

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 12th March 2026 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor Laureen Shaw – Essex County Council
Councillor Simon Morgan – Maldon District Council
Councillor Mike Steptoe – Rochford District Council
Councillor Darryl Sankey – Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Andrew Sosin – Chelmsford City Council

Officers present:

Stuart Jarvis – Castle Point Borough Council
Brett Edwards – Basildon Council
Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
Russell Panter – Chelmsford City Council
Michael Packham – Chelmsford City Council
William Butcher – Chelmsford City Council
Freddey Banks-Ayres – Chelmsford City Council

Shadowing:

Jack Doyle – Chelmsford City Council
Nicole Morris – Chelmsford City Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Fuller (Castle Point Borough Council), Cllr Aiden McGurran (Basildon Council), Cllr Terry Sherlock (Chelmsford City Council), Stuart Anderson (Rochford District Council), Carol Carr (Brentwood Borough Council), Jo Heynes (Essex County Council) and Nicola Syder (Maldon District Council).

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting 11th December 2025

The minutes of the meeting 11 December 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

5. Operational and Performance Report (Verbal Update)

The Joint Committee received a verbal update on enforcement operational matters. It was reported that recruitment activity continued across the partnership. Brentwood intended to employ two agency staff directly from April and work was due to take place on reviewing the School Engagement Officer role, which was funded by Essex County Council. The Committee heard that clarification was being sought on whether Essex would refund the role again or whether alternative funding sources would be considered.

An update was provided on ongoing enforcement projects. This included progress on camera enforcement in Duke Street and the use of the National Evaders Database and the associated platform. The Committee was informed that work on Chipside had been completed, creating a safe and secure means of connecting to third party platforms. Work to improve the enforcement mailbox had also been completed.

The Committee received an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in relation to parking. Essex and the East Anglia Parking Forum (E&EAPF) had agreed to form a focus group to support parking services through the process. Members were advised that some local authorities within the forum were uniting with authorities that were not yet decriminalised, which added another complex operational matter.

With regard to Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) values, the Committee was advised that Bournemouth had completed a one month trial within a two square kilometre section of the seafront. A report was due to be published. Early information shared at the forum indicated increased compliance, a reduction in PCN issue rates and an increase in public transport use during the trial period. Once the trial had ended, there had been a return to previous PCN levels. No negative public feedback had been received relating to the level of the charge. An executive summary was expected to provide evidence supporting increases to PCN charges. Several authorities had also reported significant operational deficits attributed to rising costs. It was noted that the British Parking Association (BPA) seminar would be taking place in the near future and further information would be shared with the Joint Committee once available.

The Committee was informed that the Pavement Parking Bill had completed its second reading on 29th January and was scheduled to move to Committee Stage on 26th May. Concerns had been raised across authorities about the labour intensive nature of enforcement, the poorly defined nature of what constituted an obstruction and the challenge of managing public expectation. Clarification had been sought during discussion regarding how the legislation would treat grass verges, it was shared that obstructions appeared to relate only to footpaths with access being the main reason for the Bill.

In response to questions it was shared that:

- Clarification was sought on the Bournemouth experiment relating to observation times for Civil Enforcement Officers before issuing a PCN. Officers explained that the detailed logistical information would be included within the Bournemouth report once published and could be circulated when available.

- In relation to pavement parking definitions and reference was made to the inclusion of wheelchair users and double buggies when assessing obstruction. Further guidance was expected when the Committee Stage commenced.
- In relation to Blue Badges and whether enforcement officers could confiscate a badge that was being used by someone other than the badge holder. Officers confirmed that they were able to interrogate and confiscate badges, although only when present at the vehicle. Logistically this was hard to enforce due to complexities that arose when a driver was legitimately dropping off the badge holder, and consent considerations therefore applied.

RESOLVED that the operational and performance update be noted.

(2.02pm to 2.14pm)

6. Financial Report

The Joint Committee received a financial report regarding the financial position of the South Essex Parking Partnership for the period covering 1st April 2025 to 16th February 2026. The report provided details of the actual costs incurred and income received during this period.

