



Parking Tariffs, Operations & Development Supplementary Report in Response to Scrutiny

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1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The report entitled Parking Tariffs, Operations & Development was originally presented to Cabinet on 17 January 2024. It was called in by both the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups. Their concerns were considered by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 February 2024 with a recommendation to review certain matters.
- 1.2. These reports are henceforth referred to as the original Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee respectively.
- 1.3. This is a supplementary report to the original Cabinet report and the Scrutiny Committee which seeks to address specific areas of concern of the Scrutiny committee and considers variations to the original report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report considers issues raised by Scrutiny Committee in relation to the original report. There is no formal minute as yet but the issues they asked to be re-examined were: -

- a) Compatibility with the Shrewsbury Movement and Public Space Strategy and current strategies in relation to graduation of parking charges in Shrewsbury according to proximity to the town centre.
- b) Why there is no increase at Raven Meadows Multi-Storey Car Park
- c) The effect on the economy
- d) Risks related to the Park and Ride service
- e) The use of surplus income from the Parking Service
- f) Maintenance history and arrangements
- g) Consultation methods
- h) The parking charge Band applied to Wem
- i) The necessity for and potential changes to Evening parking charges in Shrewsbury
- j) The necessity for and potential changes to Sunday parking charges throughout Shropshire.
- k) The potential for parking to be displaced into neighbouring areas

2.2 Detailed responses are provided in Section 7 – Background below.

2.3 Since the Scrutiny meeting on 19 February 2024 a Motion was submitted to Council, proposed by Alan Mosley (Labour) and seconded by Julia Buckley (Labour). In summary, the Motion called for full consultation on the proposals and a suspension of tariff changes until that had been completed. The Motion was rejected.

2.4 In response to a petition from Shrewsbury BID a 15 minute debate was conducted at full council on 21 March 2024, largely focussing on the method of consultation. It was resolved that the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Dan Morris, would write to Shrewsbury BID.

2.5 The revised recommendations are shown in full in Section 3 below in summary the changes are:-

2.5.1 Wherever the original recommendation was to use a Notice of Variation it has been changed to a notice of proposal to make a Traffic Regulation Order, which includes a consultation/objection period.

2.5.2 'Evening Charges' are now capped at £1.00 during any period between 6pm and 10pm

2.5.3 The Sunday Charge where charges are to be introduced is capped at the normal charge for 1 hour.

2.5.4 The new charge at Abbey Foregate will be £0.80 per hour.

2.5.5 The new charge at Raven Meadows multi-storey car park will be £2.40

2.5.6 Evening Charges will apply to Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars as per 2.5.2 above

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (in twelve parts) – parking tariffs

3.1 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the twelve items shown in Table A and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.2 Table A

| Recommendation | CURRENT BAND | CURRENT TARIFF (Per Hour) | NEW TARIFF (Per Hour) | LOCATION | SUNDAY TARIFF |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| 1a | 1 | £2.80 | £3.60 | Shrewsbury On-Street | Full |
| 1b | 2 | £2.00 | £2.80 | Bridge St, St. Austins St, The Quarry | Full |
| 1c | 2 | £2.00 | £2.40 | Raven Meadows | £2.40 flat fee |
| 1d | 3 | £1.20 | £1.60 | St. Julians Friars | Full |
| 1e | 4 | 80p | £1.20 | Frankwell – Main, Riverside and Quay | £1.20 flat fee |
| 1f | 5/4 | 60p/80p | £1.00 | Bridgnorth, Ludlow On-Street (Blue), Much Wenlock | Half |
| 1g | 2 | £2.00 | £2.20 | Ludlow On-Street (Red) | Full |
| 1h | 3 | £1.20 | £1.40 | Ellesmere Mereside | Full |
| 1i | 3 | £1.20 | £1.40 | Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Oswestry, Ellesmere | Half |
| 1j | 5 | 60p | 80p | Abbey Foregate, Whitchurch, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, Church Stretton | £0.80 flat fee |
| 1k | 6 | 40p | 60p | All the above plus Wem and Prees Heath | £0.60 flat fee |
| 1l | 7 | Free | Free | All other car parks | - |

