

**NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP
JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ON-STREET PARKING**

24 June 2021 at 1.00pm

**Held in the Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street
Colchester CO1 1PJ.**

Members Present:

Councillor Richard Freeman (Uttlesford District Council)
Councillor Sam Kane (Epping Forest District Council)
Councillor Beverley Oxford (Colchester)*
Councillor Michael Talbot (Tendring)

Councillor Richard van Dulken (Braintree District Council)**

**Councillor van Dulken attended as a non-executive, non-voting representative of Braintree District Council

Substitutions:

*Councillor Beverley Oxford attended as substitute for Councillor Simon Crow

Apologies:

Councillor Simon Crow (Colchester)
Councillor Alistair Gunn (Harlow District Council)
Councillor Sue Lissimore (Essex County Council)

Also Present:

Richard Walker (Parking Partnership)
Lou Belgrove (Parking Partnership)
Liz Burr (Essex County Council)
Jason Butcher (Parking Partnership)
Rory Doyle (Colchester Borough Council)
Jake England (Parking Partnership)
Owen Howell (Colchester Borough Council)
Linda Howells (Uttlesford District Council)
Hayley McGrath (Colchester Borough Council)
Samir Pandya (Braintree District Council)
Miroslav Sihelsky (Harlow Council)
Ian Taylor (Tendring District Council)
James Warwick (Epping Forest District Council)

91. Appointment of Chairman

Nominations were made as follows:

- Councillor Beverley Oxford nominated Councillor Simon Crow
- Councillor Michael Talbot nominated Councillor Sue Lissimore

Neither nomination proposal was seconded and so neither proceeded to a vote.

Following clarification that a member of the Joint Committee could be appointed to be Chairman for that meeting only, the Joint Committee voted to appoint Councillor Sam Kane as Chairman for this meeting only, with the appointment of a Committee Chairman to be deferred to the next meeting so as to give Joint Committee members the opportunity to first meet each other and discuss the appointment before a member is appointed to the position.

92. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

Councillor Kane was nominated for Deputy Chairman, however the Joint Committee agreed that this decision should, as with appointment of the Chairman, be deferred until a future meeting so as to allow Joint Committee members, including those not present, the opportunity to first meet each other and discuss the appointments before members are appointed to the positions.

93. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting held on 18 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

94. NEPP Annual Governance Review and Internal Audit Report '20-21

Hayley McGrath, Colchester Borough Council's Corporate Governance Manager, summarised the report and emphasised that, whilst there was no statutory requirement for the production of a governance report, it was very much considered to be best practice. The review by the Internal Auditors concluded that adequate performance and appropriate controls had been evidenced for the North Essex Parking Partnership [NEPP] for 2020-21.

The two issues raised by Internal Audit, as detailed in the report, had both been resolved, so no causes for concern were noted.

In response to questions regarding the contractual relationship between the NEPP and G4S, The Corporate Governance Manager explained that, following the ending of the initial partnership and its extensions, a new contract was drawn up and put out to tender, with G4S then successfully taking that contract.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee had considered and noted the Annual Governance Review of the North Essex Parking Partnership.

95. Annual Review of Risk Management Report.

Hayley McGrath, Colchester Borough Council's Corporate Governance Manager, summarised the dedicated risk management processes which had been set in place to provide assurances regarding mitigations in place for strategic risks faced by the Partnership, to minimise any potential failure to achieve the service plan and/or strategies.

The Corporate Governance Manager noted that section three of the report should have been updated with three recommended changes:

- Amend risk 1.2 to make it consistent with the NEPP's strategies.
- A reduction in the scoring of 1.13 to three.
- A reduction in the scoring of 1.15 to three.

The risk calculation process was briefly summarised for the Joint Committee.

Richard Walker, NEPP Group Manager, answered questions regarding the timing and arrangements for setting out the new NEPP agreement and achieving approval from Essex County Council [ECC]. It was expected that this would come to the Joint Committee for its consideration in October, and then to the individual partner authorities for approval. Heads of terms were expected to be available for circulation and discussion by Joint Committee members in September.

