

**At the Cabinet meeting held on 25th July 2018
The Agenda at item 11 included the following**

**New Parking Strategy Framework - Traffic Regulation Order - Changes to Off Street
Parking Places around the County**

We note the decisions made included the following

RESOLVED:

That approval be granted for the making of the required Traffic Regulation Order for the proposed changes within off-street parking places as follows:

iii. That the hours of operation and charging are extended until 8.00pm on all band 2 off-street parking places listed in appendix 3 of this report..

The off street parking places listed include the following

Shrewsbury Town Centre Car Parks

- Bridge Street
 - Quarry Swimming & Fitness Centre
 - St Austin's Band 2
 - Shrewsbury Raven Meadows
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We wish to call in the decision regarding the so called Band 2 Car Parks in Shrewsbury and the decision to extend the charging period until 8.00pm.

We do this as, from the report very little, if any consideration has been made regarding the following statements referred to in the report. These are further mentioned several times in public comments, some of which are listed at the end of this message.

The report includes the following statement made by BID in 6.4.8 of the report.

b) financially penalise workers in the evening economy in the 'West End' of town who often work short and irregular shifts and wouldn't benefit from a discounted weekly ticket.

c) create a potential safety risk for workers travelling alone back to their car in a free car park in a different area of town.

And also from the police

6.4.10 West Mercia Police have also commented re the potential to displace parking into nearby residential streets and the consequential impacts, obstruction, emergency access etc.

We wish Scrutiny to examine the following prior to any implantation of this section and if needed ask Cabinet to amend their decision.

- We feel the effect on a vulnerable section of society has not been fully considered in the preparation of these orders nor has the effect on nearby residents.
The safety and wellbeing of workers, mainly from the younger generation are of concern to everyone. We feel that these concerns are not addressed in the report nor in the decisions made.
- It is also noted that comments are made in the main body of the report that charging is needed to free up parking spaces so potential customers can easily park.
No data is provided to back up the comments about crowded car parks. From other public comments made in reply to the published order, no one complains about lack of parking places. Some in fact say it is easy to park between 6.00 and 8.00pm.
From personal experience we have never had any difficulty in parking and do not agree with that charging is needed as staff are taking up places that potential customers could and would use.
- We ask that any data available be supplied so a better understanding of the reasons behind the proposals is better understood and if subsequently any alterations are needed.
- We are also concerned re the report from the police which expresses their concerns re the proposed alteration to the parking of vehicles. The further information is supplied in the cabinet report. Again more information is needed to ensure a safe decision is made.
- Finally we ask that the decision be scrutinised and considered to ascertain if there are any alternative actions that can be taken to address the concerns listed above..

Councillor Roger Evans

Shropshire Council Liberal Democrat Group Leader on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group of elected members.

Extracts from the report to Cabinet which was submitted as Agenda Item 11 and which gives more information are attached below.

We note in the report which accompanied this decision the following statements are made.

1.3 Managed car parking is important to the vitality of our town centres. Ensuring that customers and visitors have a range of options when choosing to visit and use the town is critical.....

6.2.9 Another area of concern is that the increase in off-street parking places tariffs will impact heavily on employees.

6.2.15 Having given consideration to the objections received through the TRO consultation no new concerns have been highlighted that were not considered prior to approval of the parking strategy relating to proposed changes in tariffs to off-street parking places, the market economy in Shrewsbury, existing tariffs in private sector car parks in the town and operational issues.

The report continues and regarding parking in the town centre car parks the following statements are made.

6.4 Proposal to extend the hours of charging using linear tariffs until 8.00pm on all Band 2 off-street parking places and on Frankwell Main, Riverside & Quay off-street parking places, Shrewsbury.

6.4.1 A total of 75 comments have been received relating to these proposals of which 75 are objections.

6.4.2 A total of 13 objections are considered to specifically relate to the Frankwell Main, Riverside & Quay off-street parking places.

6.4.3 All off-street parking places listed as a band 2 are located within the Shrewsbury town centre river loop and include the Raven Meadows multi storey carpark.

6.4.4 There is opposition to the evening charges due to the potential negative effect this will have on businesses and trade within the town. Anyone wishing to park in the town are in most cases doing so with the intention of spending money in the shops and food outlets. It is considered that the council is in an excellent position to promote footfall in the town and as a council we have a responsibility to encourage people to do so. There is also comment on the impact of people visiting the theatre.

6.4.5 The absence of appropriate public transport in the evenings is also of concern, as is the difficulties of access to the town and the cost of parking for the young, elderly and low paid workers and the consequential impact on businesses and the community.

6.4.6 The Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID), a business led partnership dedicated to making Shrewsbury a better place to live, work, visit and invest remain very concerned about the introduction of evening charges in the Frankwell car parks. They

consider that this proposal is at odds with the objectives of the strategy to 'contribute to economic growth'.

6.4.7 They state that much of Shrewsbury's early evening and later evening attractions are located close to Frankwell carpark in the 'West End' of town and would be negatively impacted by the change. The proposal will dis-incentivise parking in Frankwell and encourage parking in the Abbey Foregate creating more traffic and pollution in the town centre.

