

**DECRIMINALISATION TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 15 JULY 2003 at 9.30 am**

Present:- Councillors M A Hibbs, R Lemon and Mrs A M Wattebot (UDC Members), Nicola Foster, Dave Howard (ECC), Sarah McLagan, Tricia Halford, Alex Stewart, Sara Chapman and Sue Hayden (UDC Officers)

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Sell and Mrs J Cheetham.

**2 CURRENT SITUATION**

A report on Decriminalisation would need to be sent to E & T Committee no later than 1 September for its meeting on 9 September. Sarah confirmed that the final decision on whether the Council would adopt Decriminalisation would need to be made at full Council on 14 October.

Alex requested that if the Council decided to adopt Decriminalisation a Manager be employed as soon after the decision is taken to proceed as possible to ensure it was ready for implementation by October 2004.

Councillor Mrs Wattebot asked who's decision it would be whether Decriminalisation was managed seven days a week. Nicola explained that if Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) or Road Traffic Regulation Orders (RTRO) were in place seven days a week, then they should be implemented seven days a week. If the Council decided not to employ anyone to implement Sunday legislation then she suggested that the TROs or RTROs for Sundays be deleted.

**Action: Members will need to determine whether or not to operate for 6 or 7 days per week.**

**3 FINANCIAL MODEL OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The group discussed the Financial Model Implementation Plan, which had been provided by ECC. Nicola said that this was to be used as a starting point and was no way definitive.

The model looked at calculations over a 5-year period. Dave explained that UDC, after the first year, would not have a deficit, as this would be written off by ECC, except in the case of maladministration.

Nicola explained that the model only showed the costs of Decriminalisation and did not reflect any of the costs and income the Council already received from parking operations. She said that a meeting needed to be held urgently between Sara, Tricia, Alex, Dave and ECC financial dept to put together the accounts.

Alex raised the issue regarding parking attendants using mopeds round the district. He said that this could be a health and safety issue, particularly in the winter months. He said that it would not be necessary to allow for a vehicle per attendant to be purchased/leased. Tricia explained that at present the attendants used their own vehicles for which they claimed mileage. Tricia said that an increase would need to be built into the model for Parking Attendant's salaries, as they were currently quite low.

Councillor Hibbs commented that currently there was a problem with car parks around the district being at full capacity but that Planner appeared to consider that Uttlesford did not have a parking problem.

Dave said that most authorities that had adopted Decriminalisation were achieving the 67% levy in Penalty Charge Notices (PCN). Councillors agreed that the model produced for Uttlesford needed to reflect its uniqueness.

Cllr Hibbs said that a detailed picture of the financial implications was needed before Members could make an informed decision.

**Action: SC/AS/TH to meet with Norman Downie & ECC Finance to prepare comprehensive model for next meeting.**

#### 4 **DELEGATED POWERS OF ORDERS**

Sarah had spoken to Paul Hardy at the Highway's Authority who had suggested holding off making further Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and Road Traffic Regulation Orders (RTROs) from the date of consolidation until October 04 when Decriminalisation was implemented. Members agreed that this was a sensible idea.

Nicola said that Essex County Council (ECC) would have the ultimate say in the making of Orders. However, ECC could pass the delegated powers to UDC if they so wished. Nicola hoped that UDC and ECC would work in partnership, from the start of the process, when TRO needed to be made.

Dave explained that the Police would still be responsible for cars parked on zigzag lines and any traffic obstruction.

#### 5 **CONSULTATION**

Sarah asked Members for their views on the consultation letter she had put together to go to Town and Parish Councils. Councillor Hibbs asked that a responses date of 20 August be put on the letter to enable comments to be reported back to this Task Group. Those Councils not meeting until after this date could report back by 5 September, thereby enabling a verbal report for E & T Committee on 9 September.

Alex asked Members for their initial thoughts on whether the Council should adopt Decriminalisation. He said that it was difficult to draft the report for E & T without knowing how the Councillors felt on the subject. Councillor Lemon

said that he had first hand knowledge how Epping operated with Contractors taking on Decriminalisation, he considered that Uttlesford should not proceed in the same way. Councillor Hibbs agreed that whilst Members were concerned and unhappy they felt the alternative option of somebody else running Decriminalisation in Uttlesford was unacceptable. However, they could not make a decision until the full financial implications were known.

**Action: Members of the Task Group to make a recommendation to be included in the report once the financial implications were understood.**

6

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

21 August at 9.30, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden. ECC would also be invited to this meeting at 11.00 am.