



*North Essex  
Parking Partnership*

**Part 1: April to June 2020**  
**Operational Report**

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This is the first quarterly Operational Report and will become Part 1 of our Annual Report 2020/21, so you won't have to wait until mid-2021 to see it!



# 1 Service overview

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) is a council-run organisation which brings together all street-based parking in North Essex on behalf of Braintree, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Tendring and Uttlesford Councils.

## Responding to the coronavirus pandemic

Due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the UK was in lockdown during the first quarter of the 2020/21 period, therefore this Operational Report will feature the way in which we have responded to the pandemic, and the measures and tools we put in place to help protect our communities and staff during this difficult period.

## Support for NHS and Key Workers

To help NHS staff and Key Workers during this time, we provided them with parking exemptions in the form of free digital parking permits with no time restrictions, to use in on-street parking places and council-owned car parks.

## Permit and season ticket extensions

With vehicle movements restricted and only essential travel allowed for the majority of this period, we extended the expiry date of all existing resident and business permits and season tickets for free. Read more in section 2.

## Adapting our operations

The national lockdown meant we had to quickly make changes to the way we operate to protect our communities and staff, ensure business continuity and that our customers' changing needs were met as the situation evolved. Read more in sections 5 and 7.

## Temporary red routes

Several temporary Red Route Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) were introduced in specific locations where dangerous, problematic and obstructive parking increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Read more in section 2.

## Online updates

At the start of the pandemic, we set up a dedicated Coronavirus Updates webpage on our website to provide motorists and residents with the latest parking information quickly and easily. Read more in Section 4.

## Contactless parking payments

With lockdown restrictions easing towards the end of this three-month period, we actively encouraged motorists to make contactless payments using MiPermit. Read more in section 3.



# 2 On-street parking

## Support for NHS and Key Workers

During the national lockdown, NHS staff and critical Key Workers were likely to be working longer hours, have reduced travel options and experience difficulties finding, and paying for, somewhere to park either near their place of work or at a patient's home. To help with this, we provided parking exemptions for NHS staff and critical Key Workers in the form of a free digital parking permit with no time restrictions, to use in on-street parking places and council-owned car parks.

We also let customers know about a new national website [www.nhs-freeparking.co.uk](http://www.nhs-freeparking.co.uk) which helps NHS staff, health and social care workers and NHS volunteers (critical care workers) find free parking locations quickly and easily.

## Permit and season ticket extensions

As vehicle movements were initially restricted and only essential travel allowed to take place, we extended the expiry date of all existing resident and business permits and season tickets by a period of three calendar months, giving customers one less thing to worry about during this difficult time. With many people working from home, we also relaxed some resident parking restrictions to enable residents to park safely in other areas.

## Temporary Red Routes

As emergency measures, we introduced temporary Red Route Traffic Regulation Orders in Epping Forest, Mersea and Hatfield Forest where problematic and obstructive parking has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

These temporary restrictions came about after a large number of motorists were parking dangerously and obstructively on verges, caused by a combination of high volume of traffic and demand for parking. These temporary installations allowed us to assist the Police with enforcement so they could use their resources elsewhere.

As temporary emergency measures, public consultations have not been required, however, the temporary TRO period allows Essex County Council to monitor the scheme closely for 18 months. Before the end of this period, and if there is a need to amend the schemes or make them permanent, formal public consultations will take place, enabling members of the public to provide feedback on the proposals.

## Partnership working

The temporary red route in High Beech, Epping Forest was introduced following a partnership request from Essex County Council, Epping

Forest District Council, Essex Police and the City of London Corporation.

The scheme was installed to address on-street parking issues, deter non-essential travel to the Forest and support the Government's current guidelines to stop the spread of coronavirus. It also aims to improve visitor safety; prevent obstructions caused by problematic parking; reinforce the byelaw of local verges; release police resources that had been required to manage the situation; and support the City of London Corporation's environmental and management plans for the area.



# 3 Off-street parking

Besides managing the kerbside of our highway network, we also work with our partner authorities in Braintree, Colchester, Harlow, and Uttlesford Councils to operate their car parks; this section describes more about the work we carry out in car parks.

## Contactless payments with MiPermit

We introduced the MiPermit app payment system to the car parks we manage eight years ago and since then we've worked hard to increase usage of the app for off-street parking, which includes the MiPermit campaign we ran last summer.

