

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 10 March 2022 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor Jon Cloke – Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Mike Mackrory – Chelmsford City Council
Councillor Carole Morris – Basildon Borough Council

Officers present:

Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
Trudie Bragg – Castle Point Borough Council
Liz Burr – Essex County Council
William Butcher – Chelmsford City Council
James Hendry – Basildon Borough Council
Brian Mayfield – 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. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Daniel Efde, Rochford District Council, Councillor Simon Hart, Castle Point Borough Council and Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council.

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting on 28 October 2021

The minutes of the meeting on 28 October 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

The Joint Committee was asked whether it had considered seeking an increase in the penalty charges fixed by the government to meet additional operational costs since they were last set. The Chairman replied that the relevant Minister had been asked whether there were any plans to increase the charges to reflect inflationary costs. The meeting was also informed that whilst the recent increase in fuel costs was not reflected in the Partnership's budget, there were sufficient reserves to enable the budget to be adjusted to accommodate those costs.

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.

- Equipment and Technology

The Partnership had re-engaged with a company for the supply of body-worn cameras and these were currently being trialled. Asked by Councillor Morris whether bodycams improved the safety of CEOs and therefore helped with recruitment, Russell Panter said that bodycams helped to deter aggressive behaviour towards CEOs and provided evidence for any prosecutions.

Dashcams in vehicles had proved to be valuable, particularly in helping to show liability for accidents and incidents. For technical reasons it had not been possible to use the CCTV car for ANPR in residents parking zones. SEPP and NEPP were seeking from the supplier a solution to the problem. An ANPR reader was being trialled for CEOs' hand held devices. Some SEPP staff would undertake training on a software package for the creation of dashboards using data. This would enable SEPP to manage the reporting of data in a more efficient way and would provide a comprehensive central reporting system to capture data from all the systems being used.

Staff had now moved into the new enforcement hub in Brentwood.

- Partnership Working

Obtaining police accreditation for staff was now being progressed, with the Chelmsford staff the first to undergo the vetting process. It would be rolled out to other districts in due course. The Working Group with NEPP continued to meet. The Brentwood SLA continued to work well and night-time economy patrols had resumed. The Maldon SLA for the delivery of on-street parking enforcement outside of office hours was being reviewed.

- Recruitment

Recruitment was taking place for three vacancies in Chelmsford, one in Brentwood and one in Basildon. It was hoped to be up to full staffing strength within six months. The vacancy for the Schools Liaison Officer would be advertised soon and would include responsibility for general administration and project management.

AGREED that the Operational and Performance report be noted.

(2.03pm to 2.17pm)

6. Financial Report

Michael Packham reported on the financial position of the South Essex Parking Partnership up to 28 February 2022. It showed a surplus of £412,254 for SEPP and a deficit of £367,926 for the TRO account, on a cash basis for the financial year to 28 February 2022 before taking into account items funded from the Reserve. This resulted in an overall surplus position for the Partnership of £44,328. The use of reserves totalling £319,000 meant that there was an overall deficit of £274,672 at 28 February.

PCN income had been £1,232,872 to 28 February 2022, compared with £817,747 for 2020/21 and £1,460,481 for 2019/20.

Income of £450,637 had been received from the 2020/21 Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme and was being audited. A claim had been made for the first quarter of 2021/22 and about £130,000 was expected to be received. Although it was not known when the 2021/22 sum would be finally confirmed, it would be recognised in the current year's budget.

AGREED that the financial position of the Partnership for 2021/2022 to 28 February 2022 be noted.

(2.17pm to 2.20pm)

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 8% down against the 2019/20 performance and 79% up on the 2020/21 performance. The number of PCNs issued was 4% up 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 17% down against the

2019/20 outturn but had increased by 44% compared to the 2020/21 account, now being 7% below the estimated figure in the Business Plan for 2021/22.

- Overall, the operation had performed well in 2021/22 and the recovery of the operation following Covid-19 was progressing as estimated. The overall recovery rate for PCNs paid was currently 76% of the PCNs issued. The expected outturn for the Partnership was in the region of 75% to 77%, which was considered to be good. The rate of PCN cancellation (11%) remained within the expected level.

It was concluded that the current financial position and the level of the performance to date indicated that the estimated outturn position of the Partnership would be down against the estimate in the 2020/21 Business Plan.

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

(2.20pm to 2.28pm)

8. Annual Business Plan 2022/23

The Joint Committee considered the Business Plan of the Partnership for 2022/23 which set out its proposed annual budget and the business aims and objectives for that year.

The following were identified as the main features of the Business Plan:

- The total direct and indirect expenditure was estimated at £1,890,500 and the total income estimated to be £2,403,300, with expected costs of £172,000 for the operational staffing resource of the TRO function.
- The loss of income during the Covid-19 pandemic created uncertainty as to how the account would perform in the short term. It had therefore been agreed when entering into the new Joint Committee Agreement that a reserve of £400,000 would be maintained. This would consist of £300,000 from the SEPP operational reserve and a further £100,000 contribution from ECC, which comprised the £100,000 cash flow assistance given to SEPP at the start of the current Joint Committee Agreement which was payable to ECC at the termination of the contract.
- The Business Plan estimated that there would be a surplus in the region of £513,000 from the parking enforcement account. Of that, £428,000 would cover the TRO operational costs, the maintenance of sign and lines and the funding for new innovation. The remaining £85,000 would contribute to the new Strategic Partnership Panel.
- The business objectives in the 2022/23 Plan linked into the longer term aims and objectives of the Partnership. The main area of focus would be on monitoring the effects of the business recovery and adjusting the business case to ensure service provision met demand.

- Taking into account the outstanding items of spend and agreed reserve level, the Partnership was expected to have an operational fund in the region of £1,600,000 to invest back into the operation and allocate funding towards schemes which were in accordance with section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The final amount would be reported to the Joint Committee's next meeting on 30 June 2022 with a proposal for its allocation between the partners.
- The risks pertaining to the Partnership had been updated to reflect the new joint committee agreement working arrangements.

The Joint Committee was informed that the business objectives for 2022/23 had been set to ensure that the Partnership maintained the current level of performance and continued to provide a high level of service delivery.

AGREED that

1. The Annual Business Plan for 2022/23, with its proposed budgets, actions and objectives, be approved.
2. All specific Parking Authority deficits, including those over £10,000, be written off should they arise.
3. A reserve of £400,000 be maintained for 2022/23.
4. The risks identified in Appendix B to the Business Plan and the action plan to address the top three risks be approved.

(2.28pm to 2.37pm)

9. Update on New Joint Committee Agreement

Nick Binder informed the meeting that all the partner authorities had now approved the terms of the proposed new Joint Committee Agreement. Essex County Council was finalising the legal work associated with the Agreement but Liz Burr reported that this was unlikely to be completed before the current Agreement expired. It would be necessary for each partner authority to sign a Letter of Intent to continue with the current Agreement until the new one was signed by each partner and came into effect.

In approving that arrangement, the Joint Committee expressed appreciation for the work of the Partnership's officers and staff for making the Partnership a success under the current Agreement

AGREED that the update on the new Joint Committee Agreement be noted.

(2.37pm to 2.44pm)

10. Date and Time of Meetings for 2022/23

AGREED that the Joint Committee meet at 2pm on the following dates in 2022/23:

30 June 2022
8 September 2022
8 December 2022
9 March 2023

The meeting closed at 2.45pm

Chairman