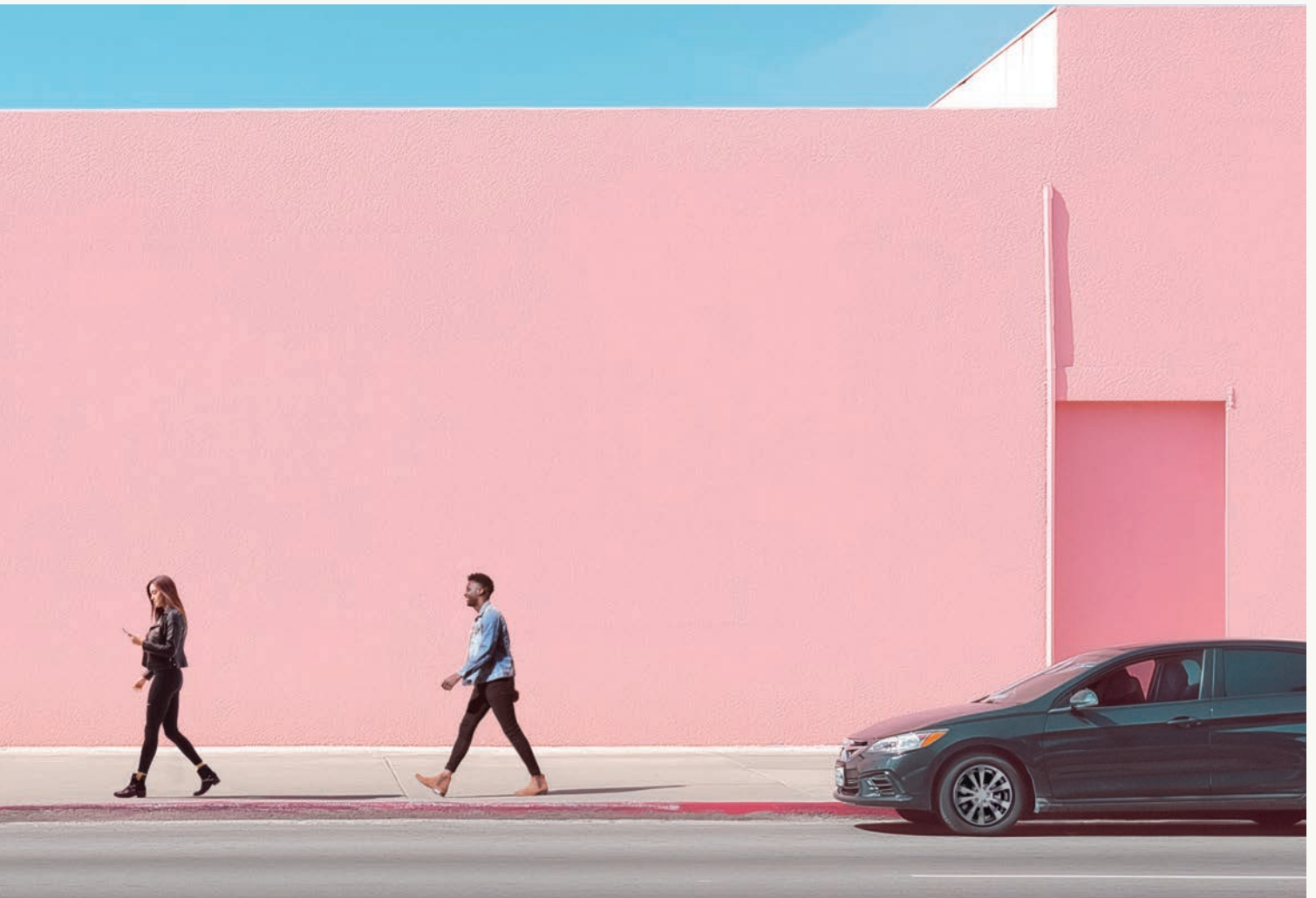


For parking apps

Competition drives innovation and the development of smarter, more user-friendly products. This encourages ongoing improvement and boosts service quality.

