

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 16 March 2023 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor Mike Mackrory – Chelmsford City Council (Chairman)
Councillor Carole Morris – Basildon Borough Council
Councillor Keith Parker – Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Andrew Sosin – Chelmsford City Council

Officers present:

Alan Underdown – Basildon Borough Council
Trudie Bragg – Castle Point Borough Council
Sue Green – Maldon District Council
Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
William Butcher – Chelmsford City Council
Russell Panter – Chelmsford City Council
Michael Packham – Chelmsford City Council
Jan Decena – Chelmsford City Council
Jack Sharp – 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 were received from Councillor Carlie Mayes – Maldon District Council, Councillor Laureen Shaw – Essex County Council, Councillor David Sperring – Rochford District Council, and Councillor Warren Gibson – Castle Point Borough Council. Apologies had also been received from Jo Heynes – Essex County Council and James Hendry – Basildon Borough Council.

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting 12 December 2022

The minutes of the meeting 12 December were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions were asked at the meeting, however there was a question from the joint committee regarding a bill on obstructions on pavement. It was noted that only local authorities were part of the consultation, and this covered obstructive and pavement parking. The Joint Committee was informed that currently the police can only deal with obstruction of a pavement in unrestricted areas but there is a new bill in the House of Lords which has still yet to be read and considered. This bill can potentially lead to the decriminalisation of obstruction of a pavement and therefore enable the local authorities to enforce this using the Traffic Management Act 2004. It was also noted that during the consultation period there was a desire from the local authorities to include obstruction within 10 metres of a junction, but this option was considered unlikely to be included in any proposed changes and will therefore remain the responsibility of the Police.

5. Operational and Performance Report

The joint committee received an update on operational and performance matters for the period of December 2022 to February 2023.

PPE, Equipment, and Technology

The joint committee was updated that SEPP were working with a new uniform supplier for civil enforcement officers. It was noted that having two competitors in the industry provided an opportunity to compare the quality of the goods with competitive prices. The new supplier also already had a working relationship with SEPP and there was an opportunity to work with NEPP for savings if uniforms were to be procured in both areas.

The joint committee was also informed that the partnership had to remove the biodegradable PCN envelopes as they were difficult to manufacture. The partnership had to revert back to the recyclable envelopes but assured the joint committee that these would still comply with the green option.

The introduction of the new body cameras was successful especially with the improvements in footage management. It was also noted that the sharing of the footage to outside organisations especially police had been efficient.

The joint committee was also informed of the successful talks with third party suppliers to provide CCTV enforcement at Sawyers Hall Lane. The partnership was reported to be in the final stages of negotiation of the contract and it was aimed to implement the pilot in the first quarter of the new financial year.

Recruitment Update

The joint committee was then updated regarding the recruitment of civil enforcement officers. They were informed that the partnership was finding it hard to recruit despite the offer of flexible hours and the job being advertised on various platforms.

The partnership was also finding it difficult to recruit agency staff. The partnership had started working with Adecco and Unity to source agency staff.

Partner Update

The joint committee was informed that SEPP continued to work closely with Maldon District Council and Brentwood Borough Council under Service Level Agreements. It was noted that Chelmsford would have joint patrols with their officers and that Chelmsford's civil enforcement officers had passed their police accreditation and were fully qualified. It was noted that this accreditation would allow for more actions and efficient sharing of data with the police regarding access to vehicles involved with dangerous or criminal activity.

The joint committee was also notified of the community event in May 2023 which the SEPP officers would attend with Brentwood Council, ECC, Police, and social services. This event would promote and highlight services that would be available to residents.

Health & Safety Update

The joint committee noted the recent Health & Safety audit that SEPP had undertaken and was informed of the four recommendations made in relation to corporate training, amendments to manuals and asset security. These were graded low level and would be completed soon. This had also resulted in improvements to protocols and amendments to the CEO manual and risk assessments.

Fleet Update

The joint committee was then updated regarding the fleet. It was noted that the last two Go Plant lease vans are now off hired and awaiting collection and that all vehicles were now leased from Riverside Truck Rental via Basildon Council's lease framework.