MiPermit has many advantages for customers, and for us as an organisation, however its contactless nature, has proved a real benefit during the pandemic and is something we've actively promoted in car parks, and through posters and social media.

As restrictions eased in June, we have also worked in partnership with Colchester Borough Council to support their town centre recovery and have set up an attractive parking offer which is only available to customers paying using the MiPermit app.

## Safety measures

As the first lockdown restrictions began to ease and travel restrictions lifted, we displayed posters in car parks promoting contactless payments as well as advising people how to use payment machines safely.

We also worked with Essex County Council to produce floor vinyls for social distancing purposes at their Colchester Park and Ride site, ahead of its re-opening on 6 July.

## Partnership working

We have continued to support Colchester Borough Council with its positive parking review, which includes its proposal for a new five-year parking strategy. The strategy includes a range of ideas to support and deliver improved and smarter parking services in Colchester, which also support the Council's climate emergency declaration. The public consultation ends in July and we will then work in partnership with Colchester Borough Council to deliver the outcome.

**PARKING PARTNERSHIP**  
NORTH ESSEX

## PAYING FOR PARKING

When possible make **contactless** payments with **MiPERMIT**

This machine is cleaned regularly

Wash your hands after use

Stay alert | Control the virus | Save lives

[parkingpartnership.org](http://parkingpartnership.org)



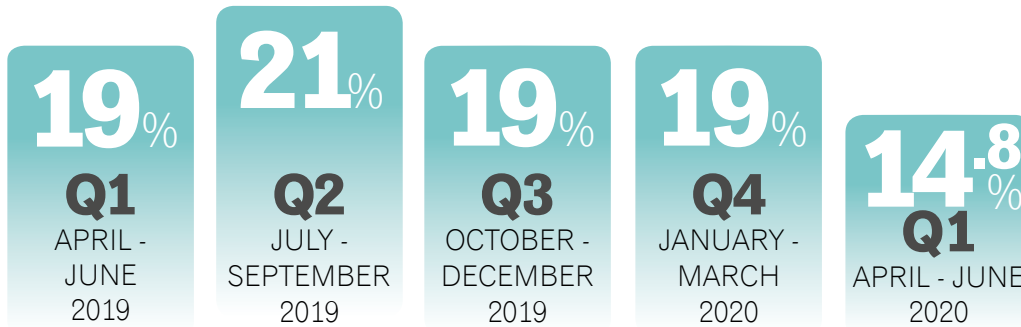
**9,409**  
parking permits  
temporarily extended

**3,558**  
NHS and  
Key Worker  
permits issued



**9.6 miles**  
of temporary red  
routes introduced

**5,688**  
CORONAVIRUS  
WEBPAGE VIEWS



Percentage of issued PCNs which were challenged at the informal stage

**97,000**  
impressions

# 4 Parking education

## Communicating changes

Due to the national lockdown, our usual parking education resources such as our 3PR school parking initiative could not take place, however the unprecedented situation and lockdown meant that we had to keep our staff, customers and partners informed about changes to our services and the support available.

Changes to our service delivery and support was communicated to the public via our website with a dedicated Coronavirus Updates webpage, which had almost 6,000 views by the end of June. Social media was also a great and popular tool and, during the three-month period, our Twitter impressions were at their peak with 97,000 impressions! We were also able to quickly and easily contact MiPermit account holders through their online accounts to update them about permit extensions.

We also kept partners and key stakeholders up to date through email, online meetings and e-newsletters and used a range of communication tools to keep our staff informed too.



**WE ARE  
HERE  
TO HELP**



# 5 People and performance

Our focus for the way we work is “Innovation, Efficiency, Education and Communication”.

## Innovation

Due to the restrictions in place, our Annual General Meeting and Joint Parking Committee meeting in June was held remotely for the first time via Zoom. The meeting was livestreamed from our lead partner authority, Colchester Borough Council's YouTube channel, where a recording was added afterwards.

## Efficiency

To communicate the temporary extension to permit holders, we contacted customers directly through their online MiPermit accounts, which saved resources due to its efficiency.

## Education

During the lockdown, we promoted the importance of continuing to park safely and legally to allow essential vehicles such as emergency services, waste collection and delivery vehicles to be able to access local roads easily and safely.

Our website and Twitter and Linked In accounts continue to be used as a place to educate.