Recommendation 2 (in five parts) – Season Tickets

3.3 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the five items shown in Table B and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.4 Table B

| Recommendation | CURRENT BAND | CURRENT TARIFF (Per Annum) | NEW TARIFF (Per Annum) | LOCATION EXAMPLES |
|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 2a | 3 | £512 | £681 | St Julians Friars |
| 2b | 4 | £640 | £960 | Frankwell |
| 2c | 5 | £480/£640 | £800 | Bridgnorth |
| 2d | 5 | £480 | £640 | Abbey Foregate, Whitchurch, Church Stretton |
| 2e | 6 | £320 | £480 | Ludlow, Oswestry, Market Drayton |

Recommendation 3 (in nine parts) - resident permits

3.5 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the nine items shown in Table C and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.6 Table C

| Recommendation | CURRENT BAND | CURRENT TARIFF (Per Annum) | NEW TARIFF (Per Annum) | LOCATION EXAMPLES |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Shrewsbury Car Parks | | | | |
| 3a | 3/4 | £512 | £768 | Frankwell (Band 4), St Julians Friars though Band 3 has been linked to Band 4 for permits only |
| 3b | 5 | £384 | £512 | Abbey Foregate, Shire Hall Overflow |
| Shropshire Car Parks | | | | |
| 3c | | £100 | £110 | Ludlow On-Street |
| 3d | | £50 | £58 | Bridgnorth On-Street |
| 3e | 4 | £512 | £640 | Back Lane, Much Wenlock |
| 3f | 5 | £384 | £512 | All other locations |
| 3g | 6 | £256 | £384 | |
| 3h | Special | £448 | £560 | Riverside Bridgnorth |
| 3i | Special | £192 | £288 | Prees Heath |

Recommendation 4 – (In 4 parts)

3.7 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the four additional items for Shrewsbury town shown in Table D and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.8 Table D

| Recommendation Number | Description | Detail |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 4a | Remove all daytime capped rates in Shrewsbury i.e. Abbey Foregate, Frankwell and Raven Meadows | From maximum fee of 8 hours to hourly charge for all hours |
| 4b | Introduce evening tariffs to Shrewsbury on-street parking places | 6.00pm-10.00pm. £1.00 flat fee |
| 4c | Introduce evening tariffs to Bridge Street, St Austins Street and The Quarry car parks | 6.00pm-10.00pm. £1.00 flat fee |
| 4d | Introduce evening tariffs to Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars car parks | 6.00pm-10.00pm. £1.00 flat fee |

Recommendation 5 – Parking Asset Improvement Plan (P.A.I.P)

3.9 Cabinet approve that a Parking Asset Improvement Plan be prepared.

Recommendation 6 – Parking Service Review

3.10 Cabinet approve to a review of the role, capacity, structure and staff in the Parking Services operation.

Recommendation 7 – Parking Strategy

3.11 Cabinet approve that a new On and Off-Street Parking Strategy be developed for Cabinet approval in principle, prior to non-statutory public consultation.

Report

Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1 The existing tariff at Abbey Foregate is £0.60 ph and the original proposal was an increase to £1.00 ph. The new proposal is £0.80 ph which has less of a deterrent

effect than the original proposal. This creates an increased risk of congestion as there is a

4.1.1 greater incentive to transfer from St Julians Friars.

4.1.2 reduced incentive to use Park and Ride (where practical).

4.1.3 reduced incentive to use alternative travel methods (walking, cycling).

- 4.2 There is also an increased risk of parking being displaced to neighbouring roads when the car park is full
- 4.3 The existing tariff at Raven Meadows is £2.00 ph and the original proposal was to retain that fee unchanged. The new proposal is £2.40 ph which has more of a deterrent effect than the original proposal. This seems to fit the aim of reducing vehicles inside the river loop, but it also creates an increased risk of transfer to Frankwell which is then at risk of being fully occupied. It is estimated that there will be less than 1000 fewer vehicles per annum (approx 3 per day), in a car park that is already full at some point on nearly 4 days per week
- 4.4 The introduction of evening charges at Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars removes the opportunity to park for free in any part of Shrewsbury. This impacts employees of evening economy more than the leisure visitor, employees who are more difficult to resource and subsequently retain.
- 4.5 An ESHIA has been carried out and assessed as Part One. This is attached at Appendix 2

Financial Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 is a revised illustration of the financial changes to the anticipated income arising from the revised Recommendations. This has reduced by £117k compared with the original report

Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 There are no revisions to the original report.

