



Committee and Date

Cabinet

4 December 2024

Item

Public



Parking Tariff Consultation

Consideration of Responses to the Public Consultation on Changes to Parking Charges

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1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings earlier in 2024 authorised public consultation on the recommendations within the final Cabinet report regarding parking tariffs.
- 1.2 The consultation has now been completed and recommends that the proposed Order changing parking tariffs is authorised to be formally made.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The proposals were considered by Cabinet on 17 April 2024 which approved formal consultation on the final recommendations. This followed presentation at Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 February 2024 and an earlier Cabinet on 17 January 2024.
- 2.2 The consultation process is laid down in legislation and the procedures have been followed correctly. It produced 158 objections in direct response to the public advertisements from the general public. An additional 223 objections were submitted after BID brought the consultation to the attention of businesses and

residents in the Shrewsbury area. BID provided a template to assist them in submitting their objections.

- 2.3 These have been analysed by officers and that analysis is set out in this report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the order should be made as drafted in relation to Recommendation 1-8 and 10-15 having considered the objections as set out in Table A below and based on the discussions of each item in the Background sections below. The recommendation number relates the Objection Types consideration addressed in the sections between 7.23 and 7.39.
- 3.2 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the order should be modified before making in relation to Recommendation 9, the evening charges, as per the discussion in 7.26 (h) to (l) and 7.33

TABLE A – Recommendations

Recommendation Number	Objection	Make the Order	Consideration
1	That the increase is too large or in excess of inflation	Yes	The increases are those necessary to effect a change in motorist behaviour in terms of parking location or travel mode
2	The increase is motivated by the need to generate revenue	Yes	Refer to Recommendation 1. In addition this would not be accordance with the legal reasons for setting charges.
3/4/5 - Shrewsbury	Deters Visitors, Shoppers and Workers - Shrewsbury	Yes	The transfer of long-term motorists to more appropriate locations creates capacity for new/extra motorists who can visit or shop
3/4/5 - Shropshire	Deters Visitors, Shoppers and Workers - Shrewsbury	Yes	The transfer of long-term motorists to more appropriate locations creates capacity for new/extra motorists who can visit or shop
6	Difficulty retaining or recruiting Employees when parking	Yes	Commuters are the most likely to utilise space needed for

	charges are such a deterrent		visitors yet they are also the most able to establish alternative travel routes.
7	Harm to the Economy	Yes	Refer to Recommendation 3/4/5
8	Harm to the 'Sunday' economy	Yes	Sunday parking is as available as most daytime parking and this will encourage active travel.
9	Harm to the 'Evening' economy	Modify	Re-introduce a graduation in charges and free parking for evening employees (and visitors) in two locations
10	Displacement of local parking to adjacent uncontrolled Residential Areas	Yes	Effects are not considered widespread. Mitigation can be taken relatively quickly.
11	Transfer of business to other towns – particularly Telford	Yes	Competition from Telford relates more to the type of town and its businesses than the parking charges
12	Unfair to residents in that they are a captive market in a single supplier situation	Yes	Residents receive a very healthy discount of up to 80% of 'normal' charges.
13	Unfair to rural dwellers	Yes	The assertion is disputed with no difference between rural and urban motorists
14	Unfair to disabled, elderly and those with other medical conditions.	Yes	Blue Badge holders already have significant concessions but to extend this to others who fall between the blue badge holder and the healthy motorist would be extremely onerous
15	Lack of Alternative Transport, particularly Public Transport	Yes	The Park and Ride (and bus) service may not meet everyone's needs but it is suitable

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 There are no revisions to the risks related to the proposals.
- 4.2 At this stage the potential risk is of legal challenge in accordance with the provisions for a person to question the validity of the Order. They may take the matter to the High Court within 6 weeks of the date the order is made. The available grounds are that the measures are not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or that any of the requirements of the Act (consultation processes) have not been complied with.
- 4.3 In this consultation there were a high proportion of objections that met the requirement for it to be considered by Cabinet. Some could have been considered by the Assistant Director Infrastructure under delegated powers in the Council's constitution. In theory these could be brought into force without waiting for Cabinet, but they are inherently linked to those which must be dealt with by Cabinet. The resultant confusion, multiple implementations, cost and quality of infrastructure would be detrimental to successful implementation and the reputation of the Council.
- 4.4 To minimise the risk, Cabinet are being requested to make decisions on all types of objection, which will remove the possibility of any challenge to the process of delegation or the decision making of officers.
- 4.5 A new ESIA has been completed and is available in Appendix 1. Only Part 1 needed to be completed. All elements were classified as low impact apart from:-
- 4.5.1 An acknowledgement that the increased charges may make it difficult for an additional cohort of less affluent members of society. However, this is an existing characteristic of parking charges as part of the cost of motoring.
- 4.5.2 It should make it easier for motorists to find a space nearer their destination, which in terms of this assessment specifically applies to the Disabled and during Pregnancy/Maternity

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council is currently managing an unprecedented financial position as budgeted for within the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 29 February 2024 and detailed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. This demonstrates that significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all Cabinet Reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and

make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve

- scaling down initiatives,
- changing the scope,
- delaying implementation, or
- extending delivery timescales.

- 5.2 The forecast income and expenditure were reported in the Cabinet meeting of 17 January 2024 and Scrutiny meeting of 18 February 2024 together with some adjustment to the forecast income in the 17 April 2024. The expenditure is minimal compared with the forecast income changes from which it has been deducted.

Some expenditure has already been incurred in terms of the advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Order and some of the signage materials had already been purchased as part of another project. The remaining works of advertising the making of the Order, signage and technical changes to the Pay and Display machines and IT systems remain to be completed and as per the above reports is offset by the much larger income changes arising from the new charges which have been necessary to meet the traffic/parking management measures.

The revision to evening charges within the report is forecast to reduce the income changes by £94k pa but is necessary to maintain a justifiable, viable solution

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 There are no revisions to the original report.

7. Background

History

- 7.1 A 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.
- 7.2 Their concerns were considered by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 February 2024 with a recommendation to review certain matters.
- 7.3 The concerns and recommendations were re-considered at the Cabinet meeting on 17 April 2024
- 7.4 These reports are henceforth referred to as the January Cabinet, the February Scrutiny and the April Cabinet meetings respectively.
- 7.5 At the April Cabinet approval was granted to carry out a public consultation in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and its supplementary legislation, The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

- 7.6 The approval included consideration of objections and the 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. The relevant part of Part 8 is set out at 7.10 below.
- 7.7 In practice the number of different types of objection means that there are several objections that must be considered by cabinet and separating Cabinet and delegated decisions will create problems which cannot be mitigated. (See 4 for more details)

Legislation

- 7.8 The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 make provisions with regard to the procedure to be followed when making traffic regulation orders . They state:-

"Objections

8.—(1) Any person may object to the making of an order by the date specified in the notice of proposals or, if later, the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the order making authority has complied with all the requirements of regulation 7(1) to (3)

(3) An objection under paragraph (1) or (2) shall—

(a) be made in writing;

(b) state the grounds on which it is made; and

(c) be sent to the address specified in the notice of proposals,"

AND

"Consideration of objections and inspector's report

13. Before making an order, the order making authority shall consider—

(a) all objections duly made under regulation 8 and not withdrawn; and"

AND

Regulation 17 defines the contents that must be included in a 'Notice of Making' when the Council brings the proposals into force. It refers to Schedule 1, Part III, Paragraph 12 where the relevant text provides details of how a person may question the validity of the Order. They may take the matter to the High Court within 6 weeks of the date the order is made. The available grounds are that the measures are not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or that any of the requirements of the Act (consultation processes) have not been complied with.

Consideration of Objections

- 7.9 Consideration of the consultation responses was delegated to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure under Part 8 of the Council's Constitution, beginning at Page H51, paragraphs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.
- 7.10 This is contingent on the objections not having a complex nature and being only of local significance. If these conditions are not met the Assistant Director must refer the objections back to Cabinet for their consideration. The majority of Objection Types must be referred to cabinet so all Objection Types have been so referred to minimise confusion and conflict in the implementation process and to maximise

the level of authority of the consideration, which may help if the order should be challenged in court.

- 7.11 It is permitted to make only part of an Order or to modify the Order before it is made, including if such modification is to address an objection.
- 7.12 This report considers the content of objections, the quantity of the same objection is not a relevant factor.

Consultation Process

- 7.13 Shortly before the consultation process was due to launch the UK parliamentary General Election was called. The consultation was therefore deferred until after the pre-election period.
- 7.14 The consultation was subsequently launched on 12 July 2024 and as the minimum requirement is 21 days a closure date of 2 August 2024 was set. Due to issues with the format of the website presentation the closure date was extended to 8 August.
- 7.15 The consultation consisted of:-
- 7.15.1 Notices being placed in all car parks and streets where changes were proposed. These announced the possibility of change and gave details of how to find out more. They were installed on 12 July.
- 7.15.2 Details of the changes were published in the Shropshire Star on Friday 12 July 2024
- 7.15.3 Details of the changes were published on the Councils 'Get Involved' web pages.
- 7.15.4 Complete Traffic Regulation Orders were available from traffic engineering, and these were e-mailed to anyone who requested them
- 7.15.5 Statutory consultees, as defined in Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (Section 6) were contacted individually. The consultees were the police and ambulance services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, the AA, the National Farmers Union, Cllr Dan Morris as Portfolio Holder for Highways and all relevant local members, and Parish and Town Councils. The Fire Service have declared that they are not interested in parking related matters.
- 7.16 Objections have been received through the traffic engineering e-mail address which was included in the various notifications. Written correspondence would be accepted but telephone objections were not taken. because to be "duly made" they have to be in writing.

Objections Received

- 7.17 Objections have been categorised according to their 'origin' ie on-street, off-street and business. Within each category the objections have been further categorised as to the type of response ie objection, comment, question and support.

