

# **SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018**

**2.00 pm – 3.00 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**Responsible Officer:** Amanda Holyoak

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### **Present**

Councillors Claire Wild (Chair), Karen Calder, Roger Evans, Hannah Fraser, Peggy Mullock, Dave Tremellen and Leslie Winwood

### **17 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Councillors Gwilym Butler and Cecilia Motley. Councillor Ed Potter substituted for Councillor Motley and Councillor Elliott Lynch substituted for Councillor Butler.

### **18 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

The Chair reported that she had a Disposable Pecuniary Interest in Item 6 – Call-In Parking Strategy and would leave the meeting for the duration of this item.

### **19 Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2018**

The non-exempt minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record. A Member drew attention to questions asked by the Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> July in relation to Digital Transformation as he said they remained unanswered.

### **20 Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

### **21 Member Question Time**

There were no member questions.

### **22 Call-In: Parking Strategy**

The Chair left the room for this item as she had a disclosable pecuniary interest. As the Chair and Vice-Chair were both absent the Committee elected Councillor Ed Potter to take the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The Liberal Democrat Group had called in the decision with regard to the element of the New Parking Strategy concerning the extension of the charging period in Shrewsbury Town Centre car parks from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm. Following the Cabinet meeting on 5 September 2018 the only issue remaining for consideration was the Shrewsbury Raven Meadows Car Park. The call in questioned whether consideration had been given regarding statements in the report setting out public comments relating to safety for

workers travelling alone back to their car, and the safety and wellbeing of workers, mainly from the younger generation.

The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager explained the existing Traffic Regulation Order for Raven Meadows Car Park which allowed hours of operation on all days, all hours, for vehicles less than 2.2 m in height. However the car park was currently locked between the hours of 7pm and 7am. It was pay on foot and existing hours of charging were 8am – 6pm, including Bank and Public Holidays and Sundays. Charges were not applied to vehicles leaving after 6pm and before 7pm or during the overnight period.

1,240 people and organisations had responded to the consultation regarding the proposal to open Raven Meadows for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 87% of respondent were in favour of the proposal and 13% were against. 237 comments had been received in total of which 69% were in support and 27% against, 1% had mixed views and 3% had not stated an opinion. Although there were comments in support of the 24 hours a day opening, the security and safety of users of Raven Meadows during overnight hours were considered to be an issue. People were concerned that night time opening would invite anti-social behaviour and improvements such as improved lighting, controlled night-time access, CCTV and staff attendants had been suggested.

Affordability of parking at the multi-story overnight had also been a recurrent theme. There had been a couple of suggestions in relation to this, including a capped fee, and making it free to park after 10.00 pm. Some respondents had noted that opening the multi-story 24/7 would specifically support the local hotel economy, particularly the neighbouring Premier Inn and that it would support more generally the night time and visitor economy.

Comments in opposition had said that there was no need for the multi-storey car park to open 24/7, but had not stated a reason why. Many comments related to the issue of safety and security of users and some people felt that the fees would be too expensive.

The Committee was informed that in response to the public consultation and after discussions with the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District, the following amendments to the parking strategy proposals relating to Raven Meadows multi-storey car park were approved by Cabinet on 17 January 2018:

- i) That the hours of operation and charging be extended until 8pm;
- ii) That the opening hours in Raven Meadows be extended to 24 hours a day on Mondays to Saturdays and include a three hour cap on the linear tariff of 3 hours for parking periods on Mondays to Saturdays between the hours of 8pm and 8am;
- iii) The proposed introduction of an 8 hour tariff cap between the hours of 8pm and 8 am next day Monday to Saturday (except Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays) be added in response to results of consultation
- iv) The proposed introduction of a three hour tariff cap between the hours of 8pm and 8 am next day Monday to Saturday (except Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays) be added in response to results of public consultation.
- v) Proposal to introduce a flat rate tariff of £1.50 per day with a 10 hour tariff cap for parking on Sundays, and bank and public holidays.

The introduction of tariff caps meant that after parking for that period you could continue to park for the remainder of that day without incurring any additional charge.

