

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Initial Screening Record 2021-2022

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Proposed increase in parking charges due to inflation in all Shropshire on and off street parking places

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Kevin Aitken

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	✓	x
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?	x	✓

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations
<p>The changes will affect all residents, visitors and businesses in the affected car parks and parking areas across the Shropshire unitary council area.</p> <p>Any variation of charges for car parking are required to be laid down in a Traffic Regulation Order TRO and the required statutory consultation has now been completed with 8 objections received. Many of the objections received relate to concerns with the current increase in cost of living and a perceived detrimental impact in deterring visitors to the towns. No issues were raised in the consultation relating directly to equality, social inclusion and health.</p> <p>The change in charging will reinstate revenue levels to cover off required expenditure in the parking service which will be used in accordance to Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 section 122 which stipulates the statutory purpose of the imposition of traffic regulation orders, including the imposition of charges, is:</p>

“to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway”.

People’s behaviour may change as a result of experiencing financial difficulties as the cost-of-living crisis bites. It is considered that the relatively low-cost increase proposed is unlikely to be a significant factor in influencing choice on its own. However, it is recognised that for low-income households, whose needs we seek to consider within a broad grouping of social inclusion, there may be a negative equality impact. This also includes those we may consider to be vulnerable, eg. single parent families, serving members of the armed forces and veterans.

The grouping likely to be the most affected, both in likely positive terms and in likely negative terms, is the Protected Characteristic grouping of Disability. Free parking concessions are available to disability groups for on -street parking therefore there will be no direct impact. However, it is considered that there will be positive improvement for the disabled and low mobility groups resulting from the consequential improvements of reduced parking congestion and better traffic management facilitating safer movement of vehicular and pedestrian movements. Blue badge holder parking is free within all allocated on-street pay and display areas, hence a positive impact. Although concessionary rates are available to blue badge holders within off street carparks, disabled badge holders parking will be subject to the proposed increase in charges, a negative impact. There is thus a balancing act here of which the Council is acutely mindful.

There will be an anticipated likely potential negative impact for all Groupings within the Protected Characteristic categories set out in the Equality Act 2010: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race and ethnicity; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Due to the increase in charges, they may be forced to utilise alternative parking arrangements a greater distance from their final destinations, curtail or reduce visits, seek alternative destinations or utilise alternative options in obtaining goods and services.

There is no data held on the number of car parking users who fall into each protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact for different groups. The changes will affect all residents, visitors and businesses in the affected car parks.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

The recent consultation exercise indicated levels of concern across Shropshire, both from market towns and from those in rural areas. Whilst some comments were from individuals, and some were from town councils or parish councils, there were only two comments of positive support of the 27 received. The response, whilst low, does therefore need to be taken into consideration in reaching a decision about the proposed charges, given views around access and the cost of living crisis.

Communication will continue to take account of potential negative response as well as positive feedback that may be received from residents and town centre visitors that may experience impacts from the increases in charges. We will liaise with partner organisations such as town councils, business improvement groups as well as monitoring appropriate social media portals.

Local intelligence on the ground will be obtained from parking services personnel, with any change in usage patterns suitably reported, if necessary suitable changes to the nature and type of parking provision will be considered, for example the provision of additional disabled parking bays in key locations.

Associated ESHIAs

There is currently an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order in place relating to a trial prohibition of vehicles, waiting, and loading on Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury between 10am and 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Prior to implementation of this trial a similar ESHIA was carried out. This trial scheme along with a similar scheme is in keeping with the overall parking strategy and wider active travel and green agenda, aiming to reduce vehicular traffic in the town centres whilst improving active travel, safer access and mobility for pedestrian and cyclist groups. It is considered that the proposed increases in parking charges supports the strategy and will continue to promote appropriate availability of parking, hence proportionate levels of access and mobility for all.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. The trials includes climate change considerations

Climate change

The parking strategy, through the banding system and linear model, is designed to promote transport hierarchy and hence promote more sustainable modes of travel and reduce carbon emissions, in particularly in the larger towns of Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Bridgnorth. The strategy is therefore expected to have a positive effect to all user groups through reduction in carbon emissions from energy and fuel consumption.

Carbon Offsetting and Mitigation - The parking strategy is not expected to provide any opportunities for carbon offsetting or mitigation.

Climate Change Adaptation - The parking strategy is not expected to provide any direct opportunities for improving climate change resilience and adaptation.