- 7.18 Shrewsbury BID created a template questionnaire for businesses to object. This was completed by using an on-line questionnaire, including free format answers which have also been captured in a spreadsheet and which have been submitted by BID. However, many of these reported were in the context of being a resident.
- 7.19 The BID respondents were given the opportunity to respond to off-street and on-street separately. Of 216 responses, 24 were from season-ticket holders.
- 7.20 Using these categories the number of responses received are shown in the table below.

	On-Street	Off-Street	BID On and Off Street	Total
Objection	11	125	198	334
Comment		14		14
Question	2	2		4
Neutral			13	13
Support	3	1	5	9
Total	16	142	216	374

Objection Analysis

- 7.21 An analysis of the objection types has also been carried out with the following results. The totals are higher than the totals above as many responses are included two or more reasons.

Recommendation Reference Number	Objection Type	Council On -Street	Council Off-Street	BID On and Off Street	Total
1	Increase in General or above inflation	8	17	100	125
2	Revenue Generation	4	1	18	23
3	Deter respondent	0	0	110	110
4	Deter Visitors	0	75	57	132
5	Deter Shoppers	0	0	49	49
6	Deter/Unfair to Employees/Commuter	0	0	32	32
7	Harm to general economy	5	23	77	105
8	Harm to Sunday economy	1	24	16	41
9	Harm to evening economy	3	11	33	47

10	Displacement to residential areas	2	23	13	38
11	Displacement to other towns/retail parks/car parks	1	0	44	45
12	Unfair to Residents	1	9	4	14
13	Unfair to rural dwellers	0	1	0	1
14	Unfair to disabled, elderly, medical, volunteers	0	1	23	24
15	Lack of Alternative public transport	3	8	34	45
	Total	28	194	610	832

7.22 *Objection Type 1 – ‘Increase in General or above inflation’*

7.22.1 These objections have been received from throughout the County. Apart from Shrewsbury, objections have been received from key towns including Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, with a smattering from others.

7.22.2 Most objections are statements that the increases are excessive and should be reduced or removed. Some even suggest that the charges should be reduced to improve the attractiveness of many of the County's destinations. Though some refer to other matters these are dealt with in other sections

7.22.3 It has been acknowledged throughout the process that the increases are significant. It has been considered by the January 2024 Cabinet, February 2024 Scrutiny and the April 2024 Cabinet where the changes were approved for consultation by the majority of Cabinet members.

The charges proposed in the consultation were those approved by Cabinet following previous Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings. They were based on extensive examination of ticket purchases and occupancy data and designed to manage use of car parks such that spaces are generally available. In the case of Shrewsbury for instance, vehicles would transfer outside the River Loop and that they are operated efficiently with regard to traffic both within and outside the car park.

7.22.4 The increased charges have been set to a level which will manage the use, occupancy and duration of parking acts by encouraging motorists to use car parks further from the centre. As such some traffic will be diverted from the centre, reducing congestion, reducing pollution, improving safety for pedestrians and improving their environment.

7.22.5 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 35 (1) (b) (iii) permits the Council to set the charges for use of its car parks. Section 46 is the equivalent for on-street parking. There is no clause limiting increases to the level of inflation.

7.22.6 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which do not reflect the need to control parking activity,

7.23 Objection Type 2 – ‘Revenue Generation’.

7.23.1 There are twenty three objections which are simple statements blaming the council for mismanagement, needing to increase revenue and needing to be honest about it. Almost all are from Shrewsbury or Bridgnorth.

7.23.2 The objections suggest the increases are due to a desire to improve the council’s budget, especially during its current difficulties.

7.23.3 Charges are set at a level to manage use of car parks such that spaces are generally available and that they are operated efficiently with regard to traffic both within and outside the car park.

7.23.4 This is the result of s122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 requiring the Council to “*exercise its functions so far as practicable, having regard 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*”.

7.23.5 The charges are set for parking/traffic management reasons and, as is the case in many counties or towns, the charges may result in revenue that is greater than the costs.

7.23.6 Use of the excess revenue from on-street and enforcement operations (on- and off-street) is prescribed in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Sections 55 (2) and 55 (4). This revenue, and that from off-street operations has consistently been used as per Section 55 (4) (d) (i), for “*the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services*”.

Since 2017 the surplus revenue was £12.8m, £12.1m of which has been used on public passenger transport. The remaining £731k was split between £615k in 2017/18 for ‘maintaining the highway infrastructure’ and £116k in 2019/20 for ‘maintaining the highway. The exact nature of these projects were

7.23.7 As such any revenue generated has been used for the benefit of the travelling public and to release pressure on the car parks, not to support the operation of the Council.

7.23.8 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which do not reflect the reason for considering changes and the real, historical use of surplus income.

7.24 Objection Types 3/4/5 – ‘Deter Respondent, Visitors, Shoppers’ – Shrewsbury

- 7.24.1 In relation to this objection, it has been separated into Shrewsbury and Shropshire given the complexity of the objections relating to Shrewsbury, whilst those relating to Shropshire are simpler statements that are considered under the next heading
- 7.24.2 In this section 'respondent' refers to the person completing the objection, ie the person directly affected and the impact it will have on their life. Visitor may have been interpreted as an occasional shopper, those on a special trip/reason or a tourist.
- 7.24.3 Most people who stay for shorter periods (mostly below 2/3 hours), are less affected with typical increases ranging from £1.20 per visit to £2.40 per visit.
- 7.24.4 Many of the objections relate to the increase in charges, deterring local people, shoppers, visitors and workers, but it should be emphasised that the objective of the proposed charges is to deter the use of motor vehicles which is primarily achieved by payment of those fees whilst increasing the use of alternative private or public transport.
- 7.24.5 Large reductions in vehicle use can often be a transitory effect until people remember why they visit a town. Shrewsbury is an attractive place with multiple and varied reasons to visit, shop and work, which can be combined. Many people are expected to stay or return after a short 'protest', some will do so in their vehicles but for some it will achieve an on-going change in their travel mode. At which point a useful reduction remains.

7.25 More specifically:-

Shoppers.

- 7.25.1 It is suggested in the objections that people will avail themselves of alternative options such as on-line shopping, edge of town retail parks and other towns (the latter is discussed in more detail at Objection Type 11). Those who continue to use central car parks in Shrewsbury will incur an additional charge of £0.80/£1.60, for a one/two hour visit (which are the most popular durations).
- 7.25.2 When this is compared with the potential cost of purchases it is a very small percentage and is likely to be overcome by the range of shops available, particularly by the number of independent retailers and eateries.

Workers/Commuters.

- 7.25.3 It is suggested that people will look for employment elsewhere, where their take-home pay is not so affected by the parking charges.
- 7.25.4 A season ticket for Frankwell (8 hrs/day, 5days/wk) will increase by £320 per annum, or around £1.50 per day.
- 7.25.5 Part of the reason for these increases is to reduce the number of vehicles being used to travel to Shrewsbury by encouraging those who can use alternative means to consider them more seriously.

Visitors.

- 7.25.6 It is suggested by objectors that people will consider visiting other towns/cities, locals will visit less often and tourists will choose not to visit at all. (Alternative destinations are discussed in detail in see Objection type 11 below)
- 7.25.7 As above this is possibly a transitory effect until people remember the reason they visit in the first place and re-consider the time/travel/parking costs compared to the alternatives.

Evening Parking. (see Objection type 9 below)

- 7.25.8 Multiple reasons for objecting to the introduction of this charge have been provided by multiple groups of people.
- 7.25.9 It will affect the number of people eating/drinking in the town centre, which in turn will reduce the revenue for restaurateurs or pub/bar owners.
- 7.25.10 It will reduce the number of people visiting the theatre, cinema and undertaking other activities at those or other venues.
- 7.25.11 When this is compared with the potential cost of purchases it is a very small percentage and will be overcome by the range of restaurants and bars.
- 7.25.12 This is a new effect on the ability to recruit and retain staff in one of the evening service industries, who are not used to paying at all, An evening worker at Frankwell (arriving at 6pm, 5 days/wk) will incur an additional charge of £1 per day or maybe £200 per annum.

Sunday parking (see Objection type 8 below).

- 7.25.13 It is suggested that this will deter people from visiting the town, attending activities and decreasing the revenue to businesses. This is especially noted in relation to the availability of alternative transport (see Objection type 15 below).
- 7.25.14 There is concern that family time and exercise will be compromised.
- 7.25.15 The introduction of modest charges at Frankwell and Abbey Foregate, which are full at certain times of the year, is intended to encourage those who are able, to use alternative means of transport. It is noted that buses/park and ride do not operate on a Sunday, but this is not the only alternative, rail and active travel modes are available.

Business .

- 7.25.16 It has been suggested that businesses will look for alternative premises which will be cheaper for them, including business rates, cheaper for their customers, more convenient for their customers and cheaper for their employees.
- 7.25.17 Charges are not intended to be detrimental to businesses but introduce a new way of working which creates greater opportunities for customers to visit the town, whilst customers and staff reconsider their options for travel.

