

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 28 October 2021 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor Jon Cloke – Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Simon Hart – Castle Point Borough Council
Councillor Mike Mackrory – Chelmsford City Council
Councillor Carole Morris – Basildon Borough Council

Councillor Lee Scott – Essex County Council (observer)

Officers present:

Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
Trudie Bragg – Castle Point Borough Council
Mike Dun – Brentwood Borough Council
James Hendry – Basildon Borough Council
Victoria March – Chelmsford City Council
Brian Mayfield – Chelmsford City Council
Charlotte Moody – Chelmsford City Council
Michael Packham – Chelmsford City Council
Russell Panter – Chelmsford City Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of the Joint Committee.

2. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of those present was confirmed. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Daniel Efde & Sharon Braney, Rochford District Council, Liz Burr, Essex County Council, and William Butcher, Chelmsford City Council.

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting on 24 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting on 24 June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

No questions were asked or statements made by members of the public.

5. Operational and Performance Report

The Joint Committee was given an update on the following matters:

- Covid-19 precautions

The Partnership's staff continued to work to some Covid protocols.

- Uniforms, Equipment and Offices

Civic Enforcement Officers (CEOs) had been issued with new uniforms, which were less formal than the previous style. The public's views on them was being assessed.

It was planned to re-engage with the suppliers of body cameras for CEOs in 2022 but in the meantime all vans had been fitted with the cameras. Discussions would be held with NEPP and SCA about acquiring a CCTV car that was capable of carrying out ANPR checks, and handheld ANPR units were being tested.

Some office moves had taken place and Brentwood was in the early stages of exploring the creation of an enforcement hub of which SEPP could be part.

- Recruitment

Since June 2021 nine CEOs had been recruited. All were of a good calibre and had achieved the Level 2 Civil Enforcement qualification. Some vacancies remained, especially in Basildon, and whilst there were challenges in the current jobs market, efforts were being made to fill them.

- Service Level Agreements

Discussions continued with Maldon on the SLA for that area and the Partnership was working closely with Brentwood on its SLA. The Partnership was also looking to re-introduce the Police accreditation.

- Performance

Overall, the PCN issue rates across the whole of the Parking Partnership had made a good recovery and were in line with the estimate in the business plan.

AGREED that the Operational and Performance report be noted.

(2.03pm to 2.15pm)

6. Financial Report

Michael Packham reported on the financial position of the South Essex Parking Partnership up to 18 October 2021. It showed a surplus of £388,354 for SEPP and a deficit of £219,239 for the TRO account, on a cash basis for the financial year to 18 October 2021 before taking into account items funded from the Reserve. This resulted in an overall surplus position for the Partnership of £169,144. The use of reserves totalling £232,000 meant that there was an overall deficit of £62,886 as at 18 October. The income claimed from the 2020/21 Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme had been received and was being audited. A similar claim for the first quarter of 2021/22 had been submitted.

AGREED that the financial position of the Partnership for 2021/2022 to 18 October 2021 be noted.

(2.16pm to 2.18pm)

7. Update on Business Plan for 2021/22

The Joint Committee received an update on its Business Plan for the current year and progress with the achievement of financial projections. It showed that:

- The number of PCNs issued across the Partnership was currently 16% down against the 2019-20 performance and 68% up on the 2020/21 performance. The number of PCNs issued was 6% down against the estimated figure in the Business Plan. Operating costs and expenditure were currently as expected. The total overall income had reduced by 21% against the 2019/20 outturn and had increased by 45% compared to the 2020/21 account. Currently the income was 13% down against the estimated figure in the Business Plan for 2021/22, but it was estimated that the operation would improve further into the second half of the financial year as the recovery from Covid-19 continued.
- The projected Partnership outturn for 2021/22, including the TRO operational costs, was expected to achieve an operational fund in the region of £227,000.
- Overall, the operation had performed well in the first six months and the recovery of the operation following Covid-19 was progressing as estimated. Expenditure was currently as expected and the PCN issue rate and overall income was currently slightly down compared to the estimate in the 2021/22 business plan but it was estimated that the operation would improve further in the second half of the financial year as the recovery from Covid-19 continued.

