

Skegness Car Park Survey July 2011



Planning and Built Environment Department

local.plan@e-lindsey.gov.uk

Introduction

The Policy and Conservation Department have historically carried out surveys of car parking provision in Skegness town centre biennially however the last survey took place in August 2004. The 2004 survey concluded that parking provisions overall, though reduced was sufficient and adequate. The reason for undertaking this survey is:

- To give a better understanding of shoppers parking patterns;
- To assist in the determination of planning applications within the town centre;
- To see if there are enough car parking spaces to deal comfortably with demand;
- To provide information to help with the review of town centre policies and land use proposals for emerging planning policy;
- To provide relevant data for the Skegness Foreshore Master Plan.

The surveys initially included private parking spaces, public parking spaces, on street permit parking and general on street parking. For the purpose of more accurate analysis of the behaviour of shoppers parking habits, private and permit parking provision have been excluded from the analysis of the results.

Past surveys have excluded seafront parking from analysis in order to reflect visitors to the town centre rather than visitors to the beach and sea front. 2011 however represent the first year when analysis of the foreshore parking facilities has been carried out in order to help inform the Skegness Foreshore Master Plan. This decision has meant the inclusion of six extra car parks which have never been surveyed before. The new additions to the survey are those of; the Festival car park, Princes Parade car park, North End car park, Pierside North, Scarborough Esplanade and the Embassy Swimming pool car park which collectively have a capacity of over 2490 spaces.

Prior to the counts, a preliminary study was undertaken to check the capacities of all types of parking provision (on street parking capacities were estimated based upon allowing for a medium-sized car, leaving room to get out the space). Provision for disabled, parent & child, motorcycle and cycle spaces has also been included within these figures.

As in previous years, the survey was carried out over 2 days – Thursday August 18th represented a standard weekday and Saturday August 20th a peak shopping day. Unlike Louth, Skegness does not have a defined market day when you would expect a higher than average number of shoppers. Both surveys were carried out within the school holiday season, the period of optimum demand for parking spaces in the tourist resort of Skegness.

Surveys were carried out every hour between the hours of 9.30am and the final survey beginning at 3.30pm. The town centre was split into 2 separate routes with a further single route covering the foreshore area.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Amount of car parking spaces available

<u>Type of Car Parking</u>	<u>Overall Capacity</u>	<u>% Capacity of Overall Total</u>
Public Car Parking	3939	89%
On Street Parking	485	11%
Total	4424	100%

Since the 2004 survey a number of additional car parking facilities have been assessed along the foreshore area. The addition of the six large foreshore car parks with a total capacity of 2490 spaces has had a noticeable impact on the number of public spaces covered in this survey. During the 2004 survey there were a recognised 1241 public spaces within the town however this year (with the removal of the foreshore car parks) there is a notable increase in provision, with 1449 spaces recorded. The increase of 208 spaces since the 2004 survey may partly be as a result of the re-laying of parking bays in some public car parks but also the inclusion of the Tesco car park which was under construction during the 2004 survey.

The table below shows the break down of provision when the foreshore capacities as looked at independently from those of town centre public and on-street provision.

<u>Type of Car Parking</u>	<u>Overall Capacity</u>	<u>% Capacity of town centre</u>	<u>% Capacity of Overall Total</u>
Public Car Parking	1449	75%	33%
On Street Parking	485	25%	11%
Town centre total	1934	100%	
Foreshore	2490		56%
Overall total	4424	100%	100%

Thursday 18th August 2011

The weather on the day of the survey was generally overcast early on with persistent rain from 1pm. Being a none market town there were no events on the Thursday of the survey which impacted upon usage of the car parks. Therefore Thursday can be regarded as essentially a typical weekday during the school holiday period.

On Street Parking

During the Thursday survey of on street parking facilities the average use throughout the day was recorded at 85% compared to 90% in 2004, 93% in 2001 and 86% in both 1999 and 1997. The peak period of use was at 11:30am when 422 cars were recorded as being parked in on street locations, occupying 87% of the available spaces, leaving a total of 63 spaces available across the survey area. The lowest level of on street parking used throughout the day was 78% of capacity during the 3:30pm survey. Between the period of 9:30am and 3:30pm use did not fall below 83%. The problem of such high levels of use throughout the day is particularly evident when locations are looked at individually as these show evidence of parking in restricted areas. For example, Briar Way was recorded as being 117% full during the 13:30 and 14:30pm surveys. These peaks may not necessarily be as a result of 'illegal' parking as it may be due to the presence of disabled badge holders who as long as they do not obstruct traffic movements or present a danger to other road users and pedestrians are entitled to park on double yellow lines. Whilst disabled badge holders are permitted to park in these restricted areas they can undoubtedly be seen in instances to add to the overall congestion witnessed in some areas of the town centre. Of the individual locations, on 8 occasions on route A, 13 on route B and 16 on route C locations exceeded 90% of the available capacity with 8 occasions where capacity in use was over 100% highlighting possible illegal parking or disabled badge use.