Members were advised that the SEPP account showed a surplus of £281,017, while the TRO account showed a deficit of £363,040. The overall position for the Partnership, including the TRO account, was therefore a deficit of £82,023, which was £61,081 worse than last reported. Members were informed that due to the timing of the report, additional income from February was not yet included, which would help reduce the deficit.

The Joint Committee noted that income from Penalty Charge Notices between April and January 2025/26 totalled £1,434,658, compared to £1,243,037 in the same period of 2024/25. This represented just over 115% of the previous year's level. Members were advised that PCN income to 16 February was already higher than the total collected for 2024/25, and that if income for February and March continued at the average monthly level for the year so far, it would be just short of the budgeted level of £1,731,000.

The impact of the inflationary increases to residents' parking charges was also highlighted, with income for April to January 2025/26 totalling £682,001, compared to £571,305 over the same period in 2024/25. This represented just over 119% of the 2024/25 level and was on target to exceed the budgeted level of £750,000 for 2025/26.

It was also confirmed that there had not been any spend from reserves to date in 2025/26.

Clarification was provided to members in relation to 'third party payments' listed as an expenditure, officers explained that this was a partnership-wide expense which covered county court fees, tribunal fees etc.

RESOLVED that the Financial Report be noted.

(2.15pm to 2.25pm)

7. Progress on Business Plan 2025/26

The Joint Committee received an update on progress against the approved Business Plan for 2025/26, covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 January 2026.

Members were reminded that the Business Plan, approved in January 2025, set operational aims, financial projections and key performance objectives for the year.

It was reported that PCN issuance across the Partnership was 19.6% higher than in 2024/25 and 4.2% above the level estimated in the Business Plan. PCN income was also 13.4% higher compared to the same period last year. Operating expenditure remained in line with expectations.

The Committee noted that overall recovery rates for paid PCNs stood at 74%, compared to 72 % in 2024/25, indicating a strong recovery position. Cancellation rates remained within expected levels at 10%.

Progress was reported against Business Plan objectives, including staff performance management, patrol coverage adjustments, partnership working to support out of hours enforcement, and the introduction of new resident parking schemes. Essential maintenance of signs and lines continued to be delivered under delegated authority.

It was confirmed that the Partnership remained on track to maintain a positive financial position, contributing to the costs of the Traffic Regulation Order function and retaining the agreed £400,000 reserve.

Joint Committee Members queried whether they would be able to view a breakdown of PCN's by a specified area. Nick Binder asked members to book in to visit the office so that specific breakdowns could be established as requested.

(2.26pm to 2.37pm)

8. Delegation of the Joint Committee decision to consider representations against an advertised Traffic Regulation Order and sign and line funding

The Joint Committee received a report outlining the funding decisions made under delegated authority for the 2025/26 financial year relating to signs and lines maintenance and new Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

It was noted that Essex County Council has delegated responsibility for on-street parking enforcement, associated sign and line maintenance and the power to make TROs to the Joint Committee through the Joint Committee Agreement, renewed in 2022. The Agreement permits delegation of these functions to the SEPP Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

Members were informed that the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan allocated £200,000 for essential signs and lines maintenance and new TRO schemes. Members were made aware that the funding approvals made under delegated authority in the agenda pack was incorrect

and listed a total of £189,550, the actual total being £197,500, leaving £2,500 unallocated for the remainder of the financial year.

Appendix B listed Batch 22 schemes for maintenance works totalling £155,500, while Appendix C set out new TRO schemes totalling £42,000. These schemes were approved under delegated authority in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

(2.37pm to 2.41pm)

9. Confirmation of one year extension to the Joint Committee Agreement

The Board was informed that that all Partner Authorities had agreed to extend the current South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee Agreement by one year, moving the expiry date to 31 March 2028.

In accordance with clause 3.3 of the Agreement, a letter confirming the Joint Committee's consent to the extension will be sent to ECC before the 31 March 2026 deadline.

(2.42pm to 2.48pm)

10. Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be on 2nd July 2026 at 2pm, in the Marconi Room, at the Chelmsford City Council offices.

The meeting closed at 2.49pm

Chairman