



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20th February 2024

Report of Councillor Richard Cleaver,
Deputy Leader of the Council

Findings of Car Parking Utilisation and Capacity Study

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

This report sets out the findings of the recently published car parking study in respect of the Council car parks across the South Kesteven District.

Recommendations

The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Consider the findings of the car parking study.
- Make any observations in relation to the Survey findings and the current car parking tariff proposals.
- Support the extension of the Cattle Market car park in Stamford in order to provide additional parking.
- Agree to commission a further car parking study six months after the implementation of the new car parking tariffs to assess their impact.
- Requests that further work is undertaken with respect to:
 - The future car parking arrangements in Bourne and the Deepings
 - The current parking arrangements for Blue Badge holders
 - The future capacity requirements for Grantham and Stamford

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities? (delete as appropriate)	Connecting Communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling Economic Opportunity Housing Effective Council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

There are no specific financial comments arising from the car parking study although any changes to the car parking arrangements will have a financial implication that will require financial modelling before approved.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director and Deputy s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report which are not already highlighted in the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently recommended that an independent car parking study is carried out to assess the utilisation of the Council operated car parks in the four market towns – Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping.

The purpose of the study is to ensure that the provision of parking is aligned to the objectives of the council, which are to:

- Ensure South Kesteven has an appropriate supply of public parking in the four town centres in the study.
- Ensure SKDC's public car parks are attractive, safe, and accessible for all users by having appropriate tariff and management regimes in place.
- Ensure SKDC's public car parks are assets that support the economic vitality and vibrancy of South Kesteven's town centres.

The report provides a detailed analysis of car parking usage and the data analysis was supported by on-site observations during a typical peak usage days of Friday and Saturday.

In summary the report covers the following areas:

- Review of existing conditions
- Forecasts of Change
- Assessment of Potential Parking Solutions
- Action Plan
- Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

- There is excess parking capacity in Grantham in the public car parks while demand exceeds the available capacity in the Morrisons free customer car park.
- There is a lack of available space at peak times in all car parks in Stamford.
- On-street parking spaces in the town centres are very well used and it is difficult to find a space during the busy periods of day.
- Traffic congestion in Stamford makes it more difficult to find the remaining parking spaces, which in turn adds to the congestion.
- Public parking in Bourne and Market Deeping is limited compared with the number of spaces provided by private operators and on-street parking. Bourne car parks are approaching capacity at busy times but there is ample space in Market Deeping.
- Issues with the payment machines can cause significant queues at many times in different car parks. Some payment machines do not have level access.
- There are inconsistent parking charges in Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping.

- Most car parks are in good or reasonable condition. A small number would benefit from some maintenance or improvement, e.g. St. Leonards Street and Wharf Road multi-storey. Some car parks could benefit from new infrastructure, including waste bins, direction signs for drivers and pedestrians, information boards, cycle and motorcycle parking spaces, Parent and Child spaces and CCTV.
- The demand for electric vehicle charging facilities will inevitably increase and more parking spaces will need to be converted for this purpose.

The on-site observations showed the following analysis:

Grantham

Grantham Car Park Occupancy – Friday 3rd November 2023

Car Park	Car Park Occupancy (%)					
	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4
Conduit Lane	70%	68%	79%	89%	83%	66%
Guildhall Street	93%	97%	98%	100%	97%	75%
Watergate	34%	77%	67%	62%	61%	57%
Welham Street	26%	24%	27%	23%	23%	15%
Wharf Road	28%	20%	22%	25%	23%	18%
SKDC Total	37%	40%	41%	41%	39%	31%
Morrisons	97%	98%	92%	86%	91%	70%
Total	51%	53%	53%	51%	51%	40%

Grantham Car Park Occupancy – Saturday 4th November 2023

Car Park	Car Park Occupancy (%)					
	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4
Conduit Lane	28%	38%	49%	36%	23%	19%
Guildhall Street	98%	100%	90%	86%	82%	78%
Watergate	90%	90%	90%	85%	67%	56%
Welham Street	21%	21%	21%	21%	20%	16%
Wharf Road	28%	26%	27%	19%	16%	14%
SKDC Total	40%	41%	41%	36%	32%	28%
Morrisons	99%	100%	98%	97%	93%	81%
Total	54%	55%	54%	50%	46%	40%

2.2 The observations results are unsurprising and mirror the ongoing analysis of car parking ticket sales and income levels. Due to the range of parking offers in town by private operators, supermarkets and retail parks, the Council provided car parks are a minority offer when compared to the total amount of parking.