The not-for-profit company behind the platform

NPP – led by the British Parking Association and industry experts with support from the Department for Transport (DfT) – is the not-for-profit company responsible for developing and operating the NPP. It was set up following the DfT's successful NPP pilot scheme.



The NPP pilot

The NPP pilot ran from 2021 to 2025. Here's a snapshot of its reach and impact, demonstrating national scale and reliability:

10

Local authorities

475

On-street locations and car parks

202%

Increase in NPP transactions between March 2024 and April 2025

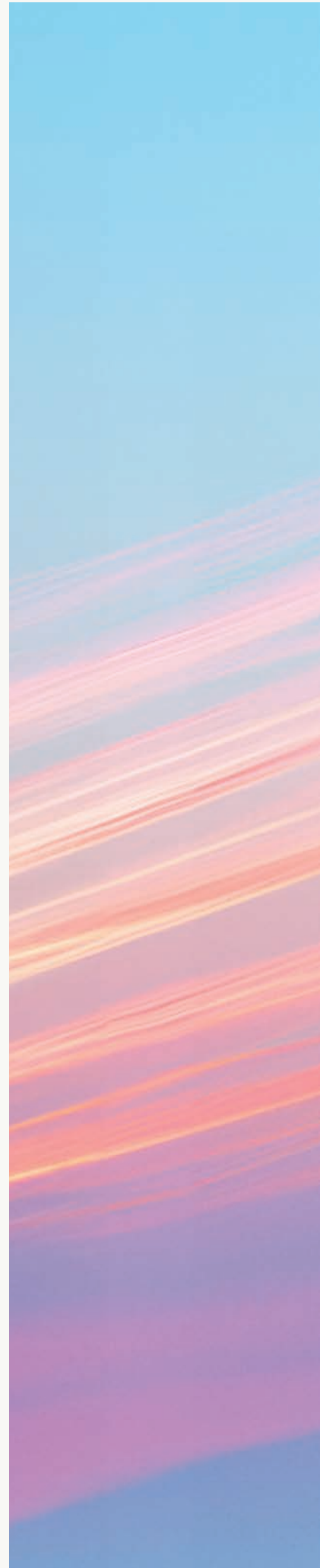
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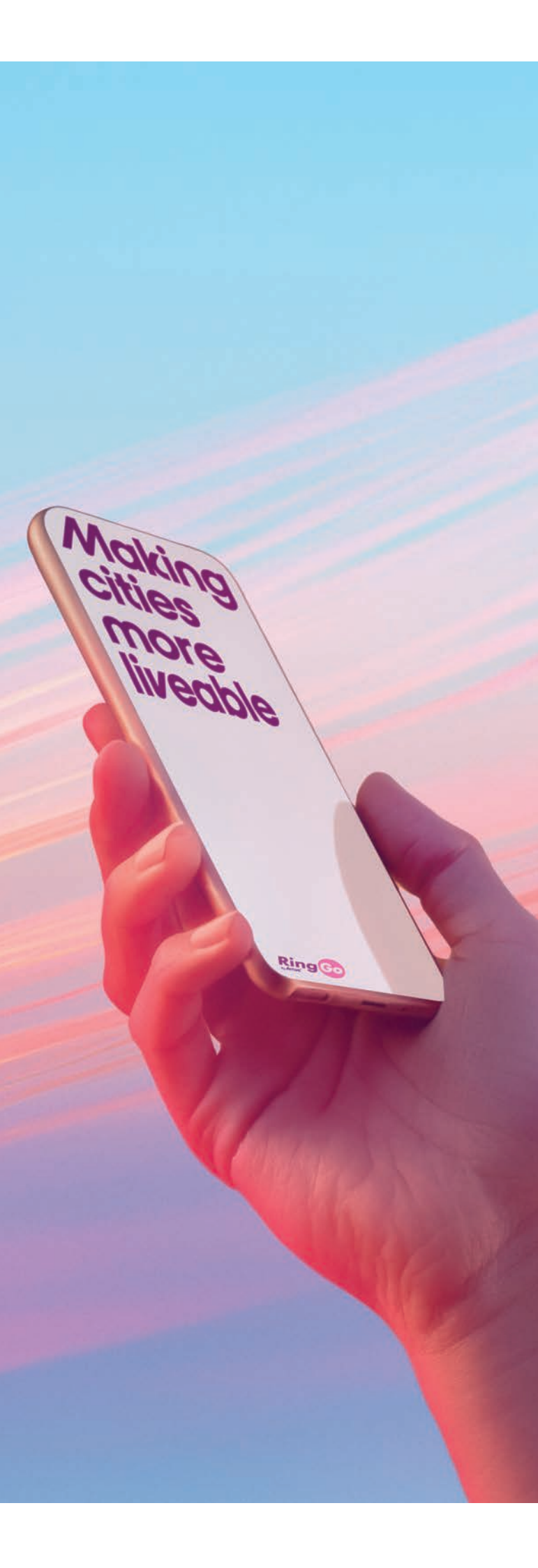
Transactions processed in April 2025 – up from 178,576 in March 2024

