



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Richard Cleaver -  
Cabinet Member for Property and  
Public Engagement

## Review of Council Car Parking Arrangements

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

This report provides an update following review of car parking use across SKDC following recent tariff changes.

### Recommendations

The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny is asked to:

- Consider the findings of the Car Parking Study including analysis of payment methods.
- Review the current criteria for Disabled Parking.
- Review the criteria for use of Season Tickets.
- Consider the case for introducing controlled parking arrangements in Bourne, Deepings and Billingborough.
- Consider options to further increase the utilisation of car parks where capacity remains unused.
- Consider options to achieve higher turnover of spaces in the busiest short stay car parks enabling more utilisation.

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities 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***

- 1.1 This report is a review of the car parking arrangements following the implementation of the current car parking tariffs in January 2025. There are no specific proposals to amend the tariffs and therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.

*Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer*

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 Finance and Economic OSC are asked to consider a number of actions within the recommendations. Any changes to parking arrangements following the reviews suggested in the report will be subject to the decision making requirements within the Constitution at Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions).

*Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

## 2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. During 2024 there was a fundamental review of car parking arrangements across the car parking portfolio which culminated in changes to the car parking tariffs in Grantham and Stamford. These changes were introduced on 20 January 2025 and introduced a simplified tariff structure and an element of free parking in Grantham.
- 2.2. It was agreed to undertake a review of the impact of the new tariffs following a period of 6 months to assess:-

- the impact the new charges have had on usage and any identify any adverse behavioural changes.
- Parking usage and charges policy at Bourne and the Deepings
- The impact of the additional capacity at Cattle Market, Stamford
- The appropriateness of the council's Blue Badge parking policy

The Council has appointed the consultants (Tetra Tech) who have been previously utilised in order to provide car parking studies. Tetra Tech's report is provided in detail at Appendix A – Car Parking Update 2025.

2.3. After considering the review, the Portfolio Holder and officers believe the following areas require further consideration:

- Analysis of Tariff Charging post January 2025
- The analysis of pay by machine and pay by app
- Disabled parking offer – designation and location of bays and free parking period
- Season ticket usage and current criteria
- Underutilisation of car parking bays at specific locations on specific days
- The desirability of maximising the turnover of spaces at the very busy short stay car parks
- Current free and unrestricted limited parking policy in specific locations – Bourne, Market Deeping and Billingborough

2.4 Analysis of Tariff Charging post January 2025

Following implementation of the new car parking tariff structure in January 2025 it is evident the change has been predominantly positive, with the potential for some fine tuning in specific locations to further enhance the effective use of the Council's parking provision across the district.

2.5 Grantham has seen the introduction of free short stay parking (up 2 hours at Wharf Road, and 1 hour in all other car parks), which has helped to increase the number of tickets sold by approximately 30%, with evidence of increased short stay turnover. Income has reduced by approximately 16%, due to the implementation of the free parking provision. Overall occupancy generally sits between 40-60% during core periods, which suggests the supply of provision within the town is sufficient but areas of high demand could be offset to alternative sites where capacity is available.

2.6 Stamford continues to experience growth in ticket sales of approximately 8% and income generation of approximately 33% since the implementation of the new tariff structures with continuing very high occupancy levels in general, across all short stay car parks. Following the recent extension of the Cattle Market car park

long stay provision there is now greater capacity and therefore opportunity to offset the very high demand from the short stay provision during Monday to Thursday each week.

2.7 Following the implementation of the new parking tariff structure, Grantham's free short-stay offer has increased turnover of short-stay parking but reduced long-stay and income generation as a whole across the town. Stamford's increase to tariff prices has reduced all-day tickets in the short stay car parks and promoted turnover of spaces whilst increasing overall income.

2.8 In summary it is recognised that the changes to the car parking tariffs have been successful and the required outcomes of simplifying tariffs, reducing dwell time in short stay car parks and encourages more users in Grantham has been achieved. However it is recognised that there is still scope to further improve utilisation in off-peak periods.

