

SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

11 December 2025

AGENDA ITEM 8

Subject	One-year extension to the current Joint Committee Agreement
Report by	The South Essex Parking Partnership Manager

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Purpose

The report sets out the process with the option to extend the current Joint Committee Agreement for a further year as per the requirements set out in the Joint Committee Agreement. The report requests that each Partner Authority provides their written consent to continue the delegated function for a further one-year period up to 31st March 2028

Options

The Joint Committee can agree, reject or amend this proposal.

Recommendation(s)

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| 1. | That the Joint Committee agrees to go back to their respective Councils' to seek agreement for the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) to continue the delegated function for a further one-year as set out in the Joint Committee Agreement and confirm this decision in writing to the South Essex Parking Partnership Manager by 20 February 2026. |
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Consultees

Lead officers from each of the Partner Authorities as set out in Appendix B of the Joint Committee Agreement 2022.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) entered into a new Joint Committee Agreement on the 1st of April 2022 to continue the on-street parking enforcement operation and the associated Traffic Regulation Order function on behalf of Essex County Council.

- 1.2 The Term of this agreement is set out in Section 3 of the agreement as follows:

3. The Term

- 3.1 The Joint Committee shall be operational for a period of five years (“the Operational Period”) commencing on 1 April 2022 (“the Commencement Date”) unless, with the written consent of all the Partner Authorities, the Operational Period is extended for an additional 12 months on three consecutive occasions, to a maximum term of eight years.
- 3.2 The decision whether to extend the Operational Period shall be taken by the Council not less than fifteen months before the end of the Operational Period.
- 3.3 The Joint Committee’s consent must be obtained in writing to the proposed extension and shall be delivered to the Council not less than twelve months before the end of the Operational Period.
- 1.3 The current 5-year term will take the agreement up to 31 March 2027. The proposal is to extend the agreement for a further one year to take the term of the agreement until 31 March 2028 to coincide with the timeline of the Local Government Reform within Essex.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 With the introduction of Local Government Reform it is anticipated that on 1 April 2028 the new unitary authorities will be in place and the existing SEPP & NEPP Partnership Councils and Essex County Council will be dissolve and replaced with the new unitary Council’s. The current on-street functions that SEPP deliver on behalf of Essex County Council (ECC) will therefore fully transfer to the new unitary authorities and will be the responsibility of those unitary authorities as from 1 April 2028.
- 2.2 The proposal to extend the current SEPP Joint Committee Agreement is to fully ensure that the service continuity and legal enforcement of the parking restrictions can be maintained throughout the Partnership areas for financial year 2027/28 when thereafter the function will transfer and operate from 1 April 2028 under the new unitary authorities due to Local Government Reform in Essex.

3 Financial Position

- 3.1 The financial forecast (Business Plan 2026/27) demonstrates that the South Essex Parking Partnership can enter into a one-year extension to the Operational Period and remain financially self- sufficient to fully fund the parking enforcement operation and TRO function with zero financial risk to any of the SEPP partner authorities.

3 Risk and impact of ECC not extending the agreement

- 3.1 Section 3.2 of the Joint Committee Agreement states that the decision to extend the Joint Committee Agreement must initially be taken by the Council (ECC) within 15 months (31 December 2025) before the end of the operational period.

- 3.2 If ECC decide against extending the agreement, the operational term will cease on 31 March 2027 and the operation and associated staff shall be transferred back to ECC. This would potentially be very damaging and disruptive to all staff involved when you consider that a further transfer will be necessary when the new unitary authorities operate from 1st April 2028. In terms of maintaining business continuity and preventing unnecessary staff disruption prior to the introduction of the new authorities in April 2028, it is recommended that the 1-year extension is agreed.
- 3.3 Assuming ECC wish to maintain the current service continuity and offer the one-year extension until 31 March 2028, the Joint Committee's consent (as per 3.3 of the Joint Committee Agreement) must be obtained in writing to the proposed extension and shall be delivered to the Council not less than twelve months (31 March 2026) before the end of the operational period. This will require each Partner Council to provide their written consent to enter into a further one-year extension to the operational period.

5 Risk of a Partner Authority withdrawing from the Partnership

- 5.1 If a Partner Authority decides to withdraw from SEPP at any time, the delegated functions for on-street parking enforcement, TROs and signs and lines maintenance would still be delivered within that geographical area by SEPP but without an elected Member from that Authority being part of the Joint Committee.

All responsibilities sit with the Joint Committee and the Partnership could fully function as long as at least three Partner Authorities remain (quorum for meetings is three).

If all Partner Authorities decide against extending the 1-year extension and SEPP is terminated completely, ECC would need to find an alternative delivery model for the functions currently delegated resulting in the same impact on service provision and staff as highlighted in section 3.2 of this report.

- 5.2 It should be noted that technically in order to fully comply with Clause 3.1 of the Joint Committee Agreement, if one of the Partner Authorities does not provide written consent at this stage to the one-year extension and wishes to withdraw, then the existing agreement would terminate on 31st March 2027 and a new Joint Committee Agreement would be required for the one-year period up to 31st March 2028.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The current Joint Committee Agreement is for an operational period of five years ending 31 March 2027. The Joint Committee Agreement makes provision for a further 12 month extension on three consecutive occasions, to a maximum term of eight years subject to written consent from each Partner Authority.

The decision whether to extend the Operational Period shall be taken by the Council (ECC) not less than fifteen months (i.e. 31 December 2025) before the end of the Operational Period. The Joint Committee's consent must be obtained in writing to the proposed extension and shall be delivered to the Council (ECC) not less than 12 months (31 March 2026) before the end of the Operation Period.

The Joint Committee's consent is therefore required from each Partner Authority by 20th February 2026 to enable this to be reported to the SEPP Joint Committee meeting being held on 12 March 2026.

The proposal to extend the current SEPP Joint Committee Agreement is to fully ensure that the service continuity and legal enforcement of the parking restrictions can be maintained throughout the Partnership areas for the period 2027/28 when thereafter the function will transfer and operate from 1 April 2028 under the new unitary authorities due to Local Government Reform in Essex.

The financial forecast (Business Plan 2026/27) demonstrates that the South Essex Parking Partnership can enter into a one-year extension to the Operational Period and remain financially self-sufficient to fully fund the parking enforcement operation and TRO function with zero financial risk to any of the SEPP partner authorities.

Each Partner Authority is now requested to provide their written consent to enter into a one-year extension to the Operational Period to the South Essex Parking Partnership Manager by 20th February 2026.

List of Appendices

None

Background Papers

South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee Agreement 2022

Annual Business Plan 2026/27