The pilot's impact on motorists and councils

The pilot scheme created a more competitive parking market, encouraging parking apps to offer better prices and improved services for motorists. Councils gained greater resilience by no longer relying on a single provider, ensuring continuous service if one experienced issues. Multiple app options made parking simpler and more flexible, especially in areas with high visitor numbers.

Feedback from councils was overwhelmingly positive, as shown in these case studies.





Cheshire West and Chester Council

In February 2023, Cheshire West and Chester Council became the third local authority to implement the Open Market model using the NPP. The council offered equal commercial terms to parking apps, allowing each one to compete for motorists' custom.

Initially, four parking providers offered parking across 16 car parks and three on-street locations. A fifth service provider entered the market in August 2024, demonstrating that healthy and dynamic competition is stimulated by Open Market conditions.

The NPP impact

Phone parking has proven a popular addition, and has quickly grown to nearly 20% of all parking payments processed by the council, showing the clear demand for consumer choice.

“Collaborating with the National Parking Platform to roll out the five mobile phone solutions through Open Market parking across our local area in Cheshire West and Chester has improved service mobility for residents. Those who drive and park in the local area now have more options at their fingertips to make journeys seamless. For our community, we are delighted to provide new tools for accessibility and convenient transport.

Since the introduction of the Open Market for parking, our motorists have a variety of apps to choose from, giving them greater flexibility in managing their parking needs and reducing the stress and time spent on finding parking spots or dealing with physical payment methods.

For other councils seeking richer parking data to support local policymaking and inform decisions, we highly recommend exploring the Open Market for parking.”

Michael Lester, Parking Services Manager –
Cheshire West and Chester Council

Coventry City Council

When its contract with the incumbent cashless provider came to an end, Coventry City Council had a choice: embark on a lengthy and costly procurement process to appoint a single provider or join the NPP pilot scheme. Following a smooth onboarding process with the NPP in August 2023, the council introduced multiple providers.

The NPP impact

Adopting the Open Market model increased cashless parking uptake by more than 50% in the first 12 months of operation, and the council benefitted from improved payment resilience through offering a choice of parking apps.

Today, motorists visiting the city centre for business or leisure purposes can pay to park via one of five NPP service providers, including RingGo, at 51 on-street and off-street locations.

“Motorists have responded very positively to the introduction of the Open Market. One of the biggest benefits has been the ability to choose their preferred app for parking, no matter where they are, without the need to download multiple apps. This not only simplifies the process but also significantly improves the overall customer experience. With additional services now integrated and better connections to mobility solutions, drivers feel more empowered and supported in their journeys. It's a change that's been long overdue, and many are hoping other councils will follow suit.”

