

**Committee:** LICENSING COMMITTEE

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** March 15, 2006

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**Title:** TAXI RANKS AT SAFFRON WALDEN AND STANSTED

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### Summary

- 1 Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act local authorities have power to designate taxi ranks where Hackney carriages (but not private hire vehicles) may wait for fares. Within the district there are four such ranks at Audley End Station, Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted.
- 2 Members of the trade have requested that consideration be given to changing the arrangements for the ranks at Saffron Walden and Stansted. This report is to inform Members of the proposal and for Members to determine whether they wish to progress matters further.

### Background Papers

None.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	If members decide they wish to pursue the option of changing the arrangements for the taxi ranks at Saffron Walden and Stansted, it will be necessary to consult with the Highways Authority, the Police and the public by way of advertisement in a local newspaper. Members may wish to consult informally with the town and parish councils and area panels concerned before pursuing the statutory procedure.
Community Safety	None.

Equalities	The relocation of the taxi rank in Saffron Walden may have the effect of releasing car parking spaces close to the market for disabled parking.
Finance	The Council will incur expense in placing the statutory advertisements. This is likely to be in the region of £1,030 plus VAT (recoverable). It would not be possible to pass this expense on to the trade, as although the Council is entitled to recover the cost of issuing and administering licences, this is a one off expense so not recoverable.
Human Rights	None.
Legal Implications	As the proposal would be for relocating taxi ranks on public highways, the consent of the highways authority to the creation of the ranks would be required.
Ward-specific impacts	The proposal affects Saffron Walden and Stansted only.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

## Situation

1. The taxi rank in Saffron Walden is situated at Market Street. It is designed to take two cars. Essex County Council have approached the Council to ascertain its views on a proposed exchange of one of the two stands on the rank with a disabled parking space currently situated in King Street. The reason for this request is that the disabled parking space cannot be accessed when the market is open on market days.
2. The proposal was discussed with members of the trade at an officers/operators liaison meeting on 21 February 2006. The proposal did not meet with approval because if it were adopted, it would reduce the number of available stands in Saffron Walden to 1 when the market was operational as hackney carriages would not be able to access the proposed rank which is currently the disabled parking bay. However there was support from the trade to carry out a more radical review of the ranking arrangements in Saffron Walden.
3. The rank at Stansted is situated in Station Road close to the Railway Station in the centre of the village. It is close to local restaurants and other business

outlets. It also is designed for two vehicles. However, the space allowed is such that if other motor vehicles park at either end of the rank only one taxi can obtain access to it. It is not clearly visible either to people leaving the station or people in the vicinity. Members of the trade support a relocation of this rank.

4. With regard to Saffron Walden, the trade propose that the existing rank should be discontinued and that there should be a new rank in the High Street, near the Temeraire public house on an area currently designated for car parking for up to 4 Hackney carriages. It is the view of the trade that this rank will be more visible and its location better known. (At the liaison meeting it was interesting to learn that at least one private hire vehicle driver did not know where the rank in Saffron Walden was). Members of the trade consider that a rank in this position would better serve residents of the town.
5. With regard to Stansted, it is proposed that the rank should be moved closer to the junction of Chapel Hill but still remaining in Station Road. This would make the rank more visible both to persons arriving at the station and to others in the town and would therefore be a better service to people in the town. Further, if the rank were so relocated the issue of the rank being 'boxed in' so as to prevent more than one taxi using the same, would be alleviated.