RESOLVED that Joint Committee had endorsed the Risk Management Strategy for 2021/22, and agreed the Strategic Risk Register, subject to the amendments raised by the Corporate Governance Manager.

96. Finance Report – End of year and Reserves 2020/21

Richard Walker provided a high-level summary of the NEPP's financial position, including reserves of just over £1m. There had been a 38% drop in expected income from Penalty Charge Notices, due to the pandemic's effects, and the four-month moratorium on resident parking renewals had also lowered income. £600k in Government grants had been received, acting to mitigate some of the lost income.

In the year prior to Covid-19, a £286k surplus had been recorded by the NEPP, which had put it in a strong position.

The deficits shown in the table within the report showed that the Government grant did not entirely cover lost income and included the effects of lost income from the situation regarding resident parking scheme renewals.

The Joint Committee discussed the potential provision of electric vehicle [EV] charging bays and the financial implications. The Group Manager detailed some of the options, including reserving bays at street ends or on sea fronts, and explained that a proposed scheme in Colchester was currently out for consultation. This would affect many streets and it was hoped that increased uptake of active travel options would reduce the demand for bay parking.

In response to questions, it was clarified that Traffic Regulation Order [TRO] spending totalled around £185k per year. The County Council had stopped funding TRO work, after which this had needed to be covered by use of NEPP reserves. There had been significant spending on emergency Red Routes, taking significant sums from reserves.

To answer questions, the Group Manager detailed the NEPP's provisions for dealing with bad debts during normal times and that not all PCNs were paid immediately, thus being added to debt levels. A clarification of the current situation was promised.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee noted the financial position at the end of the Financial Year 2020/21, and the current parking reserves position.

97. Annual Report Data

Richard Walker, Group Manager, explained that operational data was published on a rolling basis, in addition to an annual report. The report was due to be published on the NEPP website and gave an explanation of the difficult circumstances under which the NEPP had operated during 2020-21.

Members were promised a more-readable form of the dataset, as this had proved difficult to follow in the version provided.

98. Forward Plan 2021-2022

Richard Walker, Group Manager, gave a verbal update on the situation regarding regulation and enforcement relating to obstructive parking. There had been no substantive changes as yet, although an announcement from the Department for Transport was expected in the near future. The differences between footway parking and obstructive parking were outlined, along with the NEPP view that discretionary powers should be made available for enforcement, to allow for flexible enforcement, based on NEPP policies which would lay out circumstances in which footway parking would be permitted [e.g. in circumstances where this would not obstruct the footway].

A member asked whether there would be changes likely to enforcement of moving traffic enforcement. It was clarified that the likely outcome was that potentially the decriminalisation of offences, to allow for civil enforcement and to reduce pressure on the Police. This would make enforcement easier and it was hoped that there would be legislation to back up enforcement, issuing of Penalty Charge Notices and the use of data by parking authorities.

The Joint Committee considered whether it was likely that enforcement of decriminalised offences would be conducted by the NEPP or the County Council. It was noted that the County Council had control over bus lane cameras, and so might conduct enforcement of bus lane offences. The Group Manager gave the view that it was likely that bus lane enforcement, if related offences were decriminalised, may be delegated to the NEPP, as there was already much crossover/combined working between County Council assets and staff and those

of the NEPP.

Ian Taylor, Head of Public Realm at Tendring District Council, raised concern as to whether Tendring would be able to host the 9 December meeting, depending on the Covid-19 situation, but would look to find a suitable option for a venue.

It was noted that the 30 September JPC meeting was not ideally timed to match the schedule for agreeing the future NEPP Agreement. Richard Walker, Group Manager, gave assurance that draft heads of terms would be circulated as soon as possible, and suggested that the September meeting be rescheduled and delayed by a month (to the end of October 2021) in order to allow for the draft agreement to be properly considered.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan 2021-22 be approved, subject to the rescheduling of the 30 September 2021 meeting to Thursday 28 October.