Paul Bowman, Parking Manager – Coventry City Council



East Suffolk Council

In May 2024, East Suffolk Council introduced the Open Market model in 75 off-street locations. RingGo was one of five initial parking apps piloting the model.

The council joined the NPP pilot for several reasons. As well as saving funds that could be used elsewhere, it wanted residents and visitors to be able to park quickly and easily and felt that offering multiple parking apps would enhance inclusivity. East Suffolk is a popular tourist destination, and older motorists from outside the area in particular found it difficult to switch to a new app they hadn't used before.

The NPP impact

Cashless parking accounted for 50% of all parking transactions when the council joined the Open Market, six months later it had risen to 54%.

The council has been impressed with the 'session viewer' on the NPP – showing all relevant information for each parking session, regardless of which service provider it's purchased through. This is typically all the council needs when dealing with queries from the public, like PCN appeals. But if more information is required, it still has access to each service provider's back office portal and can contact them directly for support.

“Across the country, car park providers use a range of different parking apps, meaning drivers may need to download several different apps, depending on where they are parked. This can be inconvenient and time-consuming; however, drivers using council-owned car parks in East Suffolk now have more choice about which provider to use when paying for their parking.”

Councillor Toby Hammond (who was East Suffolk's cabinet member for Economic Development and Transport at the time of joining)

Peterborough City Council

Peterborough City Council became the first UK local authority to adopt the NPP's national 7-digit location code scheme when it embraced the Open Market model in April 2024.

The council wanted to provide a better, more modern and future-proofed service to motorists, so it created a competitive market with parking sessions spread across five service providers in 34 on- and off-street parking zones.

The NPP impact

Since joining the NPP, the council has seen a 5% increase in app payments. Feedback has been positive, with no negative comments about the introduction of the convenience fee.

“It aligned with our objective to deliver a modernised parking service where customer choice and convenience are a priority. As part of this objective, we were already increasing payment options in our car parks and on-street chargeable locations through the introduction of new machines that take cash, cards and contactless.

We saw the NPP as an opportunity to further expand payment choice and convenience by adding multiple cashless suppliers to our list of payment options without having to deal with each supplier individually. As a smaller local authority, it also gave us additional buying power to secure a more favourable transaction fee rate and reduce our overheads.

Since joining the NPP, the cashless share of parking transactions has risen from around 33% to 38%. We have also benefitted from zero downtime – now should one supplier suffer an outage of service, there are four more to rely on for continuation of service. Overall, we are very satisfied with our time in the NPP and are looking forward to being one of the first authorities to join the full platform and benefit from consolidated remittance and additional reporting and analysis.”

Adam Payton, Operations Manager – City Centre

What's next

Following the successful pilot, the NPP is now live nationwide. More local authorities and private operators are preparing to join, accelerating adoption and expanding the reach of the Open Market to more cities and communities.

The Open Market is already transforming parking across the UK – reducing costs, increasing choice and improving service quality. But this is just the beginning.

The NPP doesn't stop at enabling app payments. It's paving the way for smarter, more connected transport solutions – from integrated EV charging to seamless multi-modal journeys – unlocking new possibilities for the future of mobility.



The NPP is live nationwide

As part of Arrive, RingGo is driving the UK's Open Market transformation

Arrive is the brand uniting Europe's leading parking solutions. In the UK, it's represented by RingGo – the market-leading app and key advocate for the Open Market and NPP.

RingGo in action

- ✓ 20m+ UK customers.
- ✓ Participant in the DfT's NPP pilot.
- ✓ 3+ years championing Open Market development and leading NPP advocacy.
- ✓ Trusted by 170+ local authorities and operators.
- ✓ Now part of Arrive, connecting UK leadership with global experience to transform parking and mobility.

Find out more

To find out how your area can benefit from the Open Market for parking, contact the NPP team at get-started@npp.uk.net

For more information about the National Parking Platform, [visit the NPP website](#).

