

STAMFORD CHAMBER of TRADE and COMMERCE

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NOTES ON STAMFORD HIGHWAY ISSUES

JUDICIAL REVIEW AGAINST THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT and SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. It seems that Stamford's highways issues are once more up for debate. A lot of Water has passed under Stamford Town Bridge since our Chamber became involved with these issues in 1997. Some progress towards solving our Town's traffic problems has been made as a result of our efforts.

2. Stamford town is not now a major through-route for long distance traffic. London to Edinburgh traffic takes the A1 by-pass. The A1 Carpenters Lodge Improvement will start in 2008. Birmingham to Norwich traffic takes to the A47. The forthcoming upgrade to the A1073 Spalding to Eye road will further diminish the chance of stray vehicles using Stamford as a route to Spalding.

3. Some vehicles of all sorts avoid Stamford because of the delays within Stamford, but also because of delays at Tallington railway level crossing. These delays inconvenience local commuters, but benefit our Town. Our Chamber agrees that Tallington should have its bridge over the railway, but not until Stamford's traffic problems are resolved.

4. Traffic surveys have shown that traffic in our Town is not flowing across one single main route, but is widely dispersed amongst the 8 major roads meeting in our Town Centre. This traffic is nearly all local traffic. In technical language, the Stamford morning peak data can be set out:-

a. Internal to Internal	38%		
b. Internal to External	26%		of all this Stamford traffic
c. External to Internal	28%		some 8% is HGVs, 92% is not HGV.
d. External to External	8%		

5. In 1995, the South Kesteven District Council Local Plan became the planning bible For Stamford. Various policies from SKDC have kept this Local Plan in force, or said it would be kept in force, pending the new Local Development Framework arriving in the next few years. The Ryhall Road Link Protection Corridor is part of the 1995 Local Plan.

6. The Ryhall Road Link will run behind the old Blackstone site, it links the A16 Uffington Road with the Ryhall Road to between Borderville Farm and the existing edge of Town. The route generally follow that of the old Essendine to Stamford railway line whose railway bridge under the A16 can still be see just East of Morrison's Roundabout.

7. This came about because the Highway Authority, Lincolnshire County Council, suggested The Protection Corridor with the full support of SKDC at some time before 1993. Lincolnshire does highways tasks, SKDC does most planning tasks, and the two are supposed to work together in harmony.

8. Therefore it has been assumed since 1995 that the Ryhall Road Link will be built and that it will be paid for with private money (not your taxes) as the adjoining lands are developed. Until recently, the Ryhall Road Link was not a controversial issue. On its own, it will greatly relieve traffic on the Hospital Mini-roundabout.

9. Meanwhile in about 2002 a 'Lorry Ban' was introduced, and was seen to fail, as Predicted by our Chamber (Mercury September 2002). We had said that the Ban would effect only 7% of lorries then using Stamford. As predicted, the 'Lorry Ban' seems to allow 93% of lorries into our Town, because they have legitimate business locally. Meanwhile 92% of Stamford's traffic is not lorries.

10. In 2004 our Chamber appointed professional highway consultants JMP Consulting to look into ways to solve Stamford's traffic problems. In April 2005, our Chamber's consultants proposed a Stamford Eastern Relief Road with a 2nd Town Bridge, with later a possible Northern Relief Road, to complete a future Ring Road (Mercury March/April 2005).

11. JMP predicted that in the medium term (2014) peak period traffic conditions in the historic core and Conservation Area without an Eastern Relief Road would be approaching gridlock.

12. In March 2006 Stamford Bypass/Relief Road became one of only 7 schemes on which Lincolnshire Highways will focus their feasibility work over the next 4 years. 17 other Lincolnshire schemes will await their turn in the queue, to be reconsidered 4 years hence (Mercury April 2006). Our Chamber was heavily involved in this success for Stamford.

13. All this progress, hard won since 1997, encouraged our Chamber to think that sensible, realistic and achievable solutions to our Town's traffic problems are in sight.

14. This remained true until October 2006, when our Stamford Town Council's formal position on such issues changed from 'leave it to the experts at Lincolnshire County Council Highways Department'. On 24th October 2006 the Town Council sabotaged the Ryhall Road Link, by supporting the Wm Morrison Supermarkets planning application for their further and un-needed out-of-town retail development.

15. This year, our Chamber has recently discovered information of a shocking nature.

16. SKDC's paid staff at Grantham seem to have given wrong information to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's civil servants. SKDC seem to have said that in respect of the SKDC's 1995 Local Plan, the Protection Corridor set up to prevent development on the route of the Ryhall Road Link was no longer needed.

17. No Protection Corridor means no Ryhall Road Link.

18. It seems that SKDC's paid staff acted without consulting their own elected members, County Highways, statutory consultees, normal consultees, or the public. Furthermore, the paid staff seem to have acted contrary to their council's approved policies.

19. These recent actions by Stamford Town Council and particularly by SKDC and the Secretary of State prejudice the future relief of traffic from Stamford's town centre, its historic core and its Conservation Area.

20. It is worth reminding ourselves in the 40th anniversary year of the designation of the first Conservation Area in the country, that Stamford beat Chichester, King's Lynn, York and Bath to achieve this. Our Conservation Area helps to protect 500 listed buildings, and the vitality, viability and prosperity of our Town's historic centre. Without the relief of traffic via the Ryhall Road Link, a possible Eastern Relief Road and a future Ring Road, all this is put at risk as gridlock approaches.

21. Decisions by SKDC's Development Control Committee on 13th November 2007 appear to suggest that Morrison's planning application may be approved.

22. Consequently, our Chamber's Committee have authorised our Chamber's lawyers to have papers served jointly with F H Gilman & Co on the Secretary of State and on SKDC for a Judicial Review of their actions, in the High Court of Justice.

23. The objective is to seek the quashing of the decision to delete the Ryhall Road Link Protection Corridor from the Local Plan, and the restoration of the effect of the Protection Corridor.

29.11.2007