- 7.25.18 This overall reduction in duration/frequency of visits made by existing motorists to the central car parks will leave more space in car parks for additional visitors, occasional visitors and tourists who arguably are unable/unlikely to be able to research and understand the alternative travel possibilities and for whom availability at car parks is more important.
- 7.25.19 This is important as the ability to find a parking space is the first impression visitors have of a town and may have lasting effect on the decision to return in the future.
- 7.25.20 The potential and opportunity for additional visitors is more likely than less. Changing travel mode and making space available for additional motorists over and above the normal is one of the agreed objectives. The method of achieving the change in pattern of use of car parks is to change the charges.
- 7.25.21 Ad-hoc objections were also made, which provided alternative suggestions related to parking and buses.
- 7.25.21.1 discount for workers – this would effectively reduce the price for workers and work against the principle of reducing vehicle usage. Season Tickets are already available which are a very large discount. Alternatives for hybrid workers are under consideration.
 - 7.25.21.2 make one day a week half price. This would result in a higher level of visitors at that time which could not be accommodated within existing capacities without exacerbating the existing difficulties.
 - 7.25.21.3 limit the charge at Frankwell to £4/5 day. This would be a huge reduction against current levels, exacerbating the existing difficulties with capacity and eliminating the incentive to seek alternative travel methods.
 - 7.25.21.4 council officers should pay for parking in the same way as other workers. It is not for this report to comment on what those arrangements might be.
 - 7.25.21.5 don't make visitor parking app only – need to keep P&D machines. Retention of Pay and Display machines is the current thinking which is in accordance with government guidance on not excluding certain motorists. This does not preclude the option of reducing the number of machines if they become uneconomic if App parking becomes more popular.
 - 7.25.21.6 buses are too expensive. With a maximum of £2.00 per journey (potentially rising to a maximum of £3.00) this is not considered a correct assertion. This is equivalent to around 1 hour parking inside the Shrewsbury river loop.
 - 7.25.21.7 introduce a free shuttle bus for motorists and their passengers at Abbey Foregate around the loop – the Council is considering a wide variety of bus options as part of the Shrewsbury Moves initiatives, though it is not possible to comment on any one possibility at this stage. The suggestion will be passed on to the relevant team.

7.25.21.8 build a MSCP at Abbey Foregate. A review of future capacity, demand and operational priorities is at the early stages of consideration. The suggestion will be passed on to the relevant team.

7.25.22 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections. They cover a range of impacts which individually contribute to an improvement in the use of parking and in the round combine to control parking activity across the town. (See 7.33.10 for one exception related to the evening charges.)

7.26 *Objection Type 3/4/5 – ‘Deter Respondent, Visitors, Shoppers’ – Shropshire*

7.26.1 In relation to this objection, it has been separated into Shrewsbury and Shropshire given the complexity of the objections relating to Shrewsbury, whilst those relating to Shropshire are simpler statements that can be dealt with independently in the other sections.

7.26.2 The main objection is to the level of increases as per Objection Type 1 above. Though Shrewsbury was used as an easy to explain example, car parks that are full are not confined to parts of Shrewsbury, but also occur in parts of Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Whitchurch.

7.26.3 The same principle applies in terms of spreading demand such that those with less need to be in the centre are encouraged into less well used sites, a short distance away. Again, one of the aims is to provide more, easily available space for shoppers, visitors and tourists in the middle whilst longer term commuter type parking is moved to car parks which have the capacity, but which are less suitable for short term activity.

7.26.4 The potential and opportunity for additional visitors is more likely than less. The change of travel mode and making space available for additional motorists over and above the normal is one of the agreed objectives. The method of achieving the change in pattern of use of car parks is the changes to charges.

7.26.5 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which do not reflect the need to control parking activity,

7.27 *Objection Type 6 - Deter/Unfair to Employees/Commuters’*

7.27.1 The vast majority of objections apply to Shrewsbury and relate to the effects on individuals, the self-employed and businesses attempting to recruit/retain staff

7.27.2 Concern has been expressed that the employees will bear the highest increases and that employers will be hard pressed to recruit and retain staff.

7.27.3 Employees/commuters are those who stay the longest and the most frequently. It is acknowledged that they are the motorists who will be affected the most, but they are also those with the greatest opportunity to establish alternative travel methods such as rail, bus or active travel.

- 7.27.4 Season tickets have the scope to save money and though the increase is relatively small if considered on a daily basis the annual increase is large enough to provide an incentive to change.
- 7.27.5 The potential and opportunity for additional customers over and above the normal is likely to be to the financial benefit of businesses.
- 7.27.6 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections as they oppose the need to relocate long-term/commuter parking away from the centre of towns which can be detrimental to short-term/customer parking.

7.28 *Objection Type 7 – ‘Harm to the Economy’*

- 7.28.1 The objections are mostly from Shrewsbury, with one objection from each of Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Whitchurch.
- 7.28.2 The reasons and responses are detailed in Reason 3/4/5 above. The plan is in fact for more shoppers, visitors or tourists who can contribute to the local economies.
- 7.28.3 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which oppose the intention of encouraging more shoppers, visitors and tourists which would benefit the economy

7.29 *Objection Type 8 – ‘Harm to the Sunday economy’*

- 7.29.1 These objections relate to deterring visitors as well as the lack of P&R, or indeed any bus service with one covering the effects on churchgoers.
- 7.29.2 The use of some car parks on Sunday is often greater than on other days of the week and it is considered some attempt should be made to manage the level of occupancy. Occupancy at Abbey Foregate, Bridge Street, Frankwell and St Austins St all reach 95-100% at different times through the year.
- 7.29.3 Premium car parks where charges currently exist are being increased according to the rules set out, ie being the same as or half the price of a Weekday price, charged on a per hour basis.
- 7.29.4 Where new charges are being introduced, they are moderate. The charge which normally buys one hour, buys parking for the whole day.
- 7.29.5 It is not considered a major obstruction to visiting but will encourage some use of alternative transport, especially where people might already be considering the alternative as part of their weekend activities.
- 7.29.6 Though Park and Ride and scheduled bus services are not available on a Sunday, rail services and active travel such as walking and cycling are still available.
- 7.29.7 In terms of churchgoers, as mentioned above the charges are moderate and compare with the much higher charges incurred by other faiths who congregate on other days

- 7.29.8 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which contradict the modest effort to reduce traffic on what is as much a day of leisure/enjoyment as it is one of shopping.

