

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 4 March 2021 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor J Cloke – Brentwood Borough Council (Chairman)
Councillor D Efde – Rochford District Council
Councillor D Harrison – Basildon Borough Council
Councillor S Hart – Castle Point Borough Council
Councillor M Mackrory – Chelmsford City Council
Councillor C Mayes – Maldon District Council
Councillor R Mitchell – Essex County Council
Councillor L Wagland – Essex County Council

Officers present:

Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
Trudie Bragg – Castle Point Borough Council
William Butcher – Chelmsford City Council
Liz Burr - Essex County Council
Andrew Clay – Chelmsford City Council
Mike Dun – Brentwood Borough Council
David Green – 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

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of the Joint Committee.

2. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of those present was confirmed. There were no apologies for absence.

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting on 3 December 2020

The minutes of the Joint Committee meeting on 3 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

5. Operational and Performance Report

The Joint Committee received an update on the following matters:

- Operations during Covid-19 lockdown

The SEPP enforcement operation had been adapted during the latest lockdown and aligned to adhere to the guidance issued by the British Parking Association, Department of Transport and the Local Government Association. It was concentrating on parking issues which were considered dangerous and obstructive while taking a more relaxed approach with restrictions in residential areas, recognising that there was greater demand for kerb side parking while working from home. Working practices for staff had also been altered to adhere to Covid restrictions and to focus resources on more specifically targeted enforcement patrols.

- Equipment

Arrangements were being made to replace body-worn cameras with new replacements that had greater functionality and a longer working life. Dash cameras would soon be installed in vehicles operated by the service.

- Premises

The enforcement teams in Maldon and Rochford would shortly be moving to new offices.

- Recruitment

The Partnership was increasing the number of agency staff to five. Two of the current agency staff were due to be reviewed soon and a decision would be made on whether to employ them directly.

- Partner Update

The Partnership had arrangements in place with Maldon, Rochford and Brentwood for their community safety teams to carry out parking enforcement outside of the normal core hours and at weekends. The lockdowns and on-going situation with Covid-19 had disrupted the normal service provision and a review of the arrangements would take place to agree a phased approach, as lockdown measures ease, returning patrols to pre-pandemic levels. It was confirmed that the Maldon contract was due to be renewed in March 2022.

SEPP was working closely with the police to deliver CEO accreditation. This would start with the Chelmsford CEOs and be rolled out to the other SEPP areas. Accreditation would provide many benefits and would enhance the training of the CEOs.

AGREED that the Operational and Performance report be noted.

(2.04pm to 2.18pm)

6. Financial Report

The Joint Committee received a report on the financial position of the Partnership. It showed a deficit of £3,486 for SEPP and a deficit of £317,567 for the TRO account on a cash basis for the financial year to 22 February 2021 before taking into account items funded from the Reserve. This resulted in an overall deficit position for the Partnership, including the TRO account, of £317,567. This was a worse position than the last reported deficit for the Partnership and TRO account of £134,391. The third national lockdown had again impacted on the operation of the Partnership, with reduced income levels but unavoidable spend continuing.

Reserves of £344,221 had been used on various schemes during the financial year, leaving the Partnership, including the TRO account, with a net deficit of £661,788.

AGREED that the financial position of the Partnership for 2020/2021 to 22 February 2021 be noted.

(2.18pm to 2.22pm)

7. Progress on Business Plan

A report was presented on the Business Plan for 2021/2022. The Plan presented the proposed annual budget for that year and set out the business aims and objectives to be achieved in that period. The budget was based on the annual performance of the South Essex Parking Partnership since its introduction in April 2011.

The Covid-19 situation and period of lockdown had required a complete change to how the operation operated and was monitored. The focus during 2020-21 had been on providing an enforcement service in line with central government guidance and advice and implementing new operational policy guidelines and changes to ensure the welfare and safety of the staff.

The number of PCNs issued across the Partnership was currently 49% down against the previous year and the estimated figure in the Business Plan and the overall income was expected to be 43% down. The outturn position was expected to result in a £525,000 deficit. The reserves held by the partnership would sufficiently cover any financial shortfalls this year and the Partnership could expect to maintain a reserve in the region of £1,104,000.

AGREED that the update on the Business Plan for 2021/22 be noted.

(2.22pm to 2.34pm)

8. ECC/SEPP/NEPP Agreement Post-March 2022

The Joint Committee was informed that positive meetings had been held between the County Council and the North and South Essex Parking Partnerships to consider the future of the Partnership Agreements after their expiry in March 2022. All parties were of the view that this was an opportunity to build on the existing relationship for the benefit of all concerned and to update the agreements to embrace new technology and enable the Partnerships to take on additional duties. Those included the operation of blue badge spaces, implementing TROs, CCTV enforcement and administering school parking areas, with some of those functions being provided through Service Level Agreements. The parties were also looking at how any surpluses should be distributed, including to the County Council.

AGREED that the position on discussions on the Partnership Agreements be noted.

(2.34pm to 2.44pm)

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

AGREED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be on 21 June 2021 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 2.44pm

Chair