3PR Update

The joint committee were introduced to the new School Parking Liaison Officer who would be presenting further information on the scheme at agenda item 8.

In response to queries raised by members of the joint committee, it was advised that;

- The cost of manufacturing the biodegradable PCN envelopes was also a factor on why they were discontinued. It was noted that it would have been twice the price of the recyclable envelopes.
- Regarding recruitment, it was noted that the jobs were advertised as attractively as possible and were tied by certain conditions, but officers could certainly look at the terms and conditions regarding pay. It was noted that the markets had changed, with people generally looking at the hourly wage, and that attracting people to local government remained to be difficult.

AGREED that the Operational and Performance report on the Parking Partnership be noted.

(14:04-14:18)

6. Financial Report 2022/23

The joint committee received a report to the meeting setting out a summary of the financial position for the South Essex Parking Partnership for the period 1st April 2022 to 2nd March 2023. They also received the financial summary detailing the actual costs incurred and income received.

It was reported that there was a surplus of £516,076 for SEPP and a deficit of £310,542 for the TRO account. This had resulted in an overall surplus position for the Partnership including the TRO account of £205,533 which was an improvement of £44,250.

In the period from April 2022 to February 2023, it was reported that the Partnership received £1,462,490 in income. In April 2021 to February 2022, the Partnership received £1,244,065 in income. Therefore, joint committee was informed that the 22/23 figure represented just over 117% of income received in 21/22 over the same period. It was also reported that the budget of £1,565,300 was likely to be achieved and the projections highlighted that the Partnership had recovered post-COVID.

The joint committee was then informed of the one additional item of reserve which totalled £21,110 in relation to the purchase of 3PR licence. This resulted in a net income for the Partnership and TRO account after the reserve use of £156,833.

The joint committee was pleased to see this trajectory compared to pre-COVID.

AGREED that the financial position of the Partnership for this period be noted.

(14:18-14:20)

7. Progress on Annual Business Plan 2023/24

The joint Committee received a report on the progress against the Business Plan approved for 2022/23. The progress echoed the financial data that the joint committee received and was on course with the business plan. Officers reported that they were pleased by how well the Partnership had performed and numbers were beginning to match those of pre-COVID times.

It was estimated that the enforcement account could expect a surplus of £83,000 and this would be allocated to cover wider strategic highway priorities. This would take into account an estimated surplus of £513,000 from the enforcement operation account and the deduction of £428,000 to cover the costs of TRO. The £400,000 in the reserve account would be maintained.

The joint committee was informed that the numbers of PCNs issued was down by 0.2% compared to the pre-COVID 2019/20 performance and 7.5% against the 2020/21 performance. The number of PCNs issued against the estimated figure in the 2022/23 Business Plan is 6.5%.

The total overall income had reduced by 6.4% compared to 2019/20 and increased by 8.6% compared to the 2021/22. The income was down by 2.7% against the estimated figure in the Business Plan. It was also reported that there had been a dip in income from residence permits as they were extended for three months. This had been implemented to compensate for additional non-resident parking required during lockdown.

The joint committee then heard individual area performances from boroughs within the Partnership. It was reported that Basildon had struggled to perform as the pre-COVID period had resulted in a lack of activity in the high street and that it had been a lot more spread out. There had also been the impact of people working from home. The Partnership would monitor the situation. Brentwood had performed well however there had been a struggle filling vacancies. Maldon's numbers were down compared from last year however this was starting to increase. Chelmsford was reported to be consistent and 2% down in the Business Plan. Castle Point and Rochford were reported to be doing well and going up against the pre-COVID period. Overall, the Partnership was maintaining a good reserve position.

In response to the queries and comments from the joint committee, it was advised that;

- Staffing through different local borough councils would be revisited.
- Community safety officers from different borough councils would give SEPP much more flexibility especially in times where enforcement officers would not normally patrol such as at night.
- There is a general reluctance in terms of changing legislation to enable local authorities to expand the types of contraventions where it is possible to enforce with the use of CCTV cameras. A move to a more digital enforcement environment would result in greater efficiency and patrol coverage for the Partnership.. It was advised that digital enforcement would not replace officers, but it would be useful in terms of resources.
- Sending just one officer for patrols would not be viable.

