

## **Car Parking**

Striking right to the heart of the issue of car parking is the question of roles and responsibilities in local government. This is a topic where the authorities have to work hand in hand to make a comprehensive strategy for a town. That is why Stamford Vision has been attempting to get all the relevant parties around a table to try and establish what are the likely issues which will affect car parking in the future and to put down a marker to say what the community of Stamford wants. The issues affecting car parking were identified in the original Vision 2015 document and subsequent consultation at the transportation exhibition in 2002 sought to establish some common future direction. The debate has been raised to an even higher priority by the proposals for Red Lion Square and Sheep Market.

### **Who is responsible for car parking?**

- Lincolnshire County Council (LCC): The Highways Department have a responsibility for all on-street car parking as well restrictions as well yellow lines and waiting limits. What makes LCC's role so important in Stamford is the fact that there are so many on-street car parking spaces, particularly in Broad Street and the Western end of Bath Row. The central area, north of the river, contains 914 free (time limited and unrestricted) spaces.
- Lincolnshire Police Authority: The police are responsible for enforcing the traffic regulations and the traffic warden is their officer who deals with this.
- South Kesteven District Council (SKDC): They operate all the car parks where charges are made in the town, a total of 764 spaces. The enforcement of the regulations in these car parks is the responsibility of the SKDC parking attendants. What makes SKDC's role so important in Stamford is that there are no shops which provide parking in any significant amount - in other places, such as Grantham and Peterborough, private operators often make up the majority provision of charged car parking. Somerfield and Morrison both have significant parking, but they are psychologically too far from the central area to be frequently used by those who want to visit the town centre.

### **What is central government's stance on parking?**

In London they have passed legislation to force local boroughs to take overall control of car parking, so instead of having a two tier system with different authorities enforcing the regulations there is only one. There is pressure

from central government for this scheme (called 'decriminalisation') to be adopted across the whole of England, and many authorities have done so or are thinking about it. In Lincolnshire the county would have to agree to this first and then each district would take responsibility for their area.

### **What are the issues for Stamford?**

- Free parking tends to be closer into the centre than the pay and display car parks.
- On the busiest day, Friday, the market takes up 122 free spaces.
- There is a perception that the short stay car parking spaces are not seeing as much turnover of occupancy as would be the case if the cars only stayed for their allotted time.
- The large increase in car parking charges by SKDC two years ago swept away the differentials which encouraged those who work in the town to park all day in the long stay car parks. Now areas which were traditionally outside the central area, such as Church Street, get congested by all day parking.
- The yellow line regime is not up-to-date.
- Bath Row West is an anomaly as it allows all day parking, at no cost, close to the town centre.
- Future development will increase the need for car parking and may present a threat to current parking provision.

### **What does Stamford Vision want to see?**

- No reduction in car parking provision and the identification of extra car parking for the future.
- A comprehensive regime which allows for greater through put of spaces.
- An adjustment of the charging regime in the pay and display car parks to encourage workers to park in the long stay car parks.
- The identification of short, medium and long term initiatives to be pursued which balance the competing needs of workers, businesses, residents and visitors.
- A strategy for disabled car parking.
- A strategy for coaches.

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