

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 11th December 2025 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor Daryll Sankey – Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Terry Sherlock – Chelmsford City Council
Cllr Simon Morgan - Maldon District Council
Cllr Aiden McGurran - Basildon Council
Councillor Mike Steptoe – Rochford District Council

Officers present:

Stuart Anderson – Rochford District Council
Freddey Banks-Ayres – