

## Comments received as part of the consultation on customer service centre in Stamford

### From external stakeholders

Thank you for your SKDC Customer Service Consultation 2020. I will pass this on to our Parish Councillors and let you know their comments in due course.

Clerk Greatford Parish Council.

Thank you for your e mail below regarding SKDC consultation on the planned changes to customer services.

As you are no doubt aware there are different legal requirements for engagement and consultation particularly around provision for the 9 protected characteristics covered by the DDA of which our client base is one of.

Can I ask how you are going to ensure that the blind and partially sighted residents in Stamford and Market Deeping are being consulted?

Would you be able to provide the consultation document in large print, USB, Cd, Tape ? I would also suggest that if you are sending it out in audio format that you include a paper copy for their responses in the hope they may have someone who lives with them to fill it in for them and send back to you. Alternatively you could suggest that they can ring you so one of your team to fill in over the phone. They do get very frustrated when they are met with a multiple choice automated answerphone message as many of them are elderly and have other co morbidities.

Have you written to all the households in the area informing them of the planned changes?

Looking at our database there are only 13 people living with sight loss in those two areas who are able to use e mail all the other will require transcribed copies and support to complete a questionnaire.

I look forward to hearing from you soon as I can see you have a deadline for responses.

Kind regards

Thank you for including me in the below communications.

I must admit, I am somewhat surprised about the reference to the Stamford Library that is included within your survey. The directing of customers to the library is not something that has previously been discussed with either LCC or colleagues within GLL.

Whilst we are happy for the signposting to the site, which could increase footfall, I would like an opportunity to have a discussion on expectations. We have recently updated the public use computers at the site which is receiving a positive response, however we don't have/won't have

dedicated PC's for customers coming in on the back of the below changes. We welcome all customers and whilst it shouldn't be an issue, the individuals will need to be members of the Library to be able to use the PC's. GLL Library staff will support and help people to use the PC's but they cannot advise over specifics in terms of SKDC content; which customers might not be anticipating given the wording in the proposal.

I think we just need to be mindful over user expectation as GLL Library Staff cannot replace the SKDC service that you are looking to withdraw.

Many Thanks

The Grantham and Bourne provision will be of little use to the residents of Stamford, many of whom have no means of transport and no other reason to make the journey to Grantham or Bourne.

I strongly believe that there does need to be a walk-in service available to the residents of Stamford, whether this remains at Maiden Lane or not.

Kind regards

February 19<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Sir,

I have just received your Stamford Customer Service Consultation. I notice that you are intending 'getting things easier for our customers' by changing the way you deliver face to face services in Stamford. How can you do this when you propose to remove the 'face to face' Customer Service Centre? This small office is the only place in Stamford where it is possible to speak to an SKDC employee. Shouldn't this consultation be headed 'Faceless Services at SKDC' instead?

Last September I changed my car and tried to contact the Grantham Office to change my Permit parking number. I failed totally. No one at the office seemed to know which department was dealing with permit parking. I tried on two consecutive days then I went to the SKDC office here. My request was quickly and efficiently dealt with. I also buy visitors parking permits from there. How will I obtain them in the future?

How will a 'direct phone line' help? Like the majority of residents, I have a phone at home: the problem is finding a person to speak to. Is it only Stamford residents who will be subject to this inferior service? Will it also apply to Grantham, Market Deeping and Bourne residents as we all pay the same council tax? Many of our residents prefer to speak to a person rather than coping with the complicated time-wasting telephone service you provide.

(No doubt this is already a 'fait accompli' so any negative comment will be disregarded).

I am looking forward to hearing from you with answers to my queries.

Yours sincerely.

Dear Sir,

As you know a consultation paper has been published proposing that the Service Centre on Maiden lane be closed and replaced with a self service kiosk and a telephone at the arts centre and PCs at the library.

I think this is a terrible idea. I do understand that you are trying to save money but this absolutely vital service needs to be fronted by people. The current service is excellent and deals in a timely manner with all sorts of problems and questions from a wide cross section of ratepayers. This standard of service is not available by telephone, which in my experience is poor. Telephone are not answered quickly, when they are answered the operator frequently does not know where to direct the call, and when it does eventually get through to the correct department the relevant person is out. A very frustrating experience.

Many elderly and infirm really rely on face to face contact which the current Service Centre excels at.

If money need to be saved maybe the office could be moved into a town centre building owned by SKDC. (What about the empty building at the bus station?)

I hope that the consultation was not a fait accompli and that you have not already terminated the lease on the Maiden Lane office.

Please let Stamford retain this important service.

Representing the St. Peter's Community Group.

(I have written to my MP asking for his help)

Yours sincerely

#### **From internal stakeholders**

Dear all

Thank you for agreeing to attend next month's meeting. G has covered the main thrust of our concerns.

I think, more broadly, I would like our team to be aware of (or have access to) some of the training and support offered to Customer Service colleagues – especially around potentially dealing with a wider range of customers.

I was in Bourne Library last week and witnessed the team handling a challenging situation. I'm sure they have lots of regular interactions of a similar nature and some of this will be new ground to our FOH team.

With best wishes and thanks,

Thank you for your email.

Most of the team have filled in the questionnaire.

I guess it will be around the impact the self-service offer will have on arts centre. Staff concerns are mounting about lone working. We have seen an increased amount of vulnerable adults and

homeless people in both our arts centres in the evening, perhaps attracted by the warmth but mostly attracted due to the council logo as they think if they abuse us we can help them as we are council staff. With the centre being advertised further as a council information point this will only get worse. Obviously if it goes ahead the location of any equipment and how we deal with the people that will inevitably ask for help. If a self-serve is for people who don't have and cannot use the internet at home, how will they be able to use a self-serve? That's the sort of concerns brought forward at this stage...

Hope that helps,

If you want a chat prior, do call.

Kind Regards

Thanks for taking the time to provide such a detailed response.

I know G and team will appreciate further discussion moving forward.

I felt it was important to raise this issue with my team as fully informed as possible - hence my request for the tech spec of the equipment following a brief conversation with C before Christmas. However, I hadn't heard any further news, nor realised the speed of activity from your side. Your reminder that this is just a proposal at this point is appreciated. Thank you.

Clearly there will be operational concerns with the proposals but I am sure you will find G helpful in finding a workable solution - if there is one of course!

It has been our intention to look at our physical Box Office/Front of House set up and I had hoped this situation might be an opportunity to look at this in tandem with your plans - especially if there might be funding available.

I am back in the office next week, from Tuesday, so we can pick this up again in due course.

Best as always.

Hi,

For the majority of the permit holders I only have an address and telephone number I'm afraid,

There are 550 resident permit holders and approx. 350 season ticket holders from Stamford at any one time.

I could let you have a list of those if that helps, I'm just not sure if I can give you this information due to GDPR?

It will cause an issue with my permit customers if the Stamford Office closes as quite a lot of customers use it to collect new permits where we need to see proof of residency/V5 docs etc...

Customer Services have already withdrawn their assistance with taking payments for permits at Stamford, (these are now all taken over the phone here) but I was hoping they would still be taking in evidence/swapping over existing permits after change of vehicle/new permits etc.. as we have to ensure we have this evidence as we operate the scheme on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council.

Without the option of Stamford Office it will make the process more lengthy for the residents and I do believe they will not be happy at all!

*Best regards,*

Hi

As a team we have tried to answer the survey but it is geared towards external customers and not internal service users therefore we thought it would be better to email our response. I would be grateful if you could forward this on to whomever needs the information.

Our customers (mainly taxi drivers) use the Stamford and Market Deeping area offices to apply for licences and collect plates and badges. We send those via courier. We like our licences and plates to be collected 1, to keep the cost of postage down and 2, to prevent them going missing in the post, something that was happening quite regularly until we introduced this.

In our opinion the Market Deeping office could close without too much impact on our customers as they could go to Stamford to collect their plates and licences (a significant amount of applicants live in Peterborough).

If the Stamford office was to close this would definitely impact on more of our South of the district licensees being disadvantaged as they would have to travel to Bourne or Grantham for collections.

Happy to discuss in more detail if necessary.

Kind regards