Background

Consultation

- 7.1 Following consideration of the comments made and discussion at Scrutiny Committee, a change in procedure is proposed.
- 7.2 Use of a notice of variation of charges which provides no provision for consultation was strongly criticised at the Scrutiny meeting.
- 7.3 It is now proposed to change the charges by making a traffic regulation order which requires a notice of proposals to make an Order. This includes a period of 21 days in which a person may object to the proposals.

7.4 Objections to changes which would be linked to a change in the Parking Strategy may be made by this route. For instance, the Parking Strategy sets out tariffs which fall into one of seven categories whereas the proposal is to use a finer distinction of eleven categories. This reflects Shrewsbury's increasing need to limit and re-distribute vehicles which could not be delivered using seven bands whilst maintaining the breadth of charges needed in other market towns and villages.

7.5 **Financial Consideration**

Income Generation

7.6 All parking, whether on or off-street is enabled by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in order to meet the parking and traffic management needs of an area. If in order to control demand, then charges may be introduced. The following three pieces of information are those that inform this statement.

7.7 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 states in relation to on-street parking at Section 45 (3) that

"In determining what parking places are to be designated under this section the authority concerned shall consider both the interests of traffic and those of the owners and occupiers of adjoining property, and in particular the matters to which that authority shall have regard include—

(a) the need for maintaining the free movement of traffic;

(b) the need for maintaining reasonable access to premises; and

(c) the extent to which [off-street parking accommodation, whether in the open or under cover,] is available in the neighbourhood or the provision of such parking accommodation is likely to be encouraged there by the designation of parking places under this section."

7.8 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 states in relation to off-street parking at Section 32 (1) that

"Where for the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic it appears to a local authority to be necessary to provide within their area suitable parking places for vehicles, the local authority, subject to Parts I to III of Schedule 9 to this Act—

(a) may provide off-street parking places (whether above or below ground and whether or not consisting of or including buildings) together with means of entrance to and egress from them, or

(b) may by order authorise the use as a parking place of any part of a road within their area, not being a road the whole or part of the width of which is within Greater London."

7.9 In Section 45 the whole extract details why on-street parking may be considered whilst in Section 32 it is the initial phrase that is key – the whole rationale for providing car parks is 'for the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic'

- 7.10 Caselaw has confirmed that the 1984 Act was not a fiscal measure and could not be used for the purpose of revenue raising. However, if the tariff necessary to control parking levels was such that the income exceeded the expenditure that is acceptable.
- 7.11 In Shropshire the parking charges inevitably produce a surplus. This arises from the tariff levels needed to manage demand and distribution of vehicle parking to control congestion, which is entirely different to just matching expenditure.
- 7.12 Any suggestion that setting charges to match expenditure should be sufficient is mistaken as, using a very crude calculation, this would result in charges 40-50% lower than they are currently. This would not meet the primary need of controlling parking and traffic. The demand would increase to a level the limited number of spaces could not accommodate. Traffic circulating the town centre and car parks would increase dramatically to the point of gridlock in the car parks as vehicles trying to enter a car park would conflict with those trying to leave. Queuing on the road would also be present in some locations.

Expenditure Requirements

- 7.13 In exercising powers under the 1984 Act including providing parking for the purposes of 'relieving or preventing congestion of traffic' and 'maintaining the free movement of traffic' the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 made it a duty of local authorities to secure 'expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic' as well as 'the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities.

122 Exercise of functions by strategic highways companies or local authorities.

(1) It shall be the duty of every strategic highways company and local authority upon whom functions are conferred by or under this Act, so to exercise the functions conferred on them by this Act as (so far as practicable having regard to the matters specified in subsection (2) below) 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 or, in Scotland, the road.

- 7.14 It is considered essential that 'suitable' parking facilities will include car parks that are:-
- 7.14.1 Reasonably close to the locations drivers wish to visit.
 - 7.14.2 Safe for people to occupy and transit.
 - 7.14.3 Safe for vehicles to navigate.
 - 7.14.4 Sufficiently signed with conditions of use and means of payment.
 - 7.14.5 Clean and well drained
 - 7.14.6 Well managed
 - 7.14.7 Regulations are enforced where necessary.

- 7.15 The provision of these facilities includes an obligation to maintain them to ensure that they remain 'suitable'.

Surplus Income usage

7.16 Where the income exceeds the expenditure there is an amount remaining. In terms of on-street parking and enforcement this is legally referred to as a surplus, a term which is often carried over to the amounts remaining from off-street operations.

