

Appendix 1 – Response from Ludlow Town Council

Ludlow Town Council's Representational Committee on 13 June 2108 made the following response to the parking consultation proposals:

PARKING STRATEGY ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS

RESOLVED (unanimous)

TG/CS

- i) To respond to the consultation by strongly restating the Town Council's previous comments made on 16th May 2018 and a letter sent to Shropshire Council on 12th October 2017 (as detailed below)
- ii) To convey the consultation response to Shropshire Council Cabinet, Ludlow Unitary Councillors and Phillip Dunne MP

To object to the proposal to remove Ludlow Castle Street car park market trader permits at a concessionary rate of £4 per day from April to December and £2 per day from January to March, and Ludlow - Galdeford B and Smithfield car parks market trader permits at a concessionary rate of £2 per day for the following reasons:

Ludlow market trades up to six days a week and trades throughout the year. It is an asset to the town and other traders notice that Tuesdays – a non-market day – is much quieter in terms of footfall and visitor numbers. Ludlow's economy is based on tourism, Ludlow market is one of Ludlow's core visitor attractions. It helps to create a healthy and vibrant heart to the town and therefore the needs of the market traders must be understood and addressed because they are very different to the needs of traders with permanent indoor premises. Market traders bring their entire stock with them each day they trade and take it all home with them at the end of each day.

The stalls have a canopy, but there is no storage other than under the stall and this area is not secure from theft. Traders use their vehicles as their stock room and therefore the vehicles must be near to the stall so that the stall is not left unattended for too long during each stock visit. Smithfield and Galdeford car parks are in excess of 10 minutes' walk from the market, which is not feasible for many traders.

Trading conditions are tough for everyone. The real risk is that Ludlow market loses a number of traders and loses the critical mass of traders that attract visitors throughout the year. If Ludlow market is diminished then the town centre will unfortunately feel the detrimental impact. The only positive in this sad scenario is there will be plenty of empty parking spaces in the town.

The proposals are unnecessary, and undermine a working structure of parking charges that provides necessary support to a key asset of Ludlow, namely its outdoor market. The proposal to remove the concessions is unworkable and represents an attack on Ludlow's vibrant town, award winning market, and visitor economy.

Re: Amendments to Shropshire Council's Off Street Parking Places Order. The current off street permit structure is effective and workable which is appreciated by businesses, hotels, B&B's, guest houses and holiday lets

Ludlow Town Council's also wishes to restate its response to Shropshire Council's Parking Consultation of 12th October 2017. The full contents of the letter are as below:

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARKING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Ludlow Town Council resolved to make the following response to Shropshire Council's Parking Strategy Consultation:

TOURISM BASED ECONOMY

Ludlow is a small market town with an economy based firmly on tourism. At its centre is one of the finest Mediaeval castles in the UK with its rich history as well as a magnificent parish church, Ludlow is visited by thousands of tourists each year.

Shropshire Council recognises Ludlow as an important tourism destination in Shropshire. In the Core Strategy for Planning, Ludlow is described as ‘an important tourist destination and has achieved international renown as a centre for quality local food and drink.’

Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, together with Shropshire Council, commissioned Sustainable Tourism Strategy for The Shropshire Hills and Ludlow 2011-2016, identifies, ‘Shropshire was an important focus for pioneering geological research in the 19th Century, with place names such as Ludlow and Wenlock recognised internationally as series of rocks.’ And goes on to state that ‘Ludlow in particular has an established and national reputation for its building heritage and for its food and drink.’

Over many years, Ludlow has developed an economy that has weathered the decline of the traditional town centre throughout the UK and emerged with an economy that is successful. As successful as Ludlow is, the interplay and balance of the town’s business & tourism economies is critical and any dramatic

change in the balance of any of these factors could well lead to a rapid and terminal decline in the overall local economy.

Shropshire council must employ joined up thinking and recognise the importance of a fit for purpose parking strategy.

KEEPING BUSINESS TICKING OVER

The Town Centre layout means that off-street and on-street metered parking is severely restricted.

It is essential for the town’s economy that there is a steady turnover of on and off-street parking.

People who work in the town also require long stay parking provision.

On-street bays in the town centre should be remarked to ensure efficient use of the limited space and create an additional 12 on-street parking.

‘POP AND SHOP’

The current ‘pop and shop’ 15-minute grace must be maintained because removal of the ‘pop and shop’ scheme would deter regular local shoppers and decrease the all-important rotation of spaces.

Pop and shop is important to local traders because regular local customers are the bread and butter income that can be counted on throughout the year – visitor income is subject to significant fluctuations that are ultimately beyond the control of the shop keeper.

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

The proposed extension of chargeable parking times from 6pm-8pm would irreparably harm the night-time economy of the town.