Health and well being

As well as promoting the active travel agenda and the associated health and wellbeing benefits that go with active travel, the parking strategy is designed to promote parking in the right location for the nature and duration of each visit / requirement with appropriate parking space turnover. This in turn reduces traffic congestion and subsequent impacts such as the need for parking cruising (driving around looking for space). In the county town of Shrewsbury real time information boards have recently been introduced advising on availability and locations of parking spaces. These seek to both reduce parking cruising and reduce levels of driver anxiety.

As with pedestrianisation measures, the positive health impacts that are likely to accrue for all pedestrians are around decreased exposure to vehicle emissions. The improvements to perceived safety are likely to lead to positive mental health and wellbeing by encouraging certain groupings to venture out. These are particularly those with caring responsibilities such as parents with babies and small children, those who have physical and/or learning disabilities and their carers, and those who consider themselves to be vulnerable.

Economic and societal/wider community

Shropshire Council continues to work in close partnership with Town and Parish Councils, Business improvement groups, Civic Societies and the like to develop traffic management measures and reduce congestion hence enhancing our town centre environments.

Consideration is currently being given to the enhancement of existing and the introduction of additional residents parking schemes within the main market towns of Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Oswestry and Ludlow.

These additional measures will provide concessions enabling residents to park in close proximity to their homes whilst deterring non-resident commuter parking and reducing on-street congestion, promoting a better environment for all.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i> Kevin Aitken Parking Policy Implementation /Traffic Engineering Manager		27 June 2022
<i>Any internal service area support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> Mrs Lois Dale		28 th June 2022



Rurality and Equalities Specialist

Leis Dale

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i> Kevin Aitken Parking Policy Implementation /Traffic Engineering Manager		27 June 2022
<i>Accountable officer's name</i> Steve Smith Assistant Director highways and Transport		27 June 2022

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

The current parking strategy charging structure was approved by Cabinet on 17th January 2018, there have been no increases since. The current charging structure is based on a linear pricing model and uses standard criteria for the setting of standard banding levels. There are 7 bands of carparks and on-street parking areas with bands 1 to 6 currently being chargeable. In addition to the linear hourly charges, specified car parks also offer:

- Discounted weekly tickets
- 3 monthly, 6 monthly and 12 monthly season tickets
- Residents parking permits
- Tariffs for HGV parking
- Free coach parking

The existing and proposed pricing levels for each band are shown in the table below:

Band	Charges- Linear hourly rate	
	Existing	Proposed
	£	£

Band 1	2.40	2.80
Band 2	1.80	2.00
Band 3	1.00	1.20
Band 4	0.70	0.80
Band 5	0.50	0.60
Band 6	0.30	0.40

The majority of charges are rising from between 10p and 20p from previous levels with only those Band 1 car parks rising by 40p, having remained static for the last 4 years with the council absorbing the rising inflationary costs in that time. Many other authorities have raised charges at least once in the same time period. Indeed, within the pricing structure, the council is still significantly subsidising costs of operating the service.

The proposed level of fees and charges to be applied by Shropshire Council in 2022/23 was approved by Cabinet on 16th February and subsequently by Full Council 24th February 2022 and included increases to all parking fees for on and off-street parking across the county.

Any variation of charges for car parking are required to be laid down in a TRO before they can be implemented. Before making such an order statutory consultation is required to be undertaken and due consideration given to any objections received.

The required statutory consultation was undertaken between 24th March and 20th May and incorporated notices placed on site at each car park and on-street parking area where charging applies. Full details of the consultation were also published on the Council's consultation portal.

A total of 18 comments were received during the consultation and included 1 comment in support of the proposals and 8 objections.

There has been no evidence submitted with the objections to demonstrate the assertions that the proposed increases in charges will have a detrimental impact on users. It is recognised however, that the increase in the cost of living has increased at an unusually accelerated rate in recent months and is forecast to remain at a high level in the short term. However, this has also had a knock-on impact on operational costs as well with significant rises in energy charges anticipated once the councils current supply arrangement ends.

The Council has sought to resist, for the time being using town centre charging mechanisms to deter travel into large urban areas to subsidise and encourage the take up of more sustainable means of travel which is common in many large towns and cities across the country but this will be reviewed as part of a further review of parking charges in the Autumn.

