

NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ON-STREET PARKING

**26 June 2014 at 1.00pm
Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, Colchester**

Executive Members Present:-

Councillor Susan Barker (Uttlesford District Council)
Councillor Nick Barlow (Colchester Borough Council)
Councillor Robert Mitchell (Braintree District Council)
Councillor Nick Turner (Tendring District Council)
Councillor Gary Waller (Epping Forest District Council)

Apologies: - Councillor Rodney Bass (Essex County Council)

Also Present: -

Lou Belgrove (Parking Partnership)
Jason Butcher (Parking Partnership)
Richard Clifford (Colchester Borough Council)
Trevor Degville (Parking Partnership)
Steve Heath (Colchester Borough Council)
Joe McGill (Harlow District Council)
Hayley McGrath (Colchester Borough Council)
Nikki Neapen (Tendring District Council)
Samir Pandya (Braintree District Council)
Jo Parlett (Colchester Borough Council)
Andrew Taylor (Uttlesford District Council)
Richard Walker (Parking Partnership)
Leah Whitwell (Braintree District Council/Colchester Borough Council)
Matthew Young (Colchester Borough Council)

Apologies:- Qasim Durrani (Epping Forest District Council)

1. Election of Chairman

Councillor Mitchell was elected Chairman of the Joint Committee for On-Street Parking for the 2014-15 municipal year.

2. Election of Deputy Chairman

Councillor Barker was elected Deputy Chairman of the Joint Committee for On- Street Parking for the 2014-15 municipal year.

Councillor Mitchell welcomed Councillor Nick Barlow to the Joint Committee and paid tribute to the work of Councillor Hunt.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Barker, in respect of being a Member of Essex County Council, declared a non-pecuniary interest.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee for On Street Parking of 6 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor Turner sought an update on the position on local enforcement. He felt this would help relations with the police locally. Richard Walker reported that the Parking Partnership was still committed to looking at the issue but had not been able to progress this issue since the last meeting of the Joint Committee.

Councillor Mitchell reported that he had written to Councillor Bass regarding the difference in the funding of TRO work between NEPP and SEPP. Whilst the initial response had been sympathetic, he had then declined to alter the existing arrangements. Councillor Mitchell had sent a personal invite to Councillor Bass to attend this meeting, but he had sent his apologies.

5. Statement of Accounts

Steve Heath, Treasurer to the Joint Committee, presented the draft accounts for 2013-14 and invited the Joint Committee to approve the pre-audit accounts for 2013/14 so that the Annual Return could be submitted for audit.

Clarification was sought on the figure of £9778 for petty cash in Appendix B of the report and why this was not included in the figure given for "Total cash and short term investments" in the draft Accounting Statement. The Joint Committee considered that this was a significant sum and should be accounted for. It was confirmed this was not the balance of cash in parking machines. Steve Heath confirmed that the draft Statement of Accounts could be amended to take account of this change.

RESOLVED that the draft accounts for 2013/14 be approved subject to the inclusion of £9778 of petty cash in the figure for "Total cash and short term investments" in the draft Accounting Statement, and the amended Annual Return be submitted for audit by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2014.

6. Annual Review of Risk Management

Hayley McGrath, Colchester Borough Council, presented the Annual Review of Risk Management. The Risk Management Strategy was reviewed on an annual basis. The review for 2014/15 had not highlighted the need for any significant amendments. The Risk Register had last been reviewed by the Joint Committee in January 2014, and had been subject to a fundamental review since then. Following on from that review, a revised risk register was submitted to the Joint Committee highlighting the strategic risks. The review had not highlighted any increases in risk. The highest ranking strategic risks identified were the impact of potential future financial challenges and the rate of response to business needs and demands.

In discussion the Joint Committee identified the following further risks which it considered needed to be added to the register, given the potential financial impact they could have on the work of the Parking Partnership:-

- The introduction of further legislation impacting on the work of the Parking Partnership;

- The interpretation by the public of statements by the government on parking issues, such as the recent government statements on the use of CCTV enforcement.

In respect of the Park Safe car, the Joint Committee considered there was not a significant financial risk, as the Parking Partnership did not own the car. However, in view of the government position on the use of such vehicles there was a risk that Capita could decide to withdraw from the market and this should also be included in the risk register.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Risk Management Strategy for 2014/15 be endorsed.
- (b) The Strategic Risk Register be agreed subject to the inclusion of the following additional risks:-
 - The introduction of further legislation impacting on the work of the Parking Partnership.
 - The interpretation by the public of statements by the government on parking issues.
 - Withdrawal of Capita from the Park Safe Car market.

7. Annual Governance Statement

Hayley McGrath, Colchester Borough Council, presented the draft Annual Governance Statement for the NEPP. No significant governance issues had been raised during the year and governance arrangements for the Parking Partnership remained effective. It was explained that the internal audit had not been completed in time for its conclusions to be incorporated in this report. However, it would be reported at a later date and no significant issues had been identified in the audit. Arrangements would be put in place to ensure the sharing of audit reports with the client authorities in future. Of the two governance issues highlighted in the Governance Statement, the Parking Partnership Strategy was addressed by the report to this meeting of the Joint Committee and the reconciliations issue had been resolved.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement for the North Essex Parking Partnership be noted and approved.
- (b) The positive completion of Section 2 (the Governance declaration) of the Annual Return for 2013/14 be agreed.
- (c) The actions highlighted in the statement be agreed to ensure that the service continues to provide an appropriate and effective service.