Therefore for the town there is an oversupply of car parking generally leading to poor performance of the Council car parks. Occupancy was generally low in SKDC car parks, but the free, private car park at the Isaac Newton Centre (Morrisons) was very busy, especially in the morning. The largest car parks at the Wharf Road and Welham Street multi-storeys had low levels of occupancy. The results of the Saturday survey in Grantham show that occupancy was similarly low across the SKDC car parks as a whole, but there were differences from the Friday usage in specific car parks. Watergate was used more than on Friday, but Conduit Lane was used less on a Saturday. This can be explained that there is a high number of long stay season ticket holders who use Conduit Lane during the working week. The Morrisons / Isaac Newton Centre customer car park continues to be fully occupied for a long period of the day.

Proposed Tariff Changes

2.3 The survey results show an interesting conflict with some of the current tariff proposals that are currently subject to consultation. For example, it is currently being proposed to introduce free 2 hours parking on a Saturday morning at Guildhall Street, Watergate and Conduit Lane. Whilst the analysis shows a strong rationale for doing this at Conduit Lane, the data does not support such a proposal at Watergate or Guildhall Street where occupancy on a Saturday is at peak capacity. Introducing any element of free parking will have a financial implication for the Council and could lead to congestion in these already fully occupied car parks if motorists attempt to take advantage of free parking.

The remaining proposals, such as free 2-hour parking at Wharf Road multi storey and charging reductions at the Welham Street multi storey should help stimulate demand in order to address the current under occupancy at these car parks.

Stamford

Stamford Car Park Occupancy – Friday 3rd November 2023

Car Park	Car Park Occupancy (%)					
	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4
Cattlemarket	24%	81%	91%	100%	55%	43%
Bath Row	96%	101%	100%	98%	90%	95%

North Street	98%	99%	97%	94%	89%	90%
Scotgate	82%	97%	96%	87%	81%	82%
St. Leonards St.	94%	100%	100%	100%	79%	62%
Wharf Road	73%	97%	97%	96%	71%	49%
Total	63%	92%	95%	97%	71%	60%

Stamford Car Park Occupancy – Saturday 4th November 2023

Car Park	Car Park Occupancy (%)					
	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4
Cattlemarket	15%	31%	42%	58%	59%	46%
Bath Row	74%	93%	99%	99%	96%	95%
North Street	82%	97%	99%	95%	91%	82%
Scotgate	61%	72%	94%	94%	93%	88%
St. Leonards St.	71%	94%	88%	91%	94%	68%
Wharf Road	54%	64%	73%	81%	89%	72%
Total	47%	61%	70%	78%	80%	68%

2.4 The results of the Friday survey show that occupancy was high in all car parks until it began to fall from 2pm onwards. There were very few available spaces during the midday peak. The small car parks were effectively full from 10am onwards while the larger, long stay car parks filled up later as more visitors arrived.

In addition to the car parks, on-street parking was also recorded at Bath Row. There are 102 free, time restricted parking spaces and these were full for the whole day on Friday. Drivers were observed circulating the area waiting for a space to become available and parking outside the marked bays.

On Saturday the occupancy was lower, and the peak was later in the day. There was plenty of available space in the Cattlemarket all day, the smaller car parks were almost full all day and Wharf Road filled up for an hour in the early afternoon.

The Bath Row on-street spaces were full for the whole day on Saturday and the 105 spaces in Broad Street were available to use and these were virtually full for the whole day.

Proposed Tariff Changes

2.5 In overall terms, the analysis does not contradict with the current car parking tariff proposals that are subject to consultation as these proposals should deter longer term parking in the short stay car parks and have the effect of encouraging those motorists to move the long stay car parks at Wharf Road and Cattlemarket. However, it is recognised that Fridays will continue to be the busiest day for the town and town centre parking will continue to be a challenge where the Council is the main car parking provider.

The analysis also supports the current proposal to provide further car parking capacity in Stamford by extending the Cattlemarket car park although signage and promotion will be needed to ensure motorists are aware of this increased provision as the Cattlemarket currently has capacity on all days with the exception of Friday so additional spaces could add to the under occupancy.

Bourne and Market Deeping Analysis

2.6 In relation to Bourne and Market Deeping, whilst there is some evidence that capacity is being reached at certain periods of the week, the business case to introduce paid parking is weaker at this time if the primary objective is to secure a financial return from paid parking given the associated set up costs and ongoing operational costs. From this perspective, there is no immediate proposal to introduce charges at this time. However, there are different motivations for introducing paid parking such as controlling parking duration and segregating different parking needs (e.g. longer stay parking contained to the outer town centre) and OSC may express a view whether further studies should be undertaken in relation to Bourne and Market Deeping.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Members of the Committee are asked to consider the findings of the car parking study taking into consideration the current car parking tariff proposals.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1 The reasons for the recommendations are set out in the report.

5. Background Papers

5.1 [Proposed revision to Car Park Tariffs - Grantham and Stamford.pdf](https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/Proposed%20revision%20to%20Car%20Park%20Tariffs%20-%20Grantham%20and%20Stamford.pdf)
[southkesteven.gov.uk](https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)

6. Appendices

6.1 Car Parking Study