When considering the proposed increases against inflationary rises in the last 4 years the proposed charges are considered necessary as the alternative would be

to require increased subsidising of parking budgets which is not affordable within current budget pressures.

During the period since implementation of the new linear tariffs no inflation increase has been applied and there is need to recognise that inflation rates have been significant over that time.

The new proposed linear hourly rates have been rounded to a sensible value taking into account size of coinage for shorter periods of stay giving variations in proposed uplift, hence for bands 4,5 and 6 there is no other option but to implement a full 10p increase to the hourly rates.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The changes will affect all residents, visitors and businesses in the affected car parks and parking areas across the county of Shropshire.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Due to the pay and display parking machines only accepting coinage in denominations of 10 pence upwards and the council's parking machines not accepting lower denominations of coinage, any price increase needed to be considered in denominations of ten pence.

Historical UK inflation figures were screened and factored and the new tariffs rounded to the nearest 10 pence denominations with additional considerations with regards to concessionary rates, for example the 50% reduction in tariffs on Sundays, bank and public holidays.

Much of the feedback received from the TRO consultation, referred to the increases in charges being excessive, however no evidence or reasoning was submitted. On review following completion of the consultation and analysis of the feedback the proposed increases in tariffs are considered proportionate and within the principal of the parking strategy. For example the increase in tariff for band 1 is the largest monetary increase, that in practice will deter parking on-street in Shrewsbury town centre promoting alternative parking and transport modes hence preserving the town centre environment, pollution and carbon reduction.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The required statutory consultation was undertaken between 24th March and 20th May and incorporated formal noticing placed in the press and on site at each car park and on-street parking area where charging applies. Full details of the

consultation were also published on the Council's consultation portal. This consultation exercise attracted 27 responses.

The consultation exercise indicated levels of concern across Shropshire, both from market towns and from those in rural areas. Whilst some comments were from individuals, and some were from town councils or parish councils, there were only two comments of positive support of the 27 received. The response, whilst low, does therefore need to be taken into consideration in reaching a decision about the proposed charges, given views around access and the cost of living crisis.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)				✓negative
<u>Disability</u> (please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)			✓ positive and negative	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓negative
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓negative
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓negative

Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)				✓negative
Religion and belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				✓negative
Sex (this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓negative
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				✓negative
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)			✓ negative for low income households	

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?			✓ positive and negative	

<p>Will the proposal indirectly impact an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p>			<p>✓ positive and negative</p>	
<p>Will the policy have a direct impact on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p>			<p>✓ positive and negative</p>	
<p>Will there be a likely change in demand for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p>				<p>✓ positive and negative</p>

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

It is considered that the proposed increase in charges may deter some shoppers and visitors from visiting towns, adversely impacting on trade and that instead they may choose to visit alternative centres such as Telford or Chester.

There may also be some modal shift by local visitors to our towns who will opt to use alternatives such as park and ride, cycle or walk but this is only likely to occur in the larger towns and mainly Shrewsbury given this is the only town that currently has a good alternative modes of transport including a park and ride service.

Although disabled persons who display a blue badge are able to park within pay and display bays free of charge and for unlimited periods of time, persons with limited mobility who do not qualify for a blue badge will be forced to either pay a further premium for their parking or seek alternative parking some distance from their destination. There are some concessions in place for parking on Sundays however a specific group that will be impacted in this way are Sunday worshippers at different places of worship across the county.

Any decrease in vehicles parking in our town centres will result in positive outcomes in terms of environmental and climate change impact in particular within the two air pollution hot spots in Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth. The recent trial closures to traffic of Shrewsbury High Street has demonstrated that despite the removal of parking provision in the immediate vicinity the provision of a safer and more pleasant environment for shoppers and visitors has increased trade although access for some user groups such as blue badge holders and Sunday worshippers has been penalised.

There are concessions available for residents who are able to purchase residents parking permits within specified town centre car parks, however the cost of these permits are also proposed to be increased. Residents permits are also available for on-street parking provision in Oswestry and Bridgnorth. Parking is currently free in the majority of parking areas after 6pm, it is therefore considered likely that as the cost of living crises bites, even more residents will choose not to purchase permits and take chance with indiscriminate parking during charging hours. The increase in charges will also promote in an increase in visitors and commuter parking in outlying residential streets resulting in further parking congestion and impacting on the daily lives of residents, businesses and society in general.