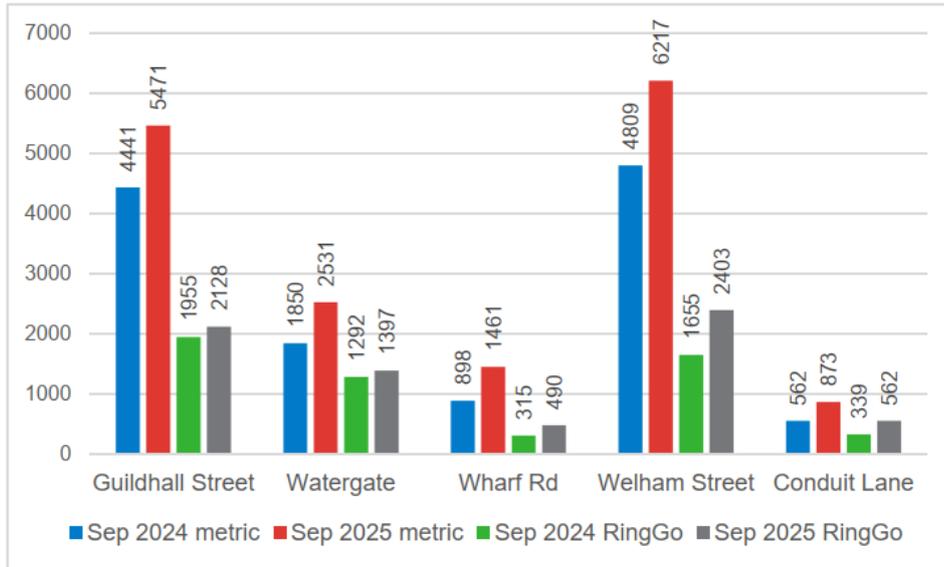
## 2.9 Analysis of Payment Methods

The car parks offer 3 primary methods of payment at each of its locations:

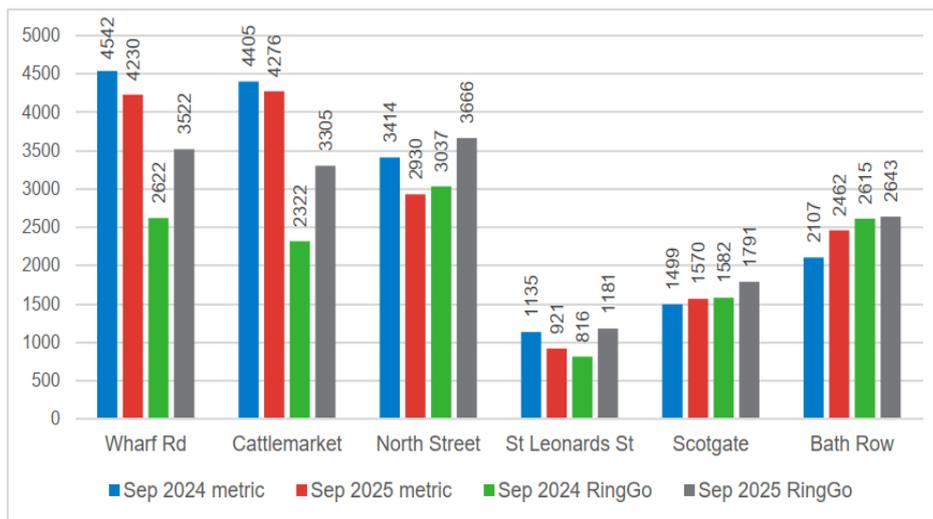
- Pay by App (RingGo)
- Pay by cash (at a car park machine)
- Pay by card (at a car park machine)

2.10 Pay by App continues to be most convenient method of payment for motorists as it is easy to receive reminders for periods of stay that are nearing expiry, the ability to increase the parking period without returning to the vehicle and avoid the inconvenience of visiting a physical machine. The popularity of the app as a payment method continues to grow with app usage in Stamford increasing from 43% to 50% of all transactions in the past year. For Grantham it has remained constant at around 30% of all transactions.

