

**DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT TASK GROUP held
at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.00 pm
on 26 NOVEMBER 2003**

Present: Councillor M A Hibbs – Chairman
Councillor R M Lemon

Officers in attendance:- T Halford, S McLagan, M T Purkiss and A Stewart.

DPE1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J F Cheetham, G Sell and A M Wattebot.

DPE2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 26 June and 15 July 2003 were approved as correct records subject to the substitution of the words “planning department” for the word “Planner” in the fifth paragraph of Minute 3 of the Minutes held on 15 July 2003.

DPE3 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Financial Model of Implementation

The Head of Community and Leisure said that she would discuss car parking issues further with the Planning Department and request that car parking capacity was taken into account when future large scale developments were determined.

(ii) Management of Decriminalisation

At the last meeting the Task Group had discussed whether decriminalisation should be managed for six or seven days per week. The Task Group considered this matter again and felt that it should not operate on Sundays. It was considered that this would help with making the area more attractive to visitors and tourists and it was recognised that if decriminalisation was managed seven days a week there would be staffing implications. Members also raised the question of the responsibility for policing temporary road closures for special events and officers undertook to seek clarification of this matter.

(iii) Business Plan

Officers confirmed that the preparation of the business plan was the responsibility of Essex County Council and once completed it would be submitted to the Department for Transport for approval.

DPE4 PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO IMPLEMENT DECRIMINALISATION

The Community and Development Manager circulated a chart illustrating the progress with the Implementation of the Special Parking Area Application. The draft agency agreement was currently being finalised by the Head of Legal Services and it was understood that, once completed, the County Council would agree to sign it. In relation to the levy it was confirmed that this Council would be looking for a 0% rate in the first year. However, it was noted that, whatever was agreed, the levy would be reviewed annually.

The Head of Community and Leisure reported that it was hoped to advertise the post of Parking Enforcement Manager in the next few weeks. She outlined the duties of this post and said that it would be responsible for the review of traffic regulation orders. Members suggested that any obvious changes to the traffic regulation orders should be made at the first stage. Officers also clarified that the appointment would be funded from the set up costs provided by Essex County Council.

- Action:**
- 1 Officers to circulate final copy of agreement to members of the Group for comment.
 - 2 Officers to proceed with appointment of Parking Enforcement Manager as soon as possible.

DPE5 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Following a request from a Councillor, Officers had investigated whether opportunities existed for sharing staff resources on decriminalisation with other authorities. Officers considered that it was important that Uttlesford had a dedicated manager to deal with the amount of work that would be required in this District and to give priority to the interests of this Council. Other authorities had also made it clear that sharing would not be a practical solution and could lead to a conflict of interest. In relation to the Parking Attendants it was considered that Uttlesford was a large District and if other areas were added to the workload it would mean Officers spending a disproportionate amount of time travelling rather than enforcing. It was also noted that a public/private model at Epping Forest District Council had been deemed to be unsuitable.

The Task Group endorsed the above comments.

DPE6 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Following the last meeting, Officers had written to all Town and Parish Councils advising them of the decriminalisation process and inviting comments. A number of responses had been received and concern had been expressed in a number of areas about fly parking in the villages near to Stansted Airport. Officers considered that some short term parking restrictions in areas such as Takeley and Lower Street, Stansted would deter people from parking for long periods. Requests for resident parking schemes could only be considered once the decriminalisation measures had been introduced.

A letter had also been received from Saffron Walden Town Council concerning the parking of cars on the nights prior to market days. The Town Council had suggested that a tow away service should be introduced and they had stated that they would be prepared to finance this. Officers understood that some provision could now be included in the agency agreement and, on the basis that there was no cost to this Council, it would be pursued.

Action: Town and Parish Councils be advised of the above.

DPE7

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT SCHEME

The Committee & Communications Manager reported that following a survey of residents and businesses using the town centre two main issues had been highlighted. These were parking for blue badge holders and loading/unloading times. It was therefore proposed to discuss the issues raised with representatives of District, Town and Parish Councils, Uttlesford Access Group and ECC Officers. The purpose of the meeting would be to consider means to enable greater and easier parking in the town centre by disabled drivers and to discuss the potential for more flexible use of the loading/unloading bays.

The matter had been considered at the last meeting of the Environment and Transport Committee and that Committee had asked the Task Group to appoint a Councillor to chair the meeting.

The Task Group considered that representatives from the Saffron Walden Initiative Group should also be invited to the meeting and that it should be held in the Town Hall at Saffron Walden.

Action: Environment and Transport Committee be advised that Councillor Hibbs should be nominated to chair this meeting.

DPE8

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that a meeting would be required in March 2004 and this would be arranged in consultation with the Chairman.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm.