

SAFFRON WALDEN MARKET SQUARE PROPOSALS

John Ready and Peter Riding from the Saffron Walden Initiative explained that the initiative was a non-political non profit making organisation. Their aim was to enhance accessibility and appearance of the Town Centre. Money for a study was given by Uttlesford Futures in 2004.

John Ready gave a presentation explaining that a desktop study into traffic management within historic towns had been undertaken with visits to market towns. The Historic Core Zone Principles would create a Restricted Zone with clearly identified entry points that would reduce the speed of traffic. This would provide safer areas and create opportunities for open air activities as well as an established coordinated design discipline for surfaces, signage and street furniture based on high quality materials and workmanship.

Within the town improvements could be made in the following ways:

- Widening footways, narrowing roads
- Defining loading and parking bays
- Courtesy crossing and “pinch-points”
- Rationalising road and parking signage
- Bollards
- Formal public spaces
- Sitting areas and trees

The total estimated costing for this market square proposal would be £59,125. Consultation and public participation had been undertaken and priorities for early action were identifies funding sources and the incorporation of Core Zone principles into George Street with Section 106 funding.

The scheme would enhance the pedestrian environment whilst maintaining essential servicing and emergency access. The market square would provide 16 short-term car spaces, up to 4 extra disabled parking bays and one additional standard loading bay. The scheme could be implemented for an experimental period of 18 months and would hold flexibility to be extended if successful.

Councillor Flack asked if the traffic regulations order was included in the £59,000. John Ready said the study had come out of this fund. Highways would be responsible to implement the proposed plans, if the final scheme was agreed by the Saffron Walden Town Centre Management Group and the Town Council.

Councillor Thawley brought to the table a recommendation which Members discussed. They viewed it important that a management scheme consultation was led by multiple parties and that the scheme was evaluated after implementation. The Executive Manager (Development Services) said he would look into funding from Section 106 agreements for planning applications.

RESOLVED that

1. External funding is found by officers of UDC.
2. ECC agreed to implement the scheme if funding is found.
3. A management scheme is devised after consultation led by Saffron Walden Town Centre Working Group with the Town Council, County Council, Saffron Walden Initiative, local traders and other local community groups. The details of this and a timetable for implementation were to be agreed by the District Council Members of the Saffron Walden Town Working Group on advice of the officers of Town, District and County Councils.
4. The scheme be evaluated 18 months after final implementation and the findings and any recommendations devised by the Group after due consultation be brought back to the Environment Committee for decision.