

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

18 October 2011

Subject: Response to proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented to Wiltshire Council 11 July 2011

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dick Tonge – Highways and Transport

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider its response to the nine proposals submitted by the Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry, presented to Wiltshire Council 11 July 2011 with the exception of on and off-street car parking prices which will be part of the full review at Full Council on 8 November 2011.

Proposal

That Cabinet consider and agree the proposed responses to the proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented to Wiltshire Council 11 July 2011 with the exception of on and off-street car parking prices which will be part of the full review at Full Council on 8 November 2011

Reason for Proposal

To respond formally to proposals presented to the Council by Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce & Industry with the exception of on and off-street car parking prices which will be part of the full review at Full Council on 8 November 2011.

Mark Boden

Corporate Director – Operations, Department of Neighbourhood and Planning

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

18 October 2011

Subject: Response to proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented to Wiltshire Council 11 July 2011

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dick Tonge – Highways and Transport

Key Decision: No

Purpose of Report

1. For Cabinet to formally consider and agree its response to proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented to Wiltshire Council 11 July 2011 with the exception of on and off-street car parking prices which will be part of the full review at Full Council on 8 November 2011.

Background

2. The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 December 2010.
3. Following Cabinet's decision and the above Cabinet Member decision, the required amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) were advertised in accordance with the processes set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Consultation on the amended TROs was undertaken between 27 January and 21 February 2011.
4. The LTP Car Parking Strategy was formally adopted by the Council at its meeting on 22 February 2011 as part of the Wiltshire LTP 2011-2026.
5. Following Cabinet Member approval of the report 'Off-Street Traffic Regulation Orders for Wiltshire' (reference HT-006-11) on 11 March 2011, the revised car parking charges were introduced on 18 April 2011.
6. The changes to the parking order in Salisbury led to a great deal of discussion and eventual proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management (SCCM), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

7. A set of proposals were sent to Mr Andrew Kerr dated 24 May 2011, attached as **Appendix A**. These were then revised by the organisations and sent to Wiltshire Council dated 11 July 2011, attached as **Appendix B**.
8. The response to the letter dated 24 May 2011 from Mr Andrew Kerr is attached as **Appendix C**.
9. This report considers the proposals as set out in the document dated 11 July 2011 shown at **Appendix B**.

Main Considerations for the Council

Response to the Proposals

10. Proposal 1: Short Stay Parking
 - a) *Introduce a one hour stay at a charge of £1.20*

Cabinet, at its extraordinary cabinet meeting on the 19 August 2011, approved the reintroduction of the one hour off-street charge at £1.50 and adjusted the two hour charge to £2.50 through a variation to the existing 'The County of Wiltshire (Southern Wiltshire) (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2011'.

- b) *Introduce a five hour stay in the Brown Street short stay car park. This is particularly important for the hotels and other accommodation providers in the city centre, some of which are reporting lost business, including the lucrative conference market, due to a lack of nearby long-stay car parking*

The results of the parking strategy consultation showed the 64.3% of respondents were in agreement that short stay parking should be restricted to a maximum of three hours. The objective of restricting short stay parking to a maximum of three hours is to ensure that those drivers requiring the shorter time are able to park close to the city centre. The three hour short-stay period will ensure there is a good turnover and availability of spaces. Culver Street long stay car park is only 200 metres away from Brown Street.

- c) *Reduce charges for the two and three hour time bands*

In the letter to Andrew Kerr dated 24th May 2011, Salisbury City Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry were in agreement with the current charges. No reason is given for this proposal made only six weeks later.

For stays of up to three hours, people have a choice when going to Salisbury. They can either drive to a car park in the centre and pay £4.00/£4.20 or use the Park & Ride service and pay £2.50 or £3.50 for a group. While the former is more convenient (but only by about 7 minutes each way) it can increase city centre congestion and add to air pollution levels.

11. Proposal 2: Long –stay parking
a) *Reduce charges for four, five and all day parking.*

The strategy for Salisbury has always been to price the long stay charges in the city centre at a level that encourages the use of Park & Ride. Changing these charges to those suggested in the proposal would undermine this strategy and result in an increase in cars in the city centre with the resultant increased congestion and increased air pollution levels.

Again, in the letter to Andrew Kerr dated 24 May 2011, Salisbury City Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry were in agreement with the current charges. No reason is given for this proposal made only six weeks later.

12. Proposal 3: Parking charges on Sunday's and Bank Holidays.
a) *Introduce a flat rate parking charge of £1.00 when the park & ride service is not operating, i.e. on Sunday's and Bank Holidays*

The Sunday usage figures shown at **Appendix D** show that the previous reduction in Sunday charges from £2.00 to £1.50 in July 2010 made virtually no change in usage. Therefore the change to a flat rate of £1.00 would have no effect.

Although the ticket machines can be programmed to have different charges on Sundays they cannot be programmed in advance for each Bank Holiday. Changing the machines manually for each Bank Holiday would be difficult and expensive. However, we shall continue to investigate this matter further.