Public Car Parking (excluding the Foreshore)

The overall use of the public car parks situated in the town centre was much reduced compared to previous surveys with a total of 63% of spaces being recorded as in use. During the 2004 survey a total of 81% of spaces were in use, 74% in 2001, 64% in 1999 and 75% in 1997. The peak period of use was at 12:30pm when 74% of spaces were in use with 380 spaces remaining available. As in previous years the Iceland car park had a notably low level of use with an average of just 34% over the entire day. The lower than normal levels of use of public car parks in the town centre recorded this year may be as a direct result of the poor weather witnessed during the survey or as a result of the increased number of spaces available to shoppers with the addition of the Tesco car park to this years survey.

Foreshore Car Parking

Scarborough Esplanade is the only foreshore car park which was recorded as nearing capacity. At 14:30 it was recorded as having 93% of its spaces in use before reducing to 83% by the 15:30 survey. Scarborough Esplanade was similarly the only foreshore car park to have averaged over 50% across the day with 65% of available capacity in use. Princess Parade conversely averaged only 1% across the day with at its peak 8 cars being recorded in the car park which has a capacity of 300 spaces. The low levels of use witnessed in the foreshore car parks may be as a direct result of there proximity towards the sea front an area which is

recognised as more of a tourist area than one used for shoppers. Car parks such as North End are simply located too far out from the defined shopping areas for many and therefore are used primarily by holiday makers and visitors to the area during the weekend period.

Disabled and Parent and Child Bays

Disabled bays were used regularly throughout the day. Morrison's and Tesco's bays were at times full to capacity. Similarly the disabled bays at the Arcadia, Hildreds, Scarborough Esplanade and Lidl car parks all witnessed high levels of use with at times only a small number of spaces remaining available.

Similar was true for the parent and child bays available in the Tesco, Lidl and Morrison's car parks.

Motorbikes and Cycles

The only car park with dedicated provision for the parking of motorcycles was that of the Festival car park along the foreshore. Across the Thursday study period a total of 25 motorcycles were recorded with the majority of those being in the Festival car park.

Cycles were only recorded in one location during the course of the Thursday survey and this was at the Morrison where a total of 16 across the day were recorded.

Other Observations

During the survey, employees of East Lindsey District Council were prevented from accessing the Cricket Ground car park to record its usage. The car park is estimated to have 160 spaces available for parking and is a popular choice being close to the town centre and competitively priced. During the day no results were recorded for the car park and have therefore not been included in the overall results. Officers concluded that no attempt would be made to count spaces during the following survey on Saturday 20th.

Buses were often seen parking in the Coach park between Tesco and Lidl however these were not recorded.

Saturday 20th August 2011

The weather on Saturday was warm for most of the morning and afternoon. At 2pm it became overcast but remained at a comfortable temperature for the remainder of the day.

Due to the staff in charge of the cricket ground car park refusing entry to Officers during the Thursday survey, it was decided that no attempt would be made to count cars on the site.

On Street Parking

This year has witnessed an overall reduction in the number of spaces used throughout the day with an average of 83% of spaces being utilized, compared with 91% in 2004. The periods of highest usage of on-street parking were 12:30 and 14:30, where 89% of all spaces were in use. In common with the 2004 survey 'illegal' or disabled parking on double yellow lines was prevalent throughout the day which goes some way to explaining the high levels of usage in some areas. Rutland Road, Ida Road (East), Briar Way, Lumley Avenue (South) and Algitha Road West were all recorded at over 90% of available capacity.

Public Car Parking (Not Including the Foreshore)

The average overall usage of public car parking spaces on the Saturday was 58%, which is a reduction from the 78% recorded during the 2004 survey. The peak period of use was at 13:30 where 74% of the available capacity was in use, with 377 spaces remaining vacant. As per the weekday survey, Iceland witnessed low levels of use with an overall average of just 27%. No public car parks recorded an average use of over 90% across the entire day however on 8 occasions capacity at individual locations exceeded 90% with South Parade during the 13:30 survey reaching 132%.

