

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES
EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES
OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2006**

49. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

Progress Reports

(f) Town Centres and Car Parks Task and Finish Panel

The Panel, at its last meeting had considered a draft Cabinet report on proposals for free car parking in council owned car parks.

The Panel had held a broad discussion on the issue of free parking on Saturdays and the rationale behind it. There had been a general consensus in favour of the principle and the Panel members understood the financial effects of any such decision.

The Panel supported the proposals on the basis that they could enhance the viability of our Town Centres. The Panel had questioned however, how the regime would be enforced to ensure that free spaces were for local rather than commuting purposes. The Panel had sought further information on this aspect.

Reference had been made to a retail scheme used in Waltham Forest to facilitate their free parking arrangements. It had been suggested that consultation could take place with that Authority to hear about their issues and solutions.

The Panel had accepted the recommendations as set out on the proposed Cabinet report but following discussions on ways in which the funding might be achieved wished to see an amendment to the third recommendation regarding the possible use of 'Local Authority Business Growth Incentive' grant (LABGI) to fund the one-off costs of implementation of the proposals.

The Panel had also suggested that the arrangements should be subject to operational review on a regular basis in order to identify whether the aims were being achieved and if not how they could be improved. The Panel had recommended to Cabinet accordingly.