7.17 As was noted in 7.11 in Shropshire a surplus is an inevitable product of managing the demand and distribution of vehicles in the car parks and on-street.

7.18 There are some restrictions on how this surplus may be spent.

7.18.1 Surplus income from on-street parking and enforcement (on- and off-street enforcement) must be spent on defined purposes. That is provision of additional parking and if that is deemed unnecessary or inadvisable then public passenger transport, highway and environment improvements are permissible.

7.18.2 In the case of enforcement, Statutory Guidance states that there should not be a target income, though for good governance a forecast may be used.

7.18.3 Use of surplus income from off-street parking is not restricted as long as all necessary expenditure has been accounted for.

7.19 Surpluses since 2018/19 have been spent on supporting public passenger transport. This amounted to

- a) 2022/23 – £2.4m
- b) 2021/22 – £2.3m
- c) 2020/21 – £1.4m
- d) 2019/20 – £3.0m (except 0.1m on highway improvement)
- e) 2018/19 – £1.3m

7.20 It was observed at Scrutiny that the current Budget Book noted headline figures for Parking Services of an income of £7m with a surplus of £4.1m. However, it is not appropriate to use these figures as they were projected based on the anticipated additional income arising from the original Cabinet report and by extension this report.

7.21 This projected income will not be available until Cabinet have reviewed the findings of Scrutiny, notices have been published, objection periods have passed, objections considered, and practical implementation completed. This is not expected until at least mid-July if no substantial objections are received, mid-August otherwise or even later if an objection is upheld requiring amendment of the proposals.

Maintenance

7.22 The original report described how the Parking Services team has reduced in size over time. As a result, capacity was not available to perform the routine inspections which should have been carried out and only reactive maintenance being performed. which was exacerbated by the need for Parking Services to re-direct

resources to other priorities during the Covid pandemic. This led to a growing number of unidentified and unresolved dilapidations

- 7.23 If the inspections had been performed at the time the surpluses would have been reduced. Going forward, changes identified in this report provide for a more complete and proactive service in the future. A change in internal management in 2022 made available additional resources and well developed procedures for inspection.
- 7.24 Sample inspections have identified outstanding maintenance issues which require addressing. This prompted Recommendation 5 in the original report to perform a comprehensive inspection of all car parks, develop a database of faults and plan a programme of rectification, the Parking Asset Improvement Plan. This will identify the full extent of the additional funds needed for car park repair and maintenance as well as the expansion of the Parking Services team to instigate or preserve a proper inspection regime.
- 7.25 It should be borne in mind that maintenance is not a choice but a legal obligation. Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as noted in detail at 7.13 above) obliges local authorities to provide “suitable and adequate parking facilities” which is interpreted as meaning that the car parks must be kept in a safe condition, amongst others.
- 7.26 As has been stated earlier the increase in charges is due to the need to manage usage and distribution of parking in Shrewsbury. This is independent of the need for an additional budget for maintenance, or any other requirements.
- 7.27 Regardless of the changes to the tariffs the additional maintenance funds would be required, so if the tariff changes were not implemented, or only implemented in part, the surplus should be reduced.
- 7.28 The 2022/3 budget included relatively small amounts for grounds maintenance and Repairs/Maintenance of property. The £500k pa identified in this report is for rectification of the backlog faults in the car parks and that in the future, maintenance is charged to the surplus before it is distributed to other uses.
- 7.29 The £500k pa identified in this report will substantially increase the repairs budget and, subject to the full Parking Asset Improvement Plan, provide for a rolling programme of rectifying delayed repairs over the next 5 years before going on to properly handle repair/maintenance requirement on a proactive basis and fund improvements.
- 7.30 This does not preclude the utilisation of additional amounts of existing parking revenue as raising charges specifically for this purpose would not be legal. This might arise from a particularly serious problem or additional requirements

Parking Services Structure

7.31 Regardless of the changes to the tariffs the additional Parking Services structure budget would be required, so if the tariff changes were not implemented, or only implemented in part, the surplus should be reduced.

Matters Arising from Scrutiny Committee

Shrewsbury Moves and the Shrewsbury Movement and Public Space Strategy (MPSS)

7.32 The Shrewsbury Moves initiative aims to bring forward the objectives of the MPSS and has been developed from a comprehensive and inclusive programme of consultations and stakeholder events, coordinated through the Big Town Plan Partnership. However, it is a strategic future development which is in an extended consultation process addressing many subject areas on top of those relating to parking. There will then be multiple analyses and discussions.