13. Proposal 4: Park & Ride
a) *With immediate effect extend the operating hours of the park & ride service from 6.00am to 8.00pm to make the service more attractive to city workers;*
b) *Promote the new extended service to the city's businesses*

To extend the operating hours as described above there would be an additional cost to the Council as follows:

On a Monday - Friday only = £110k per annum

On Saturdays as well as Monday – Friday = £133k per annum

These costs cover the salaries for additional drivers, supervisors and other sundries such as increased mileage, fuel, breakdown cover, etc. To cover the cost of this arrangement through fares taken, approximately 174 passengers would need to access the service daily during these extended hours.

During 2008 the last buses left the city centre between 6.45 pm and 7.10 pm. The usage of these buses was poor, with only one or two people using them on average each day and often no passengers at all.

The current data shown at **Appendix E**, weekly extract shows that there is little demand for earlier or later services. The data shows that there are very few people who use the early or the late buses.

We would be pleased to accommodate extended hours of the Park & Ride if it were to be cost neutral. However, without a trial and supporting data it would be a financial risk to the Council. If SCCM, the FSB and the Chamber were to consult their members on this matter to establish what passenger numbers would be on the earlier and later buses, and how many would be displaced from the existing schedule, the data could be used to carry out a proper evaluation. If this approach were to be agreed, we could arrange for officers to meet with the interested parties to discuss the details of any consultation and we would evaluate the hours of other Park & Ride facilities operated by other local authorities to establish what the usage is during the suggested extended hours.

c) *Simplify charges*

The Transport Act does not permit councils to subsidise bus services that operate in direct competition with commercially registered services, the current charges do not compete with commercial bus services.

d) *Introduce some concessions for a trial period as a means of countering the adverse publicity generated over the past few months (Salisbury City Centre Management, Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury City Council will submit some ideas for consideration).*

The Council will consider suggestions put forward and respond accordingly provided they do not result in competition with commercial bus services.

14. Proposal 5: Christmas and New Year parking

a) *That Wiltshire Council enter into discussions with Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses, Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Salisbury City Council to agree special concessions for the city centre car parks and the park & ride service for the 2011 Christmas and New Year sales period.*

The Council is happy to discuss this matter; however, the Council has already invested in the re-instatement of the one hour charge in Salisbury. Therefore any concessions will need to be cost neutral to the Council.

During the 2010 Christmas and New Year period Wiltshire Council provided an additional service on the 25 November 2011 to operate until 8.30 pm from the city centre, due to the switch on of the Christmas lights and to coincide with late night shopping. On that day there were 33 car exits from all of the car parks between 7.00 pm and 9.00 pm and one car entry during the same period. The Council heavily subsidised this additional service.

15. Proposal 6: Pay-on Exit

- a) *That the Culver Street car park is converted to a pay-on-exit system as soon as possible and that in the longer term the Council similarly converts the city's other car parks.*

Experience in other local authorities indicates that pay on exit is best suited to large car parks that have good security and no mixed use. There also has to be proper traffic management to prevent congestion at both the entrance and exits which will have barriers. This would be particularly relevant in a congested city such as Salisbury. This is already witnessed by the congestion caused at peak times by the cars trying to get into the Old George Mall car park where queuing cars waiting to get in block traffic on New Street and further round to St Johns Street.

The capital cost for a large car park is in the order of £100,000. The estimated expenditure to fit out the Charlotte Street car park in Bath several years ago was £225,000 for equipment and engineering works. Bath & North East Somerset Council has now removed this pay-on-exit system and has reverted to pay and display due to operational costs, reliability of the system and vandalism.

The revenue costs of operating pay on exit will be higher although it is acknowledged that some of this might be offset by increased income. A summary of revenue costs from another local authority is shown below:

- write down of capital expense of equipment (around £100,000 per car park)
- damage to barrier equipment (to maintain 24 hours access to car park barriers need to be in use at all times)
- increased staff costs (permanent staffing needed during charging period and out of hours call out system)
- increased maintenance cost
- increased risk of payment machines being vandalised

In summary, the Council does not have the financial capacity to implement pay-on-exit within the car parks that are big enough for consideration. However, we will fully evaluate all options as part of the developments that will take place as part of the Salisbury Vision developments. However, there is an alternative. The MiPermit system allows payment by mobile telephone which eliminates the need for cash and allows motorists to top up should they be delayed at their appointments or wish to do more shopping and avoid a fine.

16. Proposal 7: Future parking charges and arrangements

- a) *Wiltshire Council meet with Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses, Salisbury District Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Salisbury City Council to discuss any future changes to parking charges or arrangements at an early stage, i.e. before any decisions are taken;*

Agreed

- b) *That until Salisbury's retail offer has been significantly improved (i.e. with the completion of the Maltings and central car park redevelopment) the presumption shall be that the cost of parking in Salisbury will be less than it is in Bournemouth and Southampton.*

Neither Bournemouth nor Southampton have Park & Ride therefore this presumption is not agreed.