6.4.8 The BID also advise that they consider the proposal will:

a) lead to more parking in residential areas in the evening time creating more congestion and noise for residents

b) financially penalise workers in the evening economy in the 'West End' of town who often work short and irregular shifts and wouldn't benefit from a discounted weekly ticket.

c) create a potential safety risk for workers travelling alone back to their car in a free car park in a different area of town.

d) dis-incentivise workers and shoppers who have parked in Frankwell during the day to dwell into the evening and make use of our evening economy.

e) the change in policy may lead to penalty charges for visitors who did not realise the change and would give them a very bad experience of Shrewsbury leading to less return visits

f) incentivise people to use out of town or competitor evening destinations where free car parking is available immediately outside the venue

g) mean our evening car parking offer would compare unfavourably with Telford which has recently upgraded its evening economy

h) increase the price of parking in Frankwell and question whether this will result in the intended net increase in revenue as there will be an inevitable decrease in usage

i) have a negative impact on the use and experience of Shropshire Council evening assets including Theatre Severn, Old Market Hall and Market Hall

j) dilute the clarity of message about the best value and free car parking in Evening and Sundays in Abbey Foregate and Frankwell and therefore complicate a strategy which has been designed to be simple for the public to understand.

6.4.9 The BID also shared a selection of member comments, these are shown in appendix 2 of this report.

6.4.10 West Mercia Police have also commented re the potential to displace parking into nearby residential streets and the consequential impacts, obstruction, emergency access etc.

6.4.11 The original public consultation exercise proposed an extension of the hours of evening charges to 8.00pm on all pay and display parking places both on and off street across the county, and consultation returns identified an overwhelming desire to retain the hours of charging to 6.00pm. Many people considered there was a need to retain free parking in the evenings to encourage visitors to the market towns, hence promote the night time economy. There were also numerous comments raised with regards to the need for the provision of continued free evening parking within the market towns to facilitate attendance at community organisation meetings and events at venues such as community centres and assembly rooms.

6.4.12 Likewise, at a public meeting hosted by the BID during the original public consultation, the need to ensure premium evening parking within the river loop is not overrun by residents and night time economy workers and that capacity is made available to encourage visitors, was highlighted. Another concern was the need to better manage parking in the evenings within all 3 Frankwell off-street parking places; Shrewsbury can become congested when town centre events are held and /or when the Theatre Severn is busy.

6.4.13 The recommendation approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 17th January 2018 therefore relaxed the proposal for the extension of the hours of evening charges until 8.00pm on all pay and display off street parking places across the county except for Band 2 off street parking places (all carpark within the Shrewsbury river loop are band 2 with the exception of St Julian's Friar's carpark) and on all 3 Frankwell offstreet parking places.

6.4.14 The above relaxation, together with the adjustment of St Julian's Friar's carpark, Shrewsbury from proposed band 2 to a band 3 ensured the retention of the availability of free parking on off-street parking places located within the river loop.

6.4.15 Given the comments received to the TRO consultation, in particular the comments made by the BID, it is recommended that approval is granted for the making of the required TRO to extend the hours operation and charging to 8.00pm, only on band 2 carparks listed in appendix 3 of this report.

6.4.16 The omission of all 3 Frankwell off-street parking places is a departure from the agreed parking strategy previously approved by Cabinet. However, given the new substantive comments raised concerning requirements for the retention of some free evening parking in the 'West End' of Shrewsbury town it is considered an appropriate amendment to the strategy proposals. This amendment will also bring back consistency to the strategy for evening charging, given the 3 Frankwell carparks are all Band 4. With all car parks across county in Bands 4,5 and 6 remaining free to park after 6.00pm.

6.4.17 It should be noted that as part of recommendation xix of the January 17th Cabinet report, a feasibility exercise is to be undertaken and consideration given to the implementation of a traditional pay on foot rather than a pay and display system to the Frankwell, Main and Riverside surface off-street parking places.

6.4.18 We will continue to monitor and review as well as work in partnership with the Shrewsbury BID, in particular with regards to the impact of the proposed continued arrangements for free parking in the evening. However, it may be necessary to revisit this proposal again in the future. Any future proposals to change tariffs and/or extend charging will only be developed with the undertaking of appropriate consultation.

In Appendix 3 of the report a selection of the comments made are shown below

Selection of reply's received to the TRO consultation.