7.33 Whilst the MPSS is a 10-year vision, it is recognised that early changes can be made to parking provision in Shrewsbury town centre and its hinterland, without prejudicing the place making objectives of the wider Strategy.

7.34 These strategic deliberations will take a considerable time and subsequent discussion of how to integrate parking tariffs with other elements of the Shrewsbury Moves will introduce further delay. It is possible that tariff changes could not be introduced for 2-3 years, or even longer as part of the Shrewsbury Moves project.

7.35 Management of parking and traffic issues is a current issue and use of parking tariffs is an immediate, available solution.

7.36 Delaying by 2-3 years will result in problems in the interim and force parking services into a subsequent reactive approach during which the problems will continue to exist. These problems could include a lack of available space, congestion within car parks (which might spill into the road) and additional traffic in the centre whilst motorists re-circulate looking for an on-street space or alternative car parks. Taking a proactive stance now, will avoid such problems before they become an issue.

7.37 The MPSS proposes an integrated approach to parking in and around Shrewsbury, referred to as a Parking Plus Strategy that includes:

7.37.1 Graduated charges according to how far a car park is from the town centre

7.37.2 An undertaking to maintain the number of disabled parking spaces within the loop,

7.38 The Shrewsbury MPSS full report also proposes consideration of making park and ride more affordable and therefore a more financially attractive choice for visitors to the town centre, compared with parking in or near the loop. (see below)

7.39 The recommendations in this Parking Tariffs report aim to support the three identified aims in the Shrewsbury MPSS objectives for parking. The first is for a set of graduated charges, which the proposals provide. The second is for park and ride to be more financially attractive which it does as parking tariffs are proposed for increase whilst the Park and Ride charges are unaltered (and may be the subject of a promotional discount). The third relates to Disabled parking which, whilst outside the scope of this report, is proposed in the MPSS to be retained and improved.

7.40 This Parking Tariff report also aims to support the wider opportunities of the MPSS and for which amendments can be considered as necessary.

Clarification of Statements made at Scrutiny Committee

7.41 There were a number of statements made at Scrutiny that need clarification. These arose under the theme of 'Cabinet members could not have been aware of'. They were: -

- 7.41.1 The percentage increases related to the tariff changes were not provided. These were present in the appendix to the Cabinet Report, which related to the financial effects of the changes.
- 7.41.2 The percentage increases are opposite to current and future strategies. In practice the tariffs are not represented by percentage increases but the actual costs which are in compliance with the strategy for diminishing charges according to distance from the town centre. See the section on parking charges below for details.
- 7.41.3 Economic strategies rely on visitors choosing to come to Shrewsbury. The first impression of a town is often based on the easy availability of parking. Having to make an extensive search for a parking space can make parking an ordeal, which makes a return visit less likely and may make 'regulars' choose other locations more frequently.
- 7.41.4 Park and Ride was not identified as the greatest risk. If not explicitly stated, the park and ride risk was identified in five individual locations, more than any other, which indicates the seriousness with which this is considered and presented.

Parking Charges in Shrewsbury

7.42 The Scrutiny committee referred to the 'percentage' increases in relation to strategies to create a graduated decreases in charges related to the distance of the car park from the town centre. However, the strategies are not designed on the basis of a percentage-based increase in charges, but the charge actually paid by motorists.

7.43 The charges proposed clearly comply with the principle of higher charges in the centre, reducing as the distance from the centre is increased. They are:-

- a) £3.60ph On-street bays are the closest to the town centre,
- b) £2.80ph Bridge Street, St Austins Street,
- c) £2.40ph Raven Meadows,
- d) £1.60ph St Julians Friars,
- e) £1.20ph Frankwell,
- f) £0.80ph Abbey Foregate, the furthest away.