7.30 Objection Type 9 – ‘Harm to the evening economy’ –

- 7.30.1 These are amongst the most detailed arguments which applies to on-street and car parks in Shrewsbury only, where some car parks are full on two or three days per week.
- 7.30.2 The reasons for the objections include:
- 7.30.2.1 Reduction in visitors
 - 7.30.2.2 Reduction in trade
 - 7.30.2.3 Effects on staff recruitment and retention
 - 7.30.2.4 There is no Park and Ride or Bus service.
 - 7.30.2.5 Leisure and health benefits at the Theatre will be diminished.
 - 7.30.2.6 Back door route to pedestrianisation
- 7.30.3 Consultation was carried out on the basis of a modest flat rate across the whole town which would be an incentive for motorists to change their behaviour. However this provides no differentiation between the central car parks and the more distant sites. In addition, it does not provide any opportunity for employees of the evening economy to avoid increased costs of employment.
- 7.30.4 It is possible for the Traffic Order to be modified prior to making and considering the objections it is proposed Cabinet agree to modify the proposed order by removing the charge at St Julians Friars and Abbey Foregate to resolve these issues.
- 7.30.5 This is not considered a major impact on visitors. The changes are nominal, with no difference in the cost in different parts of the town, which will only result in a small change in behaviour.
- 7.30.6 The lack of Park and Ride and other bus services is discussed in Objection Type 15 below. Some visitors might use active travel methods and though it is relatively expensive it may also push some to use a taxi, minicab or rail travel. However, this is unlikely to be a realistic year round option for evening workers.
- 7.30.7 The biggest consequence probably relates to staff, staff retention and recruitment whereby low paid workers in the evening economy will be required to pay a daily charge or seek employment elsewhere.
- 7.30.8 There has been mention of the Theatre at Frankwell which apart from shows and plays also provides a venue for healthy activities/education such as dance, drama, fitness and healing arts. One of the groups charges only £5, so £1 extra may be a disincentive.

7.30.9 These charges would not result in pedestrianisation as they do not prevent vehicular access. To achieve pedestrianisation would require a purposeful scheme with specific legal measures to restrict access by vehicles to certain roads.

7.30.10 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be modified prior to making to remove the evening charge of £1.00 from the car parks at Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars as discussed at 7.33.3 and 7.33.4,

7.31 *Objection Type 10 – Displacement to Residential Areas*

7.31.1 Most objections related to Shrewsbury but there were also several from Much Wenlock and others such as Market Drayton, Wem, Whitchurch and Ellesmere

7.31.2 This is the movement of motorists from areas with new or increased charges to alternative facilities a little further away from their destinations. This can be from a street or car park to a residential area or another street which may not be suitable for additional parking.

7.31.3 This was estimated for Shrewsbury during the development of the reports to be minimal and unlikely to need further action. It is acknowledged that there may be some very specific areas on the fringe of Shrewsbury and in some other locations where displacement might be more likely, and these will be kept under observation.

7.31.4 If an urgent/critical outcome is identified, Parking Services have identified where additional resources can be obtained to quantify the problem, design control measures and assist with consultation and implementation if needed.

7.31.5 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the objections which relate to probably small impacts compared with the larger beneficial impacts on management of town centres

7.32 *Type 11 – Transfer to other towns*

7.32.1 Objections, all from Shrewsbury, suggest that visitors/shoppers will re-locate to Telford or retail parks, but no mention was made of Chester or Hereford, the neighbouring county towns with distinct similarities to Shrewsbury.

7.32.2 However, it is thought to be a more countywide issue as it is the whole of the North, East and South parts of the county that have access to easy alternatives. This may not have been a primary concern to all, in the same way it might be to those who were notified of the consultation by Shrewsbury BID

7.32.3 Chester is also historic and picturesque with a multitude of independent, boutique, specialist and high-priced shops in the centre as well as some of the more common chain stores.

7.32.4 Its parking charge structure is very different to Shrewsbury and has a more extensive private car park stock. Though there is a wide variation, but for short stays they are comparable to the proposed rates. This is where a large majority of

Shrewsbury visitors fit in. The difference begins with several of their car parks being capped at 3 or 4 hours. Several slightly more distant car parks have fixed all day rates (like the charges at the privately operated Shrewsbury Station). On-Street charges are less but they have short time limits.

