

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 22 November 2016

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Title: **North Essex Parking Partnership –
Extension of the Joint Committee
Agreement**

Author: **Victoria Taylor Business Improvement and
Performance Officer, 01799510569** Item for discussion

Summary

1. At the meeting on 26 September the committee considered information presented to them by NEPP and by the Director of Public Services, which helped assist them to recommend that the Cabinet agree in principle to the four year extension to the joint agreement.

The committee also felt that there should be some improvements to the quality of service provided and decided that the Chairman Cllr Dean and Cllr Asker should liaise with officers to assess this further. This report contains their views.

Recommendations

2. That the Scrutiny Committee review the report and the committee's views will be communicated to Cllr Susan Barker as the council's representative on NEPP and the Council's nominated lead officer Gordon Glenday, Assistant Director Planning.

Financial Implications

3. None directly relating to this report.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

NEPP Extension Development Plan presentation and accompanying committee report.

Impact

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| Communication/Consultation | This report requires members to consider what potential improvements they wish to pass on to NEPP |
| Community Safety | None |
| Equalities | None |

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| Health and Safety | None |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | NEPP operates under a Joint Committee Agreement between ECC as the highway authority and the north Essex authorities, with Colchester BC serving as the host authority. This superseded the previous arrangement whereby ECC delegated its on street traffic regulation powers to district and borough councils. |
| Sustainability | None |
| Ward-specific impacts | None |
| Workforce/Workplace | None |

Situation

5. At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 September 2016 the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP), Richard Walker, Group Manager and Lisa Hinman, Central Area Manager gave a presentation about the NEPP service to assist with the pre-scrutiny discussion on the decision to be taken by Cabinet on whether to commit to the partnership for a further four years in an extension to the joint agreement.
6. In addition the committee considered a report by the Director of Public Services, which contained information to assist with making the decision.
7. Having considered the detailed information provided by NEPP and the Director of Public Services the Committee recommend that the Cabinet agree in principle that UDC commit to the NEPP for a further four years.
8. It was also decided that the Chairman Cllr Dean would liaise with Cllr Asker and discuss with officers possible areas for improvement to the service.
9. These investigations have now been completed and the following potential improvements are detailed in paragraphs 13 - 20 for Members to review.
10. As the decision to extend the partnership has already been taken by Cabinet, the most appropriate way for the committee's views to be taken forward is for them to be sent to the council's nominated lead officer Gordon Glenday, Assistant Director Planning. They can then be raised with NEPP as part of the ongoing partnership negotiations.

11. The committee's views will also be communicated to Cllr Susan Barker as the council's representative on NEPP.
12. Cllr Dean's comments are contained in paragraphs 13 to 17.
13. The partnership's accounts are not sufficiently transparent to the public and to this council. Nor are they scrutinised by the council's Performance and Audit Committee. It is recommended that UDC negotiates an arrangement with NEPP to make its accounts accessible via UDC's website and that the P&A committee receive a report at least once each year.
14. The council should review the standard of service it receives for off-street parking and the standard of service that the county council receives for on-street parking in Uttlesford. NEPP should be asked to provide data on the frequency and timing of patrols to assess whether this provides adequate deterrent against unauthorised parking. If the service is deemed inadequate, negotiations should take place to revise the service agreement. As part of the negotiations, use of the partnership's surplus funds should be considered to pay for a higher standard of service.
15. The council welcomes the partnership's recent initiative to increase elected members', parish/town councils' and the public's understanding of the service. The council should press for this to be continued and sustained through increased advice and publicity to increase all stakeholders' awareness of the services offered and how to use it. For instance, there should be advice on how residents can register private drives where blocking can result in penalties, how blocked dropped kerbs can result in penalties, and also where there are limitations, such as taking action against pavement blocking by parked vehicles. Performance data such as heat maps and associated data with explanations should be provided so that local consideration can be given to NEPP's service and what improvements may be requested.
16. NEPP should be asked to consider developing a mobile app so that the public can report parking problems simply and effectively.
17. The NEPP should be asked to work with the council to lobby central government to achieve legislative change so that the partnership can enforce in areas presently reserves for the police; e.g. blocked pavements without the need for yellow lining.
18. Cllr Asker's comments are contained in paragraphs 19 to 20
19. When NEPP are considering restricted parking zones, some planning or consultation should take place and involve those directly affected to ensure the restrictions are suitable and not over or under generous. Including accompanying

signage. It is wholly unfair to assume signs will be read and are 'clearly' placed for motorists to see.

20. NEPP informed the Committee there would always be at least one Civil Enforcement Officer in the Uttlesford District, on average there will be two, one concentrating on Saffron Walden and one covering the rest of district. They explained that it was often difficult to recruit and staff numbers were insufficient to cover sick leave, holidays etc. I believe there should be concentration on recruitment, training and loyalty of staff retention.

Risk Analysis

There are no risks associated with this report.