7.44 It has been suggested that Raven Meadows should have been increased to match Bridge St and St Austins St as it does currently. Though not to that extent, the

charge has been increased, to £2.40ph. However, the recommendation to retain the existing tariff was a deliberate decision based on the following factors: -

- a) It is not so central as the central car parks and is of poor quality.
- b) It does not require vehicles to enter the town centre roads.
- c) It will still be considerably more expensive than outside loop car parks.
- d) It supports the Darwin Centre and town centre without adding to the town centre traffic
- e) Moving more parking activity to Frankwell will overload it until a better Park and Ride service is available.
- f) A hard inside/outside loop boundary lacks the finesse of continuous graduation both within and outside the loop.
- g) St Julians Friars is also inside the loop and less popular than other car parks inside the loop. On the same logic it would be £2.40 per hour compared with its current price of £1.20. Similarly, this would create too much pressure on Abbey Foregate until Park and Ride is improved and would hit trade on the English Bridge side of town.

7.45 The balance of parking will possibly shift too far towards Frankwell, reducing the availability of spaces whilst reducing the use of Raven Meadows which has the capacity to spread the load. Frankwell is likely to stay at its current level of being full on nearly 4 days/week. This will arise from the following effects:-

- a) A 40p ph differential with the surface car parks at Bridge Street and St Austins St is now quite small and there is a danger that motorists will not transfer away from Bridge St and St Austins St – an extra 40p ph is not a deterrent in the same way that 80p ph is
- b) A £1.20 ph differential with Frankwell is now quite significant, ie now twice the price. This will increase the transfer from Raven Meadows and some of those from Bridge St and St Austins St will transfer direct to Frankwell
- c) Vehicles which would have transferred to Raven Meadows will go to Frankwell instead – Frankwell is half the price of Raven Meadows

7.46 The existing tariff at Abbey Foregate is £0.60 ph and the original proposal was an increase to £1.00 ph. The new proposal is £0.80 ph which has less of a deterrent effect than the original proposal. It is worth noting that Abbey Foregate will be considerably cheaper than Frankwell, though both are large, outside loop car parks. In terms of location and facilities Abbey Foregate it is probably a better car park (River access, Abbey access, toilets, better bridge crossing and landscaping).

7.47 The original decision was deliberately aimed at parking and traffic management by balancing demand. The £0.80 ph proposal at Abbey Foregate may result in:

- a) extra displacement to Abbey Foregate, which is very well used anyway. Abbey Foregate would now be half the price of St Julians Friars making transfer from the partially occupied St Julians Friars more attractive than it would have been.
- b) reduced incentive to use the existing Park and Ride service for those motorists where it is available/viable
- c) reduced incentive to take up alternative transport for those motorists where it is possible/viable.
- d) extra pressure from visitors or retail/service customers as it is now very much the cheapest car park in Shrewsbury, 33% less than the next one up (Frankwell).

- 7.48 Other examples of the considerations and interactions that are used to balance demand arising from the situations at each car park as well as the town as a whole.
- a) St Austins St is full at some time during the day on between 3 and 5 days per week according to season. To encourage a lower usage and to avoid the poor experience of queuing the tariff must rise by a relatively large amount.
 - b) Bridge St is full on close to 4 days per week and the same arguments apply as at St Austins St.
 - c) Frankwell is also full on close to 4 days per week and bearing in mind the displacement of some of the vehicles to Frankwell from Bridge St and St Austins St. the problems may be exacerbated. In turn that needs a strong deterrent to maintain space. The forecast is that occupancy at this car park will in fact be reduced, allowing for further town centre displacement and new visitors.
 - d) An increase to the tariff at Raven Meadows will further hit Frankwell in that vehicles which would have transferred to the multi-storey will also transfer there.
 - e) The comparatively low increase at St Julian Friars compared with other car parks inside the loop is to avoid an excessively large increase in usage at Abbey Foregate which may not have capacity with its own low increase.

Evening charges

- 7.49 There is data available on the rates of evening parking in Shrewsbury. This comes from 15-minute frequency counts of car park occupancy from the system that provides detailed information to Variable Message Signs. These are the signs at the entries to town which show the number of available spaces in popular car parks. The data relates to the entire week, ie Sat/Sun have not been separated.
- 7.50 Evening charges have been proposed for Bridge St and St Austins St inside the loop and Frankwell outside.
- 7.50.1 *St Austins Street* - This is full around 3 evenings per week in both July and October as representative months for the Summer holiday period and 'normal' Autumn period. Unfortunately, December data was not available.
 - 7.50.2 *Bridge Street* - This was also full for 3 evenings per week in the Autumn and 1 per week in the Summer and in December.
 - 7.50.3 *Frankwell* - This was full 2 evenings per week in October but not in the July or December counts.
- 7.51 Following Scrutiny consideration, instead of the standard hourly rate the new proposal is a flat rate of £1.00 for any period between 6pm and 10pm
- 7.52 It is also proposed that Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars should be subject to the evening charge
- 7.53 Implementation of evening charges is recommended.