In May and June 2018, a formal traffic regulation order (TRO) consultation was carried out with regard to these proposals. With regards to proposals i) – iv) there were not any specific responses relating to Raven Meadows from this first round of TRO consultation. With regards to proposal V, an amendment to the strategy was approved by Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> July, removing the 10 hour cap. A further TRO consultation (proposal to remove the proposed ten-hour cap and allow unlimited periods of parking on Sundays and bank and public holidays for the flat rate tariff of £1.50 a day) has since been undertaken. One comment was received, from Shrewsbury BID, in support of this amendment.

However, the current position was that it was operationally not possible to open for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and the maximum opening could be extended to would be midnight on any day. Prior to the extension of opening hours overnight there had been anti-social behaviour and security issues to overcome. It was estimated that the additional revenue generated with the extension of charging hours would just about cover the additional operating costs until midnight. The intention remained that Raven Meadows be subject to 24/7 parking, this would allow overnight parking for the likes of the Premier Inn, but for now the car park would be locked from between midnight to 7 am.

The Chairman asked if recent amendments by Cabinet had allayed some of the concerns of those who had called the decision in. Councillor Evans said he was glad that Cabinet had decided not to extend the charging period to 8pm and reverted back to 6pm, following representations from Shrewsbury BID. However, many users of town centre car parks worked in town centre businesses, often earning the minimum wage and wished to park in the town close to the premises where they worked. He said that many would wish to park in Raven Meadows as it was monitored by security, this would make people feel safer and expand the choice of where to park.

He also expressed the view that to accommodate low wage workers who worked in the town centre, there should be no charge between 6pm and 8pm and that parking between 6pm and midnight should result in a charge of only 3 hours. He drew attention to the reason for one of the original arguments to charge more for surface car parks was that they got congested because night time economy workers parked in them as well as customers. The affordability and accessibility of Raven Meadows if this was implemented would help relieve that congestion.

In response to questions, the Transport Commissioner explained that at the time the original proposals had been made, this had been on the basis that on street and off street evening charging would be made inside the river loop. Evening workers preferred to park on surfaced car parks inside the river loop, and as close as they could to their place of work, on street.

Officers also reminded the Committee that its focus should consideration of whether the decisions made by Cabinet were open to wider challenge or not.

A member observed that access to Raven Meadows car park was dark, especially at night, which raised a question about it feeling safer. She also questioned why evening

economy workers should have a proportion of free car parking whilst those in the daytime needed to pay.

Councillor Evans reiterated that comments received through the consultation included that people wished to park cheaply, in town and near to their place of work. They did not want to use the cheaper Abbey Foregate Street Car park due to the distance to walk. Officers acknowledged that people wished to park close to their place of work and to return to their car late at night in safety. This was the reason for recent revisions to include in loop parking.

A Member drew attention to the restrictions on those staying at the Premier Inn as they were not able to leave the car park until 7.00 am. She suggested that charging from 6.00 am would not penalise anyone other than those wishing to make an early start and additional than those starting at 6am which might help to alleviate any funding issues. Officers observed that this was possible but would require further additional funding.

The Chair observed that Raven Meadows was unique in terms of paying and access. He asked about access to the car park and whether it was regarded as a safer location to park. It was confirmed that access with a lift was available from Smithfield Road and that there was a staircase and lift from the Riverside shopping centre. Officers expanded on issues around security – infrastructure needed to be in place throughout opening hours and this was an extra cost element that would need to be recognised.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was proposed and seconded that there should be no charge made in Raven Meadows car park between 6pm and 8pm; that linear charging should cease at 6pm and any hours after that be subject to the three hour cap. This proposal was lost with two votes in favour, five against, and one abstention.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Car Parking Strategy be endorsed.

## 23 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee

The date of the next meeting was discussed. A member asked about the work programme and why intended items for the meeting had not been brought forward. He asked that an explanation be provided when items listed in the work programme were not included in agenda as planned. He also expressed the view that the Committee should be able to look at items ahead of or in parallel with Cabinet, rather than having to wait.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....