- It was expected that the Partnership would achieve the estimated outturn position of the 2020/21 Business Plan.

The Joint Committee was informed that the vacant post of Schools Liaison Officer was being re-evaluated and would be advertised soon. In the meantime, the TROs team was covering school parking.

AGREED that progress against the Business Plan for 2021/2022 be noted.

(2.18pm to 2.28pm)

8. Review of Policies

The Joint Committee received an update on the results of the review of the Parking Partnership's Operational Protocols, the Parking Policy Framework, including the Partnership Enforcement Policy, and the Civil Parking Enforcement Discretion Policy. It had been concluded that all the policies continued to meet the requirements of the Partnership and legislation and did not need to be amended.

AGREED that the results of the review of the Partnership's policies be noted.

(2.46pm to 2.47pm)

9. Proposed New Working Arrangements for a New Term of the Joint Committee Agreement

Nick Binder outlined the main provisions of the proposed working arrangements for a new term of the Joint Committee Agreement.

The new Agreement would run for five years from 1 April 2022 with annual extensions possible for three years after that. The business model was based on the services currently provided by the Partnership but the new Agreement would also

- Establish a new surplus sharing model
- Encourage plans and ideas for innovation and technology
- Look at how cost efficiencies could be delivered in future

The proposed new surplus sharing arrangements would comprise three parts.

Part 1 would be a reserve of up to £400,000 a year to cover any potential deficit on the Partnership. The level of reserve would be maintained (and topped up as appropriate) before any surplus was moved into the second and third parts. Any surplus generated after any calls to maintain the Part 1 deficit reserve at the agreed level would be split between Part 2 (55%) and Part 3 (45%) subject to certain conditions.

Part 2 would be used for local needs as set out in the annual business plan. Specifically, it would cover (a) the operational and funding costs for TROs and the essential maintenance of parking related signs and lines and (b) innovation around different ways to manage parking within each partnership. Any capital/innovation funds required above the level agreed in the annual business plan that could not be contained within Part 2 could be bid for in Part 3 and considered on merit against other county-wide priorities. Any in-year surplus must cover the costs of TRO delivery and innovation to manage on-street parking. In the event that the 55% share did not cover those costs they would be covered but the remainder would be allocated to Part 3.

Part 3 was intended to cover Essex wider strategic highways priorities and was proposed to be governed through a new Strategic Panel led by the ECC cabinet member and including the two SEPP chairmen and possibly one other member from each of the three partners. Any surplus achieved in this area from NEPP and SEPP would be directed towards county-wide priorities within the respective areas, still in line with section 55 of the RTRA 1984. ECC would work with the two Lead Authorities to develop the assessment criteria for bids for this funding. Bids would be put forward by officers from both the partnerships and ECC.

Service Level Agreements would also be agreed with Essex County Council to cover:

- Management of additional on-street Pay and Display parking, which would replace limited waiting parking
- Management of CCTV cameras installed to monitor school parking

There would also be scope in the Agreement to engage in separate service level agreements for the Partnership to manage other activities such as discretionary disabled badge holder bays, enforcement on highways outside country parks, Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 moving traffic offences and electric vehicle charging points.

The Joint Committee was of the unanimous view that the revised terms of the new Agreement were satisfactory.

AGREED that:

1. The proposed terms of the new offer from Essex County Council to enter into a new joint committee agreement from 1 April 2022 be approved.
2. The Joint Committee Members go back to their respective councils to formally approve continued membership of the SEPP under the terms of the new offer and subject to the new Joint Committee Agreement being signed; and provide written notice of this decision to the SEPP Manager by 31 January 2022.
3. The SEPP Manager is authorised to agree the terms of the new Joint Committee Agreement in consultation with each of the SEPP partner authority lead officers and the lead authority (Chelmsford City Council) legal representative.

(2.28pm to 2.46pm)

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

AGREED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be on 9 December 2021 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 2.47pm

Chair