

**Report by Cllr Robert Chambers, Leader of the Council, on
Office Accommodation for Uttlesford District Council,
Meeting at Saffron Walden on Monday June 17th 2002**

SUMMARY

This report is on whether to put proposals forward for Uttlesford District Council to make a final decision to move the Planning Administration staff from Great Dunmow to Saffron Walden and enhance the CIC facility at Great Dunmow.

BACKGROUND

Over the last twelve months there has been a Best Value review on Corporate Services throughout UDC.

One of the issues discussed has been the possible move of the Planning Administration staff from Great Dunmow to Saffron Walden to centralise services for the efficiency of the service. Having carried out the initial study through officer investigations and member workshops, the Council confirmed the following recommendations on February 12th 2002.

1. the principle of relocating Planning staff at Saffron Walden be agreed,
2. following further consultation a detailed action plan be prepared to cover such issues as car parking and relocation arrangements within Saffron Walden offices
3. the market for leasing/selling potentially surplus accommodation be explored, and
4. improved service delivery through website development, the provision of hot desk sites and the Community Information Centre be progressed

The Council approved a sum of £145,640 for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

PRESENT INFORMATION

The officers have now carried out further detailed consultation with the staff on concerns such as car parking and relevant accommodation. That information is before members and is not included in this report. It needs to be said that the issues concerning Members are primarily put forward in paragraphs 6, 8 and 12 of the officers' report.

Extensive consultation has taken place and a decision now by the whole Council is appropriate to maximise the opportunities that have arisen out of the Best Value review.

RECOMMENDED THAT

1. Following the report by officers, the centralisation of administration at Saffron Walden is implemented
2. The approved Capital Programme budget be increased by £15,000 for extra parking facilities at the Stewards House location.
3. Enhancing services at the CIC at Great Dunmow is progressed as quickly as possible
4. The leasing of surplus accommodation at the Great Dunmow offices be vigorously pursued
5. Further progress reports are submitted to the appropriate committee as necessary