## Communication

As restrictions eased and our patrols increased, our Civil Enforcement Officers experienced an increase in abuse towards them whilst carrying out their roles. To address this, as part of the national #haltthehate campaign and to protect our staff, we issued an appeal to the public to behave responsibly, and reminded them of the important role our staff undertake in keeping traffic moving and our local roads safe and accessible for all road users.





# 6 Work programme

Our future aims will help shape our work for the coming financial year. Here is just a taster of the projects that we will be focussing on.

## Parking projects

At our Joint Parking Committee meeting held in January, 18 exciting new parking projects with an investment of over £1 million from the organisation's Reserve Fund were given provisional approval. These projects enable the organisation to reinvest revenue into parking services across North Essex and several include making use of the latest technology and innovations, such as a trial of school parking cameras and on-street bay sensors. Due to the impact of coronavirus, these projects will continue to be progressed as and when possible throughout the year.

## Video series

We've appointed a local film production company to produce a series of short videos to promote and support the work we do. Some of the videos will be educational, whereas others will be promotional, but all will demonstrate how

innovative we are and will be used for different purposes. Filming for each of these has now begun and we've already launched our first video "About Us", which received national recognition as part of our Communications Award entry at the British Parking Awards 2020. Work on our next video, which will be a step-by-step guide to using the MiPermit App to pay for off-street parking, is underway and we hope to launch this as restrictions ease.

## Working with Babergh & Mid Suffolk Council

Richard Walker, our Parking Partnership Manager, is continuing to work with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (B&MSDC) to help support the creation of their new parking strategy.

NEPP and B&MSDC share a long boundary so the conversation is a logical step, and our guidance encourages working together with neighbouring authorities.

## Parking Strategy for Colchester

NEPP is also supporting Colchester Borough Council with a new five-year parking strategy and has recently launched a public consultation on the proposals.

## Positive Parking Agenda

As a founding member, we continue to champion the Positive Parking Agenda (PPA). We embed the key principles in our everyday work and lead by example.

You can find out more about the Positive Parking Agenda online at [www.positiveparkingagenda.co.uk](http://www.positiveparkingagenda.co.uk).



# 7 How we invest and develop

The coronavirus pandemic and national lockdown meant that we had to adapt our services quickly and efficiently to be able to operate safely to protect our staff and local communities. This meant changes had to be made to the equipment we use and the way we operate our services to ensure they are Covid-secure.

Office-based staff were provided with equipment and support to enable them to work from home in a safe way, which included providing desks and equipment to enable call handling from home broadband.

New technology such as Microsoft Teams was rolled out to staff to enable meetings to continue, and to enhance staff communication and share key messages and video updates from our Group Manager, Richard Walker.

Risk assessments for all our teams were immediately carried out and steps taken to negate any potential risks to staff and public wellbeing. Our Business Continuity Plan was also used and updated to fit these unprecedented circumstances.

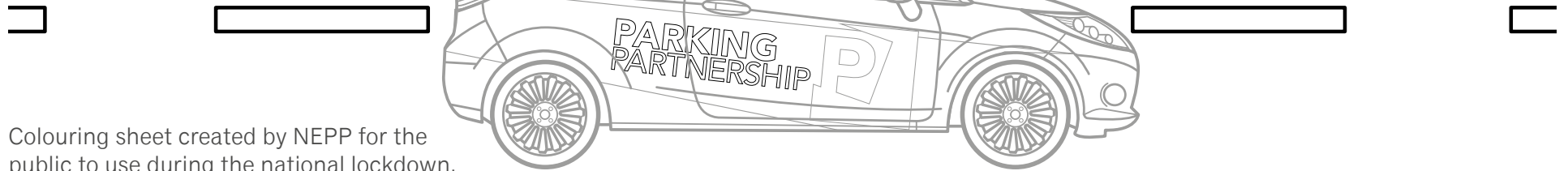
When patrols recommenced in May, additional patrol vehicles were brought in and Covid-secure screens installed in existing vehicles to protect



any staff sharing a vehicle. In addition to usual Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), staff were also provided with additional PPE such as face masks and hand sanitiser.

Staff wellbeing is always a top priority for us and the challenging circumstances the coronavirus pandemic has brought means we have to ensure

we're doing everything we can so our staff are safe and supported. Since March we have introduced additional tools and processes to ensure all our staff are well connected to their colleagues and managers, and aware of the support that is available to them and how to access it.



Colouring sheet created by NEPP for the public to use during the national lockdown, featuring the iconic rainbow symbol.

# Contact us

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## Find us on

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