Sunday parking charges

7.54 There is data available on the rates of Sunday parking in Shrewsbury. This comes from 15-minute frequency counts of car park occupancy from the system that provides detailed information to Variable Message Signs. These are the signs at the entries to town which show the number of available spaces in popular car parks.

7.55 The data displayed in the table is the highest average occupancy during the day/evening for the combined car parks at St Austins St, Bridge St, Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars.

| Percent Occupied | Weekday | Saturday | Sunday |
|------------------|---------|----------|--------|
| July | 81 | 84 | 85 |
| October | 80 | 89 | 77 |
| December | 83 | 93 | 76 |

7.56 As can be seen average weekdays are, as would be expected, fairly constant, Saturdays rise towards Christmas and Sundays become quieter as temperatures drop and precipitation increases.

7.57 More pertinent is that in the Summer, average Sundays are the day with the highest occupancy levels. As these are averages, as would be expected that there are some higher occupancies on particular days at particular car parks. For instance:-

- a) In July Frankwell reaches 97%, Abbey Foregate reaches 93%, St Austins St reaches 100% and Bridge St gets to 90%
- b) In October St Austins and Abbey Foregate reach 100%+, Frankwell 97% and Bridge St 98%
- c) In December, Frankwell reaches 96% and Abbey Foregate hits 95%

7.58 At 95% a car park is considered to be functionally full as beyond this it becomes difficult for arriving vehicles, who crawl around the car park trying to find a vacant space. Leaving vehicles get caught behind them. This leads to growing levels of queuing and frustration.

7.59 The counters will often read greater than 100% as they will also be counting searching/departing vehicles and any that have found/created an unofficial space. There are several examples of car parks reaching 100% and many more exceeding 95%

7.60 As the car parks are more or similarly occupied on Sunday than weekdays for a great part of the year then it is logical that some measure of control is required. However, it should be noted that on Sunday one of the fullest car parks is Frankwell reaching as much as 97%. Combined with a reduction in usage at Bridge Steet and St Austins Street if visitor numbers at Frankwell are to be controlled there needs to be an alternative. The two obvious ones are a Sunday Park and Ride service or to accept a greater level of traffic on Smithfield to allow access to the still relatively low charged Raven Meadows car park (£2 flat rate)

7.61 Scrutiny Committee criticised the introduction of hourly rates on a Sunday and requested that some change be considered.

7.62 The new proposal is based on:-

7.62.1 Sunday charges that currently exist should be retained, ie

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Shrewsbury on-street | retain full price |
| b) Ludlow on-street | retain full price |
| c) Ellesmere Mereside | retain full price |
| d) Shrewsbury Bridge St, | keep existing 50% discount |
| e) Shrewsbury St Austins St, | keep existing 50% discount |
| f) Shrewsbury St Julians Friars | keep existing 50% discount |
| g) Band 3 car parks | keep existing 50% discount |

7.62.2 Sundays at Band 4, Band 5 and Band 6 are proposed to have a maximum charge equivalent to 1 hour's parking

7.62.3 Band 7 car parks are proposed to stay free of charge

Situation in Wem (moving from Band 6 to Band 7)

Band 7 Level request

7.63 Since the instigation of Car Park Bands in 2017/18 Wem has been classified as Band 6, the lowest available apart from the free of charge Band 7.

7.64 This was done by means of an algorithm in the Parking Strategy which considered the nature of the town, the availability of space and the proximity to the town centre. The key factor is the nature of the town, which was assessed as being equal to Whitchurch, lower than Market Drayton and a great deal lower than Shrewsbury. The other factors created the finer differences.

7.65 As a result, all of Wem is classified as Band 6, Whitchurch has some at Band 5 and Market Drayton also has some at Band 5.

7.66 Band 7 (free) towns/car parks include the likes of Clun and Craven Arms which are very much smaller.

Market Town

7.67 Though Wem is ranked as the 8th largest market town in Shropshire it also has the lowest car park prices of those market towns

Sunday

7.68 Wem would be the subject of new Sunday parking charges under the current proposals affecting Sunday worshippers. Churchgoers would be affected to the extent of 60p per vehicle (flat rate equivalent to the charge for 1 hours parking). Band 7 reallocation would remove charges on Sunday completely (as well as every other day).