- BID welcomed but also need to consider safty and welfare of the low paid evening workers who are often paid at the appropriate minmum wage level,
- It will put people off from coming into the town and supporting local businesses that are open after 6pm. Shrewsbury town has enjoyed a recent boost from lots of new businesses having opened up, these proposed increase in charges will stifle these and may mean Shrewsbury town Center will go back to the days of being a ghost town after 6pm because many of these great eating/drinking places that rely on people being able to park and come into town will cease using the parking.
- Evening park will greatly effect night time trade and also the ability to recruit for evening shifts
- I wish to log my OBJECTION to the proposed changes to parking charges after 6pm in Shrewsbury. This will kill business in the town. What are you thinking ?? My son works at a local cocktail bar and starts work at 6pm most days - he relies on being able to park free and close to work as he feels safer having his car close to work at 2am when he needs to drive home. This is one example of how people (poor people) will be affected by the changes you are proposing. I urge you to reconsider.
- Of course this is an exercise in futility as I'm sure there is zero public support for the proposed parking fee changes which will not change your minds however please accept this as my opposition.
- Shrewsbury is a fantastic place to live, the the food scene I think will put us on the map soon. Please don't let greed get in the way of this. We all pay our extortionate parking as it is so don't make it worse.
- I object to the proposed parking changes. There is few enough parking places and the prices are driving business and visitors away from the town. These further restrictions will have no positive impact. I am both a resident and business manager.
- I think the proposed changes to parking in the town centre are disgusting!! I work as a carer and a lot of our customers gave calls between 6pm-9pm and this would mean us having to be out of pocket to provide care to a vulnerable person!
- In my view extending charging time in Shrewsbury town centre to 8:00pm is solely being done to enrich the council. There is never any pressure on parking after 6pm so this move is unjustified
- You will kill the town centre off if you increase charges after 6pm I object to proposition
- Changing the current system seems like another tax on what is a thriving nightlife industry, and will just make me take my custom to an out of town restaurant. I can't see why you need to do this as Shrewsbury is already very expensive to park in as it is.
- How does the increase in charging hours from 6pm to 8pm benefit visitors and businesses in Shrewsbury?
- Thank you for your proposed changes to the parking in Shrewsbury. Should the additional charging come into to place we will shop/eat /entertain out of town - its simply easier and less expensive.

- *I wish to register my concerns over the proposed parking changes. This will kill many businesses and restaurants in the town centre. Do you want a vibrant community in Shrewsbury or not?*
- *I am contacting you in regards to Shrewsbury. You seem determined to destroy our town and for the life of me, I cannot think why. You are making Shrewsbury town centre ever more unappealing. Park in the centre of Oswestry for an hour, 50p. Visit Meole Brace retail park, no charge. Visit Shrewsbury? Hey, we're going to squeeze every last penny out of you. At least I can currently attend an event in Shrewsbury in the evening with no charge, but it appears that you're even intent on ruining that! You should be ashamed of yourselves. The town centre will not last much longer. Our yoga group has just moved out of town, to Bomere Heath. Why? The proposed increase in parking charges.*
- *I wish to object to this proposal. Charges in town after 6pm are likely to put off evening visitors. I believe the revenue brought by these visitors (or any proportion of those visitors who would avoid town due to these charges) is greater than the revenue that would be gained from new parking charges. I do not think the risk is worth it in any event because the high street is struggling to survive increasing migration of shoppers to online only and this is not an appropriate time to press the point. I also believe that people are likely to prefer to park on side roads and similar to avoid parking charges which may cause nuisance to residents. For instance the gates and residential parking areas around abbey lawn are currently used by many visitors to avoid parking charges - I think this will increase and be very difficult to monitor given residents and visitors are legitimately able to park here. I am aware that sometimes unpopular decisions need to be taken but in this case I do not see that it would make financial or business sense to introduce these charges.*
- *I wish to formally object to the proposed parking charge changes in Shrewsbury. My main objection relates to the extension/change to the times of charges. Why on earth are you changing the time from 6pm to 8pm, apart from introducing a money making scheme?! I can understand charging for parking in the daytime (although not the increases) to control and limit parking during the main hours of population. However, in my experience there is never a parking issue during the evening (after 6pm) and by changing the operating hours I believe that it will seriously affect the night time economy of the town. I am currently a member of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre and only ever visit during the evenings due to the additional expense of parking in the daytime that makes the use of the centre cost prohibitive on a regular basis. If you go ahead with the proposed changes I for one will have little choice but to cancel my membership and look elsewhere for gym/swim membership. If you add regular parking charges to the membership fee then the continued use of the centre will become unviable for a lot of people. I believe that that this will drive a lot of people out of the town centre and kill the membership of the centre. Or is this actually what you are hoping to achieve?! The new proposals will also add additional expense to those choosing to visit one of the town's eatery's in the early evening for dinner etc. Again I believe that this will adversely affect businesses in the town, especially during the early evening. Unfortunately, I don't think for one minute that you will really listen and/or act on the concerns of the general public and will decide to do what you want. I'm not sure who comes up with some of these policy changes but I don't feel that they adequately consider the practical financial effect both on*

businesses and those using them. I note that this consultation has been very poorly advertised and I only became aware of it by chance.

- I object strongly to the new proposed parking rules . I often go into town at 18:30 to get an earlybird meal at one of the town restaurants .To change free parking till after 20:00 is the type of lunacy only this council can up with . I will not come into town when this happens and it will kill the town. The idiot that comes up with this should be sacked . The attitude of the council is destroying Shrewsbury*
- We frequently have meetings run in to the evening and it will put clients off from visiting our offices if they know they have to pay extra..*