

MINUTES

of the

**SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP
JOINT COMMITTEE**

on 7 March 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Jon Cloke	Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor R Mitchell	Essex County Council
Councillor Ron Pratt (Chairman)	Maldon District Council
Councillor Michael Steptoe	Rochford District Council
Councillor Malcolm Sismey	Chelmsford City Council
Councillor Paul Varker	Castle Point Borough Council

In attendance:

Nick Binder	Chelmsford City Council
Trudie Bragg	Castle Point Borough Council
Liz Burr	Essex County Council
William Butcher	Chelmsford City Council
Kar-Wai Chan	Chelmsford City Council
Jonathan Desmond	Rochford District Council
Brian Mayfield	Chelmsford City Council
Russell Panter	Chelmsford City Council
Hugh Reynolds	Basildon Borough Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone present to the meeting of the South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee.

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions.

It was reported that apologies had been received from Councillor Kevin Blake, David Green, James Hendry and Shaun Scrutton. Hugh Reynolds and Jonathan Desmond were attending as the substitutes for James Hendry and Shaun Scrutton

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting on 6 December 2018

The minutes of the meeting held 6 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Public Question Time**

Mr Andrew Sosin asked whether enforcement action was possible in the Causeway, near the Vineyards shopping centre, where there were problems with parking across a dropped kerb that provided access to a sheltered accommodation unit. Nick Binder said that the situation would be investigated.

5. **Operational and Performance Report**

Russell Panter, SEPP's Enforcement Operations Manager, presented a report on the operation of the South Essex Parking Partnership since the last meeting. The report covered the following matters:

School Parking Initiative/PREDAS/Joint Enforcement

The Committee was given an update on progress with these initiatives, all of which were showing encouraging results.

Staffing – Training and Recruitment

The Committee was informed that there were five vacant posts of Civil Enforcement Officer. It was intended to review staffing structures in 2019 to enable CEOs to work across the SEPP area and cover absences and vacancies.

Vehicles and Equipment

An update was given on plans for revised vehicle leasing arrangements and the introduction of charge banks for mobiles and hand-held computers. In response to a question it was confirmed that CEOs had body cameras.

Councillor Mitchell asked whether the PREDAS scheme took into account the possibility that vehicles might be parked in front of a dropped kerb with the property owner's permission. Russell Panter said that when residents signed up to the scheme the potential for visitors to receive a PCN during the restricted times was explained to them. Each household was given two permits, however, that could be displayed on the vehicles, which would avoid the issue of a PCN, as would the display of Carers' Permits.

Officers were also asked to look at the situation at Holt Farm school, where there were problems with residents accessing their properties via a car park which was used by parents at drop-off and collection times.

AGREED that the Operational and Performance Report be noted.

(2.10pm to 2.35pm)

6. **Financial Report**

Kar-Wai Chan reported on the financial position of South Essex Parking Partnership for the period up to January 2019.

The Partnership currently had an overall surplus of £414,200 on a cash basis for the year to date. Members were informed that a continuing rise in the income from PCNs now suggested that the surplus on the overall partnership account at the end of the financial year was likely to be higher than in 2017/18.

The Committee was informed that the figures relating to the cost of employees included the cost of back office staff. With regard to the deficit in Rochford, this was largely attributable to a decrease in the number of PCNs issued during a period of long-term sickness among the CEOs and the inclusion of the costs of the school parking initiative in the accounts. The financial position would improve as staffing levels returned to normal and income from more recently issued PCNs was received.

AGREED that the financial report for the period to January 2019 be noted.

(2.35pm to 2.38pm)

7. **External Audit Arrangements**

The Committee was informed that it was intended to revise the audit arrangements for the Partnership in 2019 to ensure that there was a proper segregation of duties by those who carried out the audit of its financial systems and risks and prepared its financial statement. It was proposed that Chelmsford City Council's internal audit function would carry out a risk-based review of the Partnership's operations and control environment in 2019. Separately, a qualified accountant would review the Partnership's financial statement, and the City Council's external auditor would look at the SEPP accounts alongside those of the Council.

AGREED that the separate external audit of the Partnership be replaced with a review by Chelmsford City Council's internal audit review of SEPP's controls and systems with the terms of reference to be agreed with the South Essex Parking Partnership Manager; and separately, an assessment of the Partnership be made as part of the statutory external audit of the City Council's accounting arrangements.

(2.38pm to 2.41pm)

8. **Update on Business Plan for 2018/19**

Nick Binder presented a report on progress against the approved Business Plan for 2018/2019.

Based on the projected income and expenditure, it was estimated that there would be an operational fund of £397,000 at the end of the financial year.

The Plan's business objectives were largely being met and the Partnership's performance remained good and in line with targets. PCNs were currently 13% higher than in the previous year; programmed maintenance work had been completed; new residents parking and traffic management schemes had been introduced; new hand-held computers had been issued to all Civil Enforcement Officers; and contracts had been awarded for the replacement of on-street pay and display machines and a new digital platform for recording signs and lines and traffic orders. Sickness levels were higher but mainly attributable to instances of long-term sickness.

During discussion of the report, the Committee was informed that reference to PCNs stopped after being issued related to those successfully appealed against, written off or dismissed for other reasons. Non-recovery cases were those that, for example, might be with bailiffs, had been incorrectly issued or were for cases of loading and unloading which had not been apparent at the time of issue of the PCN.

AGREED that the update on the Partnership's Business Plan for 2018/19 be noted.

(2.41pm to 2.48pm)

9. **Policy on Parking Restrictions Requiring a TRO**

In line with the practice to keep SEPP's policy document on how to deal with requests for parking restrictions requiring a TRO up to date and the process as efficient as possible, the Joint Committee was asked to consider the latest recommended changes. They related to:

- the arrangements for sending requests in respect of PR1 And PR2 routes to the County Council and obtaining its input to them, and
- the proposed provision of visual information on the most common types of parking problems and requests and the likely outcome of the Technician's recommendation.

The suggestion was made that consideration be given to allowing local businesses to obtain permits to park in residents parking areas where space was available during the working day.

AGREED that the proposed amendments to the policy document on the procedure for dealing with requests for parking restrictions requiring TROs, as detailed in the report to the meeting, be approved.

(2.48pm to 3.10pm)

10. **Receipt of Approved Allocated Funding**

The Joint Committee considered a proposed process by which each Partner Authority would receive the funding allocated to it for projects and schemes under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The latest funding, agreed by the Committee on 6 December 2018, equated to £116,000 per authority.

In approving the suggested approach, members said that the need to bring schemes to the Joint Committee for approval should be monitored for a period and consideration given to delegating that function to officers if it appeared that the vast majority of schemes met the criteria.

AGREED that the process described in the report to the meeting by which each Partner Authority receives the funding allocated to it be approved, and that the South Essex Parking Partnership Manager be authorised to release the funds to the relevant authority once an approved scheme has been completed and signed off.

(3.10pm to 3.20pm)

11. **Sub-Committee Arrangements**

AGREED that the quorum for meetings of the Sub-Committee to consider objections against an advertised TRO, and the Sub-Committee to consider funding for new TROs and maintenance of signs and lines be two elected members in each case.

(3.20pm to 3.23pm)

12. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be on 27 June 2019 at 2.00pm. at the Chelmsford City Council offices.

The meeting closed at 3.24pm

Chairman