17. Proposal 8: Promotion of Salisbury

- a) *That Wiltshire Council implements a marketing campaign aimed at overturning any negative perceptions of Salisbury that may have been gained as a result of the current parking charges; this campaign to be designed to promote Salisbury as the place to shop for people living within a 40 minute drive-time of the city. This campaign will also counter competitive local advertising in Salisbury which we understand is planned by Bournemouth and Southampton.*

We understand that a marketing campaign is being funded by Salisbury City Council. Wiltshire Council will continue to promote Park & Ride through its magazine; additionally the Area Board is considering making an investment in marketing.

The Council has also entered into an Entrustment Agreement with VisitWiltshire (a not for profit company led by the tourism industry), whereby the Council is entrusting the delivery of the tourism marketing service to the company and is making a financial contribution of £500,000 p.a. over the next three years (starting 1 August 2011) for this purpose.

The decision to provide this funding should be seen in the context of the view from the tourism industry that Wiltshire needs to raise its profile as a visitor destination in the face of stiff competition from other destinations in the UK and abroad, the industry believes that this can best be achieved by VisitWiltshire focusing on attracting visitors to the county. Salisbury and Stonehenge are the two premier Wiltshire 'brands' and will therefore be the focus of much marketing activity. VisitWiltshire should be contacted directly for further discussions on the details of proposed marketing campaigns.

18. Proposal 9: Wiltshire Council Staff parking

- a) *That Council staff currently using the Salt Lane car park be instructed to use the Culver Street car park instead; thus freeing up valuable short-stay spaces in a small central car park for paying customers.*

The Council approved a trial parking arrangement that offered continued free parking to those staff that were either in receipt of free parking or were covered by the nil detriment policy for staff. The trial parking scheme offers parking permits denoted by the manager of either a 'business user permit' for those that are out regularly travelling specifically as part of their role or who

carry sensitive data. These permits allow the individual to park in most Council car parks and a specific 'Culver Street permit' for those staff who fall within the criteria of previously having free parking or covered by nil detriment but who do not travel regularly or carry sensitive data. This only allows them to park at Culver Street car park.

Salt Lane should not be used for all day parking but confined to a period of three hours.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

19. From an environmental perspective, changes to parking charges within the city have the potential to impact on air quality, congestion and carbon emissions. If vehicular movements in the city centre were to increase this could be detrimental in the Council's objectives to improve air quality within the AQMA and the increase in congestion could result in longer journey times, potentially deterring customers.
20. Alongside this, the current park and ride system offers a valuable and cost effective service for commuters entering the city from outlying towns and villages. However, it is less effective for commuters who live closer to the city centre.
21. Section 3.45 of the Council's recent Car Parking Strategy states that any surplus revenue from the service, once operating costs have been accounted for, could be used to fund sustainable transport projects. Whilst the economic reasons for requesting lower parking charges are noted, it should be acknowledged that this will result in fewer surplus funds being available for these projects.
22. A key reason for reducing parking charges is to encourage more footfall by making it easier and cost effective to park closer to the commercial centre. However, whilst this will assist the economy in the short term, this is not a viable option in the medium to long term as commuters will face increasing pressure from rising fuel prices and there will be detrimental impacts on air quality, carbon emissions and congestion.
23. All parties should agree to work together to form a comprehensive vision for sustainable transport measures in and around Salisbury, identifying sources of funding that help the city to remain competitive.
24. The car parking strategy was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the development of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. The SEA was subject to public consultation from 4 October to 26 November 2010. The report to Cabinet on 14 December 2010 provided details of the summary findings of the SEA.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

25. None have been identified as arising directly from the proposal.

26. The car parking strategy was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) as part of the development of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. The EqIA was subject to public consultation from 4 October to 26 November 2010. The report to Cabinet on 14 December 2010 provided details of the summary findings of the EqIA.

Risk Assessment

27. None have been identified as arising directly from the proposal.

Financial Implications

28. As this is a formal response to proposals received there are no direct implications arising from the proposal.

Legal Implications

29. None have been identified as arising directly from the proposal.

Options Considered

30. In reaching the responses to the proposals consideration has been given to each of the various individual options.

Conclusion

31. That the above responses to the proposals 1b, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 outlined by Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry represents the Council's position on these matters.

Mark Boden
Corporate Director – Operations
Department of Neighbourhood and Planning

Report Author:
Ian Brown
Head of Amenity and Fleet
01380 734792

22 September 2011

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report

None

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Proposals made in letter to Andrew Kerr signed by Ian Newman, Chairman Salisbury City Centre Management dated 24 May
- Appendix B - Proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management, the Federation of Small Businesses and Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented to Wiltshire Council 11 July 2011.
- Appendix C - Response to Appendix A from Mr Andrew Kerr dated 16 June 2011
- Appendix D - Sunday usage
- Appendix E - Park & Ride early and late usage
- Appendix F - Further proposals from Salisbury City Centre Management Federation of Small Businesses and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry dated 26 September 2011 (a verbal response to these further proposals will be given at the meeting)