2.11 Grantham Ticket Sales by Transaction type:



2.12 Stamford Ticket Sales by Transaction Type:



2.13 Paying by cash is still a convenient method although there is a monthly cost for cash collection of approximately £1,800. It is unlikely the Council would move to a cash free only offer despite the costs incurred although a number of cash free machines have been introduced across the car parks to reduce the number of machines requiring cash collection. The card transaction fee is approximately £750 per month; a combined cost of £2,550 per month.

2.14 Criteria of Disabled Parking Offer

The scope of the car parking study was asked to consider the current disabled parking offer, and this is included in the report at section 6 of Appendix A. The current arrangement is that the Council offers dedicated disabled bays but allows blue badge holders to park in either dedicated disabled parking bays or any other car parking bay - provided the blue badge is displayed.

2.15 However, the Council allows unlimited all-day parking for blue badge holders which is generous when compared to neighbouring towns. A comparison of the local authorities disabled provision is set out in Table 1 below. The time limit of 3 hours is in line with Department for Transport criteria when displaying a disabled badge whilst parking on yellow lines.

Table 1 – Comparison of Local Authorities Disabled parking provision.

Local Authority	Free Duration	Designated Disabled Bays	Standard Bays	Time Limit	Payment Required Over Time Limit
SKDC	Unlimited	Yes	Yes (allowed)	No limit	No
Rutland CC (Oakham)	Up to 3 hours	Yes	Yes	3 hours	Yes – standard tariff
Newark & Sherwood DC (Newark-on-Trent)	Up to 3 hours	Yes	No free parking in standard bays	3 hours	Blue badge users must pay in standard bays
Melton BC (Melton Mowbray)	Up to 3 hours	Yes	Yes	3 hours	No

2.16 The Department for Transport (DfT) guidance document *'Inclusive Mobility – A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure'* states that the recommended proportion of designated accessible parking spaces for Blue Badge holders is 6%, although some adjustments may be appropriate at a local level to reflect nearby facilities.

2.17 The survey data (tables 8,10, 16 and 18 of Appendix A) shows that there are impacts on parking associated with the Councils current criteria to disabled parking provision. Stamford and Grantham's car parks are frequently at 100% occupancy in terms of disabled bays usage resulting in standard bays being used where all disabled parking bays are occupied. The high utilisation due to unlimited stays for blue badge holders constrains disabled bay turnover and results in use of standard spaces preventing income generation.

2.18 Taking into consideration the DfT guidance recommending a 6% proportion of disabled bays per car park, the study indicates there is a slight under provision of the disabled spaces across car parks as a whole in Grantham. However, Stamford meets this percentage across all car park sites.

2.19 The survey suggests that disabled users favour a more central parking location and based on this it is proposed that an exercise is undertaken to review disabled

parking provision along with location to ensure this is allocated based on demand for each site.

- 2.20 Example of this issue is highlighted within the study report in Stamford where Bath Row and the Wharf Road Car parks experience higher disabled use exceeding bay provision in comparison to the Cattle Market. It is suggested that this car park has a greater provision of disabled bays when compared to demand. This suggests that proximity to the town is a greater factor than availability. Tables detailing the disabled parking ratio are detailed below:

### Stamford

Car Park	Total Bays available	Disabled Bays available	Current %	6% disabled provision	Difference
Cattlemarket	384	26	7%	23	3
Bath Row	77	7	9%	5	2
North Street	103	7	7%	6	1
Scotgate	62	4	6%	4	0
St Leonards St	34	0	0%	2	-2
Wharf Road	238	10	4%	14	-4
Stamford Total	898	54	6%	54	0

### Grantham

Car Park	Total Bays available	Disabled Bays available	Current % Provision	6% disabled provision	Difference
Conduit Lane	47	6	13%	3	3
Guildhall Street	88	7	8%	5	2
Watergate	100	6	6%	6	0
Welham Street	314	10	3%	19	-9
Wharf Road	260	9	3%	16	-7
Grantham Total	809	38	5%	49	-11

- 2.21 Taking into consideration other Councils' approach to disabled parking, it is proposed that a review is undertaken in respect of the following:

- The current Car Parking Order which enables free unlimited parking in disabled bays as well any other available general car parking spaces.