- 7.32.5 In terms of travel, Shrewsbury and Chester might be a similar distance from say Whitchurch, making it a viable alternative from that area of Shropshire.
- 7.32.6 Hereford has its historic elements but is more commercial with many national chains and less independents than either Shrewsbury or Chester
- 7.32.7 Its parking charge structure is similar to Shrewsbury in terms of its tariffs decreasing with distance from the centre, though they only have 3 bands compared with Shrewsbury's 6. They too have a more extensive private car park stock. Hereford's charges are however around 30% lower than those proposed for Shrewsbury.
- 7.32.8 In terms of travel, Shrewsbury and Hereford might be a similar distance from Ludlow, making it a viable alternative from this part of Shropshire.
- 7.32.9 We have no data to indicate how many people already choose to visit Chester or Hereford rather than Shrewsbury, so no measurement of change can be made, but it probably already happens and parking costs are likely to be subservient to other travel costs, the trip objectives and perceived ease of travel and parking.
- 7.32.10 Telford, in terms of character, is totally different to Shrewsbury, Chester and Hereford. It is a New Town and was built to accommodate and facilitate the car, including extensive parking provision. It has little, if any, history in the town centre. Ironbridge is several miles away and must be considered as a separate entity/destination. Its shopping is based around an extensive shopping centre which has been purpose designed and includes many national chain stores and few independents.
- 7.32.11 The choice between Telford or Shrewsbury is mainly down to the choice between different types of shopping experience, which neither town can fundamentally change or overcome.
- 7.32.12 Parking charges are substantially lower than Shrewsbury, generally around £1.00 per hour, however as noted above, it is considered that it is the different shopping experience and/or nature of the towns that will be the predominant factor in the choice of destination.
- 7.32.13 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections as the shopping/visiting experience is considered more important than the price of parking.

7.33 Objection Type 12 – Unfair to Residents

- 7.33.1 Objections from several towns including Shrewsbury with some from Bridgnorth, Much Wenlock and Ellesmere. Apart from the increased charge the issue is that residents do not have a choice, especially if they do not have a garage/driveway. They are alleged to be a captive market

- 7.33.2 Objections were based upon the fact that resident motorists have no choice in whether to pay the new fees and they are trapped within a single supplier system with no alternative means of meeting their needs.
- 7.33.3 Parking in a town centre is a privilege, not a right, which in several cases would have been known about at the time of relocating to Shropshire, and longer standing residents would have been consulted upon.
- 7.33.4 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which do not reflect the need to control the number of permits issued and the parking activity/availability of spaces for those with permits,

7.34 *Objection Type 13 – Unfair to rural dwellers*

- 7.34.1 There is only one such objection based on the observation that rural dwellers have no alternative to using the car, especially where the bus services are so few and far between.
- 7.34.2 If a car is available, as implied, it is more than feasible to use the park and ride, or indeed any public bus service in the urban area, to complete the final part of the journey during the majority of the day.
- 7.34.3 In addition, even if the car is essential for the final part of the journey, the charges make no differentiation between rural dwellers and those from more urban areas
- 7.34.4 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which presume access by rural dwellers is different to others,

7.35 *Objection Type 14 - Unfair to disabled, elderly, medical conditions and volunteers*

- 7.35.1 These all relate to Shrewsbury. The specific statements relate to mobility, the ability to carry items any distance and the cost to pensioners
- 7.35.2 It was suggested that the increased charges, particularly on-street would be detrimental to the generally less able and their carers/volunteers.
- 7.35.3 Disabled drivers have a blue badge which enables them to park with:-
 - 7.35.3.1 Free use of specific disabled on-street reserved spaces,
 - 7.35.3.2 Free use of on-street P&D machines,
 - 7.35.3.3 Free use of on-street resident bays
 - 7.35.3.4 an additional, free hour added to their purchase at off-street P&D machines.
 - 7.35.3.5 Free use of waiting (but not loading) restrictions for up to 3 hours without penalty.

- 7.35.4 It is not considered that the changes have a serious effect, unless a very specific location is required for more than a couple of hours. For instance a 2 hour stay will cost £2.80 instead of £2.00 which compares with £5.60 for an able-bodied motorist.
- 7.35.5 Motorists with less severe mobility issues and those with limiting medical conditions who do not qualify for a Blue Badge are potentially affected more than most. They may not be able to transfer to cheaper car parks which are further away and are thus obligated to pay the higher fees within the river loop, which may be beyond their means.
- 7.35.6 Individuals and businesses quoted examples of the difficulties their customers experienced and their inability to utilise anything other than on-street or the more central car parks. The charge changes will have no effect on the practical difficulties, but it is acknowledged that some, not all, of those affected will find that changes are financially restricting.
- 7.35.7 To manage a separate, more lenient set of concessions outside the Blue Badge scheme would be onerous with separate medical evaluations and judgments required from GPs and the Council. Continuation of the blue badge 'boundary' of needs is most viable. Similarly temporary conditions would be a time-consuming process to assess and administer.
- 7.35.8 The volunteer objection was largely in relation to the vicinity of the Abbey, but Abbey Foregate car park at 80p per hour will have the lowest charge of any car park in Shrewsbury. There are of course other areas where volunteers give their time, but the cheaper car parks outside the River Loop should be a viable alternative.
- 7.35.9 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which cannot be accommodated within the existing Blue Badge scheme or without creating a parallel evaluation and administrative system with lower thresholds.

