

NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ON-STREET PARKING

18 March 2021 at 1.00pm

**Online meeting, held on Zoom and broadcast via the
YouTube channel of Colchester Borough Council.**

Members Present:

Councillor Nigel Avey (Epping Forest District Council)
Councillor Richard Van Dulken (Braintree District Council)
Councillor Deryk Eke (Uttlesford District Council)
Councillor Mike Lilley (Colchester Borough Council) (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Robert Mitchell (Essex County Council) (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Talbot (Tendring District Council)

Substitutions:

None.

Apologies:

Councillor Michael Danvers (Harlow District Council)

Also Present:

Richard Walker (Parking Partnership)
Lou Belgrove (Parking Partnership)
Liz Burr (Essex County Council)
Jason Butcher (Parking Partnership)
Rory Doyle (Colchester Borough Council)
Qasim Durrani (Epping Forest District Council)
Jake England (Parking Partnership)
Linda Howells (Uttlesford District Council)
Samir Pandya (Braintree District Council)
Miroslav Sihelsky (Harlow Council)
Ian Taylor (Tendring District Council)
James Warwick (Epping Forest District Council)

86. Have Your Say

Mr Peter Spring attended the meeting and, with the permission of the Chairman, addressed the Joint Committee regarding the proposal for parking restrictions on Maddox Road, Harlow.

Mr Spring noted that the intention given for this proposal was to assist the bus services using this road and further noted that other heavy traffic vehicles were able to navigate this road, even with parking occurring. It was queried why the restrictions would apply from 9am – 5pm, when heaviest use of buses on that road occurred in the evening, when parking would still be permitted.

Mr Spring questioned where vehicle users could then park, potentially seeing side roads becoming more congested and filled with parked vehicles, including for visiting carers and doctors.

The view was given to the Joint Committee that insufficient consultation had been carried out and had not been sufficiently thought out. Two local blocks of flats relied on the current on-street parking and would be adversely affected. Mr Spring explained that he had communicated with the local council but that no result had been achieved.

Richard Walker, Group Manager of the Parking Partnership, stated that the Joint Committee had approved the proposal to go forward to consultation. The proposals had then been redesigned to reflect feedback from consultation, with most of the proposed restrictions being removed from the scheme. The main problem had been identified as occurring during daytimes, when parking numbers were high and bus services were most common. It was agreed that parking was still heavy in evenings but explained that a balance had been sought in the proposal.

The Group Manager informed the Joint Committee that the decisions on this scheme were covered by delegations to him from the Committee, but that it could still be brought to the Joint Committee for a decision if the Committee so wished, or if it were deemed to be contentious. The Group Manager offered to bring this to the Joint Committee at its June Annual Meeting, where he could report on the next part of the process.

The Chairman clarified that it was up to Harlow District Council [as the Partnership member covering the area in question] to decide what schemes they bring forward for approval by the Joint Committee.

87. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting held on 10 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

The Joint Committee were informed that the Department for Transport were considering the comments and submission submitted for the consultation on obstruction parking. It was also expected that a governmental report on improving bus provision across the UK would be published in June 2021.

On-street Finance Update and Budget 2021-22

Richard Walker, Parking Partnership Group Manager, provided a recap of the need to approve the Budget 2021-22, which had been drafted following the last meeting of the Joint Committee. That meeting had been given a 'worst-case' scenario, and the situation had improved since then, due to factors such as an increase of Government support up to £600k, to cover lost income from the past year. A deficit was still expected at year end, however it was expected to be less than previously feared.

Clarity had been given in the budget regarding the CCTV car and Park Safe scheme, as shown in the financial spreadsheet.

Permit income would be received at the start of the new financial year, when renewals come due. There was also the expectation that there would be a significant increase in tourist use of parking facilities, as visitor numbers increased following the end of lockdown.

The Chairman voiced approval of the data-led services working hard with a range of partners, such as the Police. The Group Manager answered questions regarding the budgeting for data services, explaining that they had been moved temporarily under Management whilst they were being set up, explaining why there had been an increase in the level of running costs for the Management section of the Partnership.

The Joint Committee were informed that the Partnership had planned to reserve-fund work on Traffic Regulation Orders [TROs]. £100k had been allocated to fund red routes, including in Epping. The budget would usually see around £165k of reserve funding being allocated as funding for TROs, however this spending had changed in 2020-21 due to the situation relating to Covid-19.

Transport costs had increased as the Partnership had acquired new second-hand vehicles to help officers to maintain their Covid safety. The vehicles could be sold on, once the risk posed by Covid-19 had receded sufficiently.

A Joint Committee member queried the increase in the size of the Partnership's budget in comparison to that of 2020-21. The Group Manager explained that this stemmed from the commencement of data-led services and the operation of a second CCTV car, four new CCTV sites coming onstream. It was expected that it would be possible to defray costs in the budget to an extent.

To answer questions regarding expectations of income for the Park Safe CCTV car, the Chairman emphasised that the car's primary purpose was to increase enforcement efficiency, compared to foot patrols. The service was expected to pay for itself, but also act to increase adherence to restrictions. There were over

300 school sites in the area covered. They could not all be monitored, but remote systems like CCTV helped to increase enforcement and lower the cost of monitoring. Fines continued to only be issued where regulations were broken. The income could be modelled by looking at data collected from the operation of existing schemes.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee approved the Budget set for 2021-22.

88. NEPP Surplus Fund – Uttlesford [UDC] Projects and Project programme summary.

Jason Butcher, NEPP Parking Project Manager, explained the main points of the Uttlesford projects and the changes required, with the business case for the original plans to extend car parks being impossible to compile during the Covid-19 pandemic. The bids for funding on those projects had been withdrawn and alternative schemes had been identified. Funding had been requested for reallocation to an Uttlesford District Parking Review and Parking Strategy, and project updates were promised for future operational reports to the Joint Parking Committee.

Councillor Deryk Eke noted that the support for a review of permit schemes and restrictions mentioned in 3.4 of the report was not limited to Saffron Waldon and also applied to Stansted, Dunmow and other areas across the District. The Joint Committee was informed that issues had arisen across the District and that the NEPP was looking at ways to balance residents' parking, visitors' parking and the needs of bus users and others. The Chairman noted that areas across Essex would need to reassess parking needs as these develop over time.

The Parking Project Manager explained that the Uttlesford review and Parking Strategy would include in-house work and consultation with external experts. It was explained how internal work and use of NEPP resources were costed, when assessing the resource used and the overall project cost.

A discussion was held regarding how requests for additional schemes or traffic regulation orders should be raised. The Joint Committee were informed that the projects from last year had been delayed, owing to Covid-19. The Parking Project Manager gave assurance that he was happy to meet with partner authorities to discuss using allocated funding to get project work started.

Consultancy work by the Parking Partnership was outlined, with work being done for Babergh and Norfolk Councils. More detail could be given once these client organisations outlined their specific aims. The Group Manager confirmed that the Partnership wanted to increase consultancy and project management work for other areas, streamlining the consultancy process and reducing the external resources it needed.

The Joint Committee noted the reallocation of project funding, the withdrawal of the Lower Street Extension funding bid and the overall amended project programme provided.

89. Obstructive Pavement Parking Update

The Group Manager gave an update on the situation regarding potential changes to regulations and enforcement relating to obstructive and pavement parking. The Department for Transport had received much feedback to its consultation and was now looking at specific options. A report was expected by October regarding enforcement issues regarding moving traffic. There was also expected to be a report on obstructive parking measures by the Autumn.

90. Forward Plan 2021-2022

Owen Howell, Democratic Services Officer (Colchester Borough Council) introduced the Forward Plan for the coming 2021-22 year and gave an update on the situation regarding the possibility of conducting hybrid meetings in the future, once the regulations providing the ability to hold remote meetings lapsed.

The Chairman thanked the Partnership's officers and expressed his pride in their work on furthering a positive parking agenda, and the work of enforcement officers and the technical team on leading the use of innovative technology and approaches.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan 2021-22 be approved.