- The allocation of disabled parking bays at each SKDC car park ensuring the provision meets the demand where possible. For example the bay allocation for disabled users should be provided in the short stay car parks close to the town centre and a reduced provision in the outlying long stay car parks where the distance to town is further.

## 2.22 Season Ticket Usage

Season ticket parking has remained a strong income stream since the implementation of the new parking tariffs in January 2025 with approximately £107,500 having been generated in the past 12 months. Appendix B – Season Ticket Usage provides a breakdown of this information. The criteria for season tickets can be found at Appendix C.

- 2.23 Of the income generated, Stamford is attributable for approximately 61% of season ticket income and Grantham amounting to the remaining 39%.

Town	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Commercial Purchases Quarterly	College Other	Total
Grantham	£133	£1,465	£6,550	£17,800	£16,364	£42,312
Stamford	£1,250.50	£7,010	£50,640	£6,240	-	£65,140.50
<b>District Total</b>	£1,383.50	£8,475	£57,190	£24,040	£16,364	£107,452.50

- 2.24 It can be suggested that these different season-ticket profiles by town are consistent with change of behaviour across each town since implementation of the new tariffs. Grantham's increase in short stay usage has reduced casual long stay tickets, while Stamford's increase in tariff for long stay users promotes the purchase of season tickets for frequent users.
- 2.25 Stamford car park usage is strong generally with continuing high demand across car parks, particularly those in a central location. Of the income generated in Stamford, 78% is based on quarterly purchased tickets consistent with regular commuter usage.
- 2.26 In comparison, Grantham season tickets income is dominated by quarterly purchases, but these are concentrated in bulk quarterly purchase (48%) or via temporary commercial season tickets (39%) rather than individual demand.
- 2.27 As a result of the findings it is recommended the season ticketing criteria is reviewed to enhance utilisation of spaces across car parks, in particular the consistent underutilisation of space at the Wharf Road Multi Story car park in Grantham and the Cattlemarket car park at Stamford.

## 2.28 Under-utilisation of car parking bays at specific locations on specific days

Section 4 of the (Appendix A) report provides commentary on the September 2025 car park occupancy study undertaken at SKDC car parks in Grantham, Stamford, Bourne, Market Deeping and Billingborough.

- 2.29 Car park occupancy overall in Grantham was consistently between 40-60% on both Friday and Saturday with usage dropping in the afternoon. One notable observation however was the clear under utilisation of the Wharf Road Multi Storey Car Park with persistently low occupancy on the Friday (between 12-37%) and Saturday (between 15-50%).
- 2.30 This is notable as the car park has the most generous free parking period of any Council car park (2 hours free) following the post January 2025 tariff changes. This free provision has not led to an increase in usage and further initiatives may be necessary to stimulate demand such as enabling commuter season tickets to be introduced.
- 2.31 This is not the case at some other centrally located car parks within the town such as Guildhall Street. Consideration could be given to adjusting tariff rates during periods of peak demand at Guildhall Street in order to divert usage to Wharf Road Multi Storey although this could have a negative impact on income levels.
- 2.32 Car park occupancy levels in Stamford were generally very high on both Friday and Saturday, particularly in the car parks close to the town centre. Occupancy generally exceeded 85%, but one notable exception was that of the Cattle Market car park.
- 2.33 Appendix A suggests that the Cattle Market car park has a underutilisation in comparison to other Stamford car parks. Although improving on the Saturday this was still below other town centre car parks with the exception of a peak in demand around lunchtime on the Saturday.
- 2.34 The Cattle Market is in direct proximity to the Stamford Railway Station, which also provides parking for long stay users at a much more enhanced rate. Daily long stay tickets can be purchased at the station car park for £3.50, in comparison to that of the Cattle Market at £5 per day. Although the Cattle Market provides the most beneficial rate in the town for all day stay in Council owned car parks, the current tariff structure does not incentivise commuters and long stay users from relocating from the Railway Station.
- 2.35 Consideration should therefore be given to enhancing the attraction of the Cattle Market as a daily long stay destination with potential discounts to the tariff structure to promote long stay parking on specific weekdays (Mondays to Thursdays).