7.36 *Objection Type 15 – Lack of Alternative Public Transport*

Objections were mainly in relation to Park and Ride and general bus services in and around Shrewsbury (and to a much lesser extent, Ludlow). It should also take account of the hinterland capture area which is as significant.

- 7.36.1 The Park and Ride service does not operate before 7.20am or after around 6.30pm. It does not run at all on Sunday. Public buses are similarly restricted. This has four main impacts:-
- 7.36.1.1 The first bus does not allow some workers to arrive on time
 - 7.36.1.2 The last bus leaves before some workers have finished
 - 7.36.1.3 Evening buses are not available
 - 7.36.1.4 Sunday buses are not available
 - 7.36.1.5 Buses do not stop where convenient,
- 7.36.2 The objections have been related to the inadequacy of the Park and Ride service, but whilst it does not cater to everyone's circumstances there are probably a larger

number who could re-consider changing, ie those working within the hours of 8am and 6pm.

- 7.36.3 It was said that price is less relevant, it is the service that is key.
- 7.36.4 It is acknowledged that Evening and Sunday buses are not provided throughout Shropshire, though the car parking fees at these times are minimal or non-existent.
- 7.36.5 Railway services run 7 days a week at much earlier and later times than the buses, as do taxis/minicabs
- 7.36.6 In addition, there are active travel modes such as walking and cycling which already exist.
- 7.36.7 Though the Shrewsbury Moves consultations have raised expectations of higher quality routes, additional routes and priority routes for walking/cycling it should not be forgotten that routes do exist currently and that they are available as an alternative to the car.
- 7.36.8 Though there is the potential for improvement, the lack of alternatives is disputed.
- 7.36.9 Cabinet is recommended to conclude that the traffic order should be made as advertised in relation to these objections which present a situation more onerous than it is in reality,

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 On 17 April Cabinet approved the advertisement of changes it wished to implement. Changes had been discussed in the context of s.122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 8.2 The key element of s.122 is that it shall be the duty of a local authority to use the functions conferred on them by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to meet the objective 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'
- 8.3 This provides both for the provision and restriction of parking activity and in the case of this report ensures that suitable parking is maintained by limiting access to parking facilities. Without the measures in this report parking facilities would otherwise become congested, thus delaying parking, which might not be available, and result in extra low speed, dangerous manoeuvres in the vicinity of pedestrians where visibility from inside vehicles is the most limited.
- 8.4 In response to the advertisement, the Council has received a number of objections to its parking tariff changes which have been read, grouped according to type and considered in detail both separately and overall.

- 8.5 Having grouped the objections according to the contents of the objections it became clear that some of the groups were clearly linked with each other and should be considered together. This can be seen with Objection Types 3, 4 and 5 which relate to the deterrence of different categories – the objector, visitors and shoppers and which were specifically considered as a whole.
- 8.6 Objection Type 6 (Employees/Commuters) was dealt with separately but also incorporated in the discussion of 3, 4 and 5. This was similarly the case with 7, 8 and 9 relating to harm to the economy during the day, evening and Sunday.
- 8.7 Other items were considered to be stand-alone items and dealt with as such.
- 8.8 Cabinet is recommended to make the Traffic Regulation Order as advertised as the benefit of the measures, which are intended to move the Council forward in its aim to improve and reduce traffic within the River Loop, are considered to be greater than the viewpoints presented in the objections submitted which can be summarised as the status quo of a do nothing approach.
- 8.9 There is one exception to the statement in 8.10. The proposal for evening charges in all Shrewsbury car parks has been reconsidered and a recommendation submitted that the Traffic Regulation Order be modified prior to making to retain free evening parking in the car parks at Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars.
- 8.10 If there were a large number of modifications, or the removal of proposals, it could be argued that the proposal was no longer a coherent management program, but this does not apply here as the only modification serves to improve the management proposal.
- 8.11 An ESIIA has been prepared for this report which is shown in Appendix A. The assessment rates it Part One only and is further discussed in Part 4 of this report
- 8.12 Once approval to make the order is granted, arrangements can be made for revised signage and revisions to technical and IT systems. The Notice of Making will be published when alterations are ready to be implemented.

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

Cabinet Report – 17 January 2024 – Parking Tariffs, Operations and Development
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 17/01/2024 10:30](#)

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report
-19 February 2024 Parking Tariffs, Operations and Development

[\(Public Pack\)Appendix 3a Service Response to \(i\) Labour Call In \(ii\) Liberal Democrat Call In Agenda Supplement for Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 19/02/2024 14:00](#)

Cabinet Report - 17 April 2024 - Parking Tariffs, Operations and Development

[\(Public Pack\)To Follow - Parking Tariffs Agenda Supplement for Cabinet, 17/04/2024 10:30](#)

Local Member: n/a

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1 – ESIIA