The joint committee **AGREED** to note the update on the Business Plan 2022/23.

(14:20-14:35)

8. Update on the 3PR School Parking Initiative (Verbal Update)

The joint committee received a verbal update and presentation on the 3PR Parking Initiative with the School Parking and Project Officer.

Currently, it was reported that there were 51 schools already on the 3PR scheme however two had dropped out due to staffing issues. There were 11 new schools that joined the initiative and another two schools had also recently joined. There had been two refresher launches and two new schools launched. There had been revamped ideas such as the

Park and Stride scheme and the Drop Kerb scheme which consisted of parking near the school in a safer position.

There had been successful 3PR Refresher completions in Writtle Infant and Junior School and Newland Spring Primary School, Chelmsford. A Drop Kerb scheme was also being launched near Nickleby Road.

With regards to the 3PR new additions, the joint committee was informed that a Drop Kerb scheme was being launched in Millhouse Primary School and Nursery. They had also attended Woodham Walter Primary School and it was noted that the rural location of the school would be difficult for the 3PR Initiative, however it was hoped that the schemes that would be put in place would work well. The 3PR process for Kent Hill Infant Academy was scheduled for after the local elections and the junior school had been spoken to regarding joining the scheme.

The joint committee was informed that officers were currently in negotiations with multiple schools who had contacted or applied on the website and were receiving responses slowly. It was noted that most of the advertising for the 3PR Initiative was through word of mouth due to, officers attending refresher assemblies and other schools being made aware. The more that 3PR Initiatives were launched in new schools, more schools would be made aware of the initiative.

In response to comments and questions from the joint committee, it was advised that;

- Regarding car parking outside schools, a request would be received and there would then be a meeting with the school to deduce the problem. There would be a need to do more local research and, if possible, get in contact to grant permission.
- Parents would need to apply for a permit in a first come, first serve basis regarding the park and stride scheme. The general aim is to create a 3PR zone outside the school and to encourage students to walk or cycle into the zone. Those children who achieved this would gain a token which would contribute to a class total with a prize given on a monthly and yearly basis to the class winners with the most tokens.
- It would be down to the individual school to look after day-to-day activities.

The joint committee **AGREED** to note the update on the 3PR School Parking Initiative.

(14:35-14:45)

9. Approval of schemes from Brentwood Borough Council allocation of funds

The joint committee received a report with the proposal from Brentwood Borough Council on how they intended to use the £186,000 allocation from SEPP. The report also detailed how the funding would be fully used as per the requirements of Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) 1984.

The allocation was divided over three projects which all related to off street car parking and were listed as below:

- ANPR based Parking System installed in the multi-storey car park at Coptfold Road, Brentwood with £65,520 to be allocated
- Re-lining car park bays in Bell Mead car park, Ingatestone with £5,500 to be allocated
- Car park improvements at William Hunter Way with £114,980 to be allocated.

The joint committee **AGREED** to approve the proposals and for the funds to be released.

(14:45-14:49)

10. Approval of schemes from Maldon District Council allocation of funds

The joint committee received a report with the proposal from Maldon District Council on how they intended to use the £186,000 allocation from SEPP. The report also detailed how the funding would be fully used as per the requirements of Section 55 of the RTRA 1984.

The allocation was divided over three projects which all related to the improvement of off street car parking and were listed as below:

- Repair and resurfacing work to White Horse land and Butt Lane Car Parks with £151,250 to be allocated
- Feasibility Study for additional Car Parking Provision with £28,00 to be allocated
- Development of a Car Park Charging Strategy for all Council Owned car parks with £7,200 to be allocated.

The joint committee **AGREED** to approve the proposals and for the funds to be released.

(14:45-14:51)

11. Date and time of next meeting

The joint committee **AGREED** that the next meeting would be on 13th July 2023 at 2pm in the Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 14.53pm.

Chair