Foreshore Car Parking

Scarborough Esplanade once more witnessed the highest level of use and was recorded as having 86% of its spaces in use at 13:30 and 14:30. Whilst peak numbers of users was down on those recorded during the Thursday survey overall average usage at Scarborough Esplanade marginally increased from 65% to 69%. Princess Parade similarly witnessed an increase in average use from 1% as recorded on the Thursday to 9% on the Saturday.

As might be expected, the increase in day trippers meant car parks on the foreshore were more widely used on the Saturday compared to the Thursday. Whilst average use was higher on the Saturday the average usage still remained well below 50% at 32% of available capacity. A total of 10% more spaces were occupied along the foreshore during the Saturday than had been on the Thursday.

Disabled and Parent and Child Bays

Disabled bays were used regularly throughout the day as was the case during the Thursday study. Provision at Tesco and Morrison's were especially popular and at times recorded as at capacity. Similarly the disabled bays at the Arcadia, Hildreds, Scarborough Esplanade and Lidl car parks all witnessed high levels of use with limited availability remaining.

Similar was true for the parent and child bays available in the Tesco, Lidl and Morrison's car parks.

Motorbikes and Cycles

The number of motorcycles recorded during the Saturday survey was greatly increased from the level seen during the Thursday. Across the day a total of 199 were recorded with 53 bikes recorded during the 13:30 survey in the Festival car park.

Morrison's recorded the highest number of cycles with 11 being recorded at 12:30.

Other Observations

No results were taken from the Cricket Ground car park due to an issue of gaining access previously. It was also observed that there was significant use of blue badges along South Parade. South Parade also was noted to have a number of cars parking on double yellow lines outside the many bed and breakfast facilities in order to unload. This practice can lead to increased issues of congestion as it effectively reduces traffic movements to a single lane.

Conclusion

One very notable outcome from the survey is the fact that both survey days in Skegness produced very similar levels of use when looking at public car parking (average usage of 63% on Thursday and 58% on the Saturday) and on street parking in the town centre (average usage 85% on Thursday and 83% on the Saturday). These are the locations most widely regarded as being used by greater numbers of shoppers than visitors. In sharp contrast the level of use of the foreshore car parks varied dramatically between the two days – 22% on the Thursday and 32% on the Saturday, indicating the increased volume of visitors to the town over the weekend period. Whilst there is a clear increase in the level of use of parking facilities along the foreshore a large amounts of capacity remains available even during peak periods of usage.

Given the very small amount of variation across the two survey days with regards to on street and town centre public car park use, two assumptions can be made –

- The first assumption is that during the summer season the level of visits to the town centre is evenly spread throughout the week with there being no real peak period.
- The second assumption, is that due to the scale and nature of tourism in Skegness, Saturday could be considered 'change over day', whereby some visitors leave the areas whilst other arrive. This process would to a certain extent account for the lack of a notable peak in demand for town centre parking.

The Hildreds, Tesco, Lidl, Morrison's and Iceland car parks cater for shoppers parking with only the Hildreds offering a pay and display service available to all. Whilst there is considerable variation in terms of use between the individual car parks, usage across the two survey days in each location remained fairly static as shown in the table below, with the only real variation of note occurring at Morrison's.

Overall average usage (%) of Shopper Car parks

<u>Location</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
Hildreds	70%	67%
Tesco	49%	48%
Lidl	66%	49%
Morrison's	88%	62%
Iceland	34%	27%

In summary, whilst it is accepted pressure is experienced at peak periods during the busiest times throughout the year across the town centre, the provision of public and on street parking is reasonable and sufficient to deal with an increase in visitors to the town. Similarly whilst variations in use were noted across the foreshore car parks overall provision was more than ample to deal with current and future need in Skegness.

Recommendations for Future Surveys

It is suggested that Scarborough Avenue is considered an on street location as cars can be seen located there throughout the day. It is also recommended that Lumley Road be split into Lumley Road (East) and Lumley Road (West) in order for all vehicles located to be counted.

Due to the difficulties faced by employees in accessing the Cricket Ground and its importance in terms of provision, before any future surveys the owner/operator needs to be contacted if possible to arrange access.

Note: If you require any of the collected data with which informed this document please contact the Planning Policy team via email or phone on:

Email: local.plan@e-lindsey.gov.uk

Phone: 01507 601111