7.69 Wem is not unique in this, charges already apply inside the loop in Shrewsbury on a Sunday, with its plethora of churches, as well as some places in Ellesmere, Bridgnorth and Ludlow. In addition, other faiths are already affected as their day of worship is already covered by parking payment requirements.

7.70 The re-allocation of Wem to Band 7 is not recommended.

Displacement Parking

7.71 An indication of the number of vehicles which will no longer use the car parks in Shrewsbury can be inferred from a chain of assumptions added to the calculations of additional revenue. They must not be treated as a forecast or estimate but as a broad indication.

7.72 The indication is that displaced vehicles will amount to around 25 cars on a weekday and 6 on a Saturday. The Sunday figure is higher at 138 which probably reflects of the absence of a Park and Ride service. The 'accuracy' of these figures must not be misunderstood as the 'accuracy' of the indication. A considerable margin of error will apply.

7.73 Assuming the vehicles will be spread around the town and not focussed on one particular area the weekday (and Saturday) number of displaced vehicles is very unlikely to have any effect on the level of parking in areas surrounding the town centre. On Sunday a higher degree of concentration is possible, and the difference may be noticeable in some already congested areas.

7.74 Implementation of a new Resident Parking Zone driven by Sunday activity alone would be very unusual but can be prioritised for examination if specific concern arises.

7.75 If a scheme is found to be necessary/desirable a separate report will be made together with any budget requirements

Park and Ride

7.76 There is a park and ride service, operating from three locations which is suitable for use by a large number of visitors to Shrewsbury, though it is acknowledged that it might not be suitable for commuters or those working in the evening/Sunday. There are no fees charged inside the Park and Ride car parks, the charge is via the bus service.

7.77 The Shrewsbury MPSS advocates an integrated approach to revising parking and park and ride charges, that incentivises visitors to the town centre to consider alternative modes to that of parking a private car in and around the town centre. The proposed increases in parking tariff proposed in this report are considered to contribute to this approach. Comparing Frankwell with the Oxon Park and Ride. It will be more expensive to use the car park if a single person is staying more than 1 hour 40 minutes, a couple stays more than 3 hours 20 minutes and if a family/group (of 4) stays more than 8 hours. This compares with 2:30, 5 and 10:00 hours currently.

7.78 Office for National Statistics data suggests that 65% of vehicles are single occupancy and so will affect that group the most, and therefore reduce traffic by the most.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 This report supplements that of 17 Jan 2024 to include changes arising from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 February 2024 and to explain the reasoning behind the many points which were raised by members, individuals and organisations.
- 8.2 These changes proposed are: -
- 8.2.1 The existing charge at Abbey Foregate of £0.60 ph was originally proposed to be £1.00 ph but this has been reduced to £0.80 ph.
 - 8.2.2 The existing charge at Raven Meadows of £2.00 ph was originally proposed to remain as it is, but this has been increased to £2.40 ph.
 - 8.2.3 Evening charges which were proposed to be the hourly rate for the period 18.00-20.00 has been changed to a flat fee of £1.00 for the period 18.00 to 22.00
 - 8.2.4 Evening charge are to be applied to Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars
 - 8.2.5 Sunday charges at car parks where no charge currently exists were proposed to be charged at half the normal rate but this has been changed to a maximum of 1 hour of the normal fees
 - 8.2.6 The legal means of introducing most of the changes has been changed from just notifying the public to one which includes a notice period
- 8.3 Cabinet is requested to approve the new/replacement recommendations to achieve these changes

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

In addition to the documents listed in the original report the following document were utilised in the preparation of this report

Cabinet Report – Parking Tariffs, Operations & Development – 17 January 2024
[Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 17th January, 2024, 10.30 am — Shropshire Council](#)

Scrutiny Committee – 19 February 2024

[Agenda for Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 19th February, 2024, 2.00 pm — Shropshire Council](#)

Local Member:

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1 – Income Forecasts

Appendix 2 – ESIA

Appendix 3 - Cabinet Report – Parking Tariffs, Operations & Development – 17 January 2024 (See link above)

Appendix 4 – Scrutiny Committee – 19 February 2024 (See link above)