- It is an unnecessary cost that would deter people from using the restaurants (6:30-7:30pm is a very popular time for meals)
- It is an unnecessary cost that will deter visitors to the Assembly Rooms (LAR) because most productions begin at begin before 8pm. LAR needs to look after its customer base because the rural population only offers a limited number of customers.
- It is an unnecessary cost that will deter the volunteers that keep the Assembly Rooms open to paying customers.

MAKING THE BEST USE OF LIMITED PARKING

The way visitors, shoppers and workers use the town's limited parking resources is very important. Ludlow needs a range of parking options in order to maximize the town's potential as a place to live, work and to visit.

SHORT STAY CAR PARKING

Castle Street Car Park & Galdeford [upper tier].

These are the spaces nearest to the town centre and are the places where the majority of shoppers and casual visitors like to park to allow for a short visit to shops and amenities. There needs to be quick turnover short term parking

available at Castle Street Car Park and Galdeford [upper tier]. There is already provision for market trader parking, which is important because it supports the market at a time when other market are in significant decline, so there is no capacity for residents parking in these car parks.

MEDIUM AND LONG TERM CAR PARKING

Galdeford [lower tier] and Smithfield need to be longer stay to provide for those who wish to spend more time in the town. These are, in fact, the provisions that apply now and they have proved successful since they were introduced for the simple reason that they provide the necessary range of time slots that people require.

COACH PARKING

It is important to the economy of town that the provision for coach parking is retained.

MARKET TRADER PERMITS

Ludlow Town Council would support the continuation of the market trader permit scheme operated by Shropshire Council for a limited number of parking spaces at Castle Street & Galdeford Car Parks. The permits are sold on the Town Council at face value to market traders. The scheme recognises itinerant nature and labour intensive stock issues related to market trading.

RESIDENT'S PERMIT SCHEME

Very few houses in the centre of Ludlow have individual garage space or private parking, the vast majority open directly onto the pavement of town centre streets and residents have to use the parking bays in those streets.

The residents permit parking system is no longer fit for purpose and needs a radical overhaul. There is widespread abuse of this system including many non-resident vehicles displaying resident's permits.

The documentation required to obtain a permit must ensure:

- The vehicle registered to the property – evidenced by the vehicle logbook [VRM]
- Only a single vehicle should be registered on each ticket
- The ticket should have an easily monitored unique ID code such as a barcode or QR. This will allow CEOs to scan/check for illegally photocopied permits [a current abuse]
- In all residents parking zones, a second car at the same address should pay £100 [people living in the centre of Ludlow should be encouraged to have a single car], although care needs to be taken to avoid unintended discrimination, and registered disabled second driver at the same address should only pay the standard [£50] cost. Shropshire Council could lead the way by introducing "Green friendly" parking.
- Registered vehicles must fit into the on-road parking bays
- Tradespeople are covered under a separate waiver scheme
- Residents who do not have a vehicle registered to their address will also be entitled to visitor permits at the same rate for a small admin charge.

It is essential that this scheme is monitored rigorously to stamp out abuse. This is why the need for an easily scanned unique code is essential to the scheme.

PARK & RIDE IMPROVEMENT

It is essential to the lifeblood of the town that a 'fit-for-purpose' Park & Ride (P&R) service is provided to run 7 days per week. The production of a parking ticket issued at the out-of-town site [Eco Park] should entitle a driver and one passenger to travel into and out of the town at a reduced cost. P&R routes must be as direct as possible and as frequent as is practicable.

- To have an important tourist centre unable to provide a P&R service on Sunday makes no financial sense at all.
- Signage needs to be improved, carefully worded and placed to direct tourist traffic away from the wholly inadequate medieval street layout and towards a regular cheap P&R service run from the edge of town. This would ease congestion, remove the endless circling of visitor cars searching for parking as well as providing a greater turnover of spaces for residents and other townspeople alike.

PRICING

Whilst accepting that there may be a need to raise the charges to take into consideration inflation, any increase should only be in line with inflation and should not alter the ratio of long and short term charges.

Changes imposed to benefit the admin processes and revenue streams of Shropshire Council are not fit for purpose for Ludlow. The only beneficiary of the increased Sunday charges is Shropshire Council's coffers. That the proposed increases were astronomical at 167% and 273%. That the proposals are biased towards those who "can afford to pay" and have deep pockets.

The new higher charges in Castle Street Car Park would penalise shoppers, workers and tourists.

The unique qualities of Ludlow, its distance from the County Town and the current destination of parking revenues mean that the temptation to treat the town as a 'cash cow' for the Unitary Council must be resisted at all costs. Even small increases in charges will have a detrimental effect and large increases could be seriously counter-productive.

LOCAL REVENUE TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Revenue destination is an extremely important consideration. At the present time, the revenue from all parking charges is collected by Shropshire Council. None of this money is returned to specifically benefit Ludlow.

Shropshire Council must recognise the importance of a fit for purpose parking strategy that works to support Ludlow.