8. North Essex Parking Partnership On-Street Financial Position at Year-End 2013/14

Matthew Young, Colchester Borough Council, presented the 2013/14 year end financial position for the NEPP.

The Joint Committee was pleased to note the significant surplus of £152,000. However, it

sought clarification on why the financial forecasting processes had not been able to predict such a significant surplus. Richard Walker, Parking Partnership, reported that some expenditure had fallen across the year end and the performance of Civil Enforcement Officers had become more efficient. The Partnership had been conservative in its forecasting, and a better forecasting tool had now been developed.

In line with the policy agreed by the Joint Committee in January 2014, £50,000 would be retained to offset any deficits in future years. It was proposed that a further £50,000 be retained in a ring-fenced account to support the on-street function. The remaining £52,000 would be used to fund hardware and training to help support the on-street function. The Joint Committee supported these proposals and in particular highlighted the importance of training for CEOs to ensure the quality of the Penalty Charge Notices issued.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The 2013/14 year end position and forecast position for the NEPP on street account, as attached to the report, be noted.
- (b) The recommendations for the surplus set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the report be agreed.

9. North Essex Parking Partnership Development Plan

Richard Walker, Parking Partnership, presented a draft Development Plan for the North Essex Parking Partnership. The Development Plan was designed to cover the Partnership's next five years of operation. It set out the strategic direction for the Partnership and the main potential income streams. In particular, the Joint Committee was invited to consider the proposed permit prices set out in Appendix A of the Development Plan. The inclusion of such proposals within the Plan would promote transparency about the future plans of the Partnership.

In discussion the following points were made by the Joint Committee:-

- The table at page 17 of the draft report should be amended to clarify why figures for Harlow were not included;
- Little information was included about the impact of blue badges and on the other organisations that the Partnership undertook enforcement for. In response it was explained that the Plan was aimed at a more strategic level. However, the Partnership was working with Norfolk City Council who had empowered their Civil Enforcement Officers to inspect and, where appropriate, seize blue badges. The Joint Committee considered that the Partnership should develop a policy on blue badges and requested that a report should be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
- There was an inconsistency in the numbers of Civil Enforcement Officers between pages 11 and 14 of the draft Plan.
- The information about the respective populations of the SEPP and NEPP at page 14 should be checked.

The Joint Committee indicated that it was content that the proposals on permit prices in Appendix A be included in the Development Plan.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The draft Development Plan be approved subject to amendments to take account of the points raised by the Joint Committee as reported above.
- (b) A report on blue badges be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

10. North Essex Parking Partnership Operational Report

Lou Belgrove, Parking Partnership, introduced the Operational Report to members.

In respect of the performance figures, it was noted that was considerable variance from the figures for the previous year. For instance there had been a considerable drop in the numbers of PCNs issued in Braintree, but a large increase in Harlow. This could have been as a result of changing shift patterns and also the introduction of CEOs into new residential areas in Harlow. The progress in using e-mail for correspondence for informal challenges to PCNs was noted. A member of the Committee reported that he had used the system and it had worked well. Details of savings as a result of using e-mail for such correspondence should be reported to the Joint Committee in due course. MiPermit was in the process of being rolled out in Braintree and the pattern of use was very similar to that seen in Colchester.

RESOLVED that the North Essex Parking Partnership Operational Report be noted

11. Traffic Regulation Order Update

Trevor Degville, Parking Partnership, introduced the report and provided an update on the progress of the schemes that the Partnership had been working on in 2014. He explained that the consultation on the proposals in Harlow had now been completed and the Colchester review was now nearing completion.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12. Free of Charge Permits

Lou Belgrove, Parking Partnership, introduced a report addressing issues on free of charge permits issued by the Partnership.

The Joint Committee noted that the majority of such permits were issued to Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Borough Home and Essex County Council. It was proposed that an annual recharge would be applied within Colchester Borough Council in respect of their permits and agreement had been reached with Colchester Borough Homes for an annual administration charge of £20 per permit. Essex County Council would now administer their own permits for their staff. Some concern was expressed that the use of such permits could lead to a loss of income for the Partnership, but it was confirmed that they were largely issued to users who would be exempt from parking restrictions. By introducing charges for such permits, income to the Partnership would be increased,

It was proposed that such permits be called “concessionary parking permits” in future.

RESOLVED that an administration charge of £20 be paid to the North Essex Parking Partnership by invoice or recharge on an annual basis for each concessionary parking permit issued to partners.

13. Wivenhoe Old Ferry Development

Trevor Degville, Parking Partnership, introduced a report on the latest position on the Wivenhoe Old Ferry Development.

In view of the clarification provided by Essex County Council on advertising and funding, the Joint Committee indicated it was content to support the scheme and that it should be progressed as part of the Partnership's works programme. The Joint Committee suggested that it would be prudent to obtain the funding from Essex County Council in advance of work commencing.

RESOLVED that the introduction of the Traffic Regulation Order in the Wivenhoe Old Ferry Development be progressed as part of the NEPP work programme.

14 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.