## 2.36 Current free parking in Bourne, Billingborough and Market Deeping

In response to the previous Parking Study report to Cabinet in September 2024, the consultants were asked to review the existing parking utilisation and arrangements in the other primary towns in the district inclusive of Billingborough, all of which currently benefit from free of charge parking.

2.37 As part of the review studies were also undertaken on parking in these locations during Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025, which indicated very high occupancy and congestion in key parts of Bourne, mixed demand in Market Deeping, and persistent under-use in Billingborough. Therefore, this is no business case to consider any form of controlling parking provision at the Billingborough car park.

2.38 The following summary table provides a breakdown of the evidence of pressures at each location along with the recommendations for measures to be implemented where necessary.

Town / Location	Evidence of Pressure	Behaviour Issues	Study Findings	Recommended Approach
<b>Bourne</b>	Severe (90–109% occupancy)	Overflowing bays	Pressure increasing vs 2023	<b>YES</b> – strong case: introduce time limits, potential charging, enforcement
<b>Market Deeping</b>	Localised (Square/Halfleet)	Some out-of-bay parking	Overall decline since 2023	<b>YES</b> – limited controls: time limits, marking, enforcement at hotspots.
<b>Billingborough</b>	None (58–69%)	None reported	Under-utilised, unmanaged	<b>NO</b> – not justified

2.39 From the study report findings it is evident the uncontrolled nature of parking in these towns is starting to create issue for provision within the towns of Bourne and Market Deeping particularly.

2.40 The findings support the implementation of controlled parking to Bourne particularly for the following reasons:

- There is consistent over-capacity throughout the day.
- Car parks are used by long-stay parkers occupying valuable shopper spaces.
- Overflow outside bays is commonplace.
- Conditions will worsen as the town grows.

2.41 This was supported in part for Market Deeping, particularly in high use sites to maintain order of use and support regular turnover of bays.

- 2.42 It is proposed that further reviews are undertaken at Bourne and Market Deeping in order to manage the spaces and limit parking periods to support turnover of spaces. This would include the introduction of regular visible enforcement of parking to ensure proper use of space provision.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. The Committee is to consider the following:
- The findings of the Car Parking Study
  - Improvements to parking charges to stimulate best use of the available capacity
  - To establish a criteria for Disabled Parking; and
  - Consider the case for introducing controlled parking arrangements in Bourne, Deepings and Billingborough.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Taking no action is also an option. However, due to the ongoing parking pressures/issues throughout the car parks across the district, this is not recommended.

### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 Making greater use of the available capacity means we would better serve the needs of local residents and businesses.
- 5.2 The current disabled parking policy is not consistent with an ambition to ensure that where parking capacity is limited an equitable offer is established.
- 5.3 Implementation of controlled parking measures in Bourne and Market Deeping is recommended to limit parking periods, support turnover of spaces and ensure regular visible enforcement of parking to ensure proper use of space provision

### **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Cabinet Report – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024:  
[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 24th September, 2024, 10.00 am | South Kesteven District Council](#)

### **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Car Parking Update 2025

- 7.2 Appendix B – Season Ticket Usage
- 7.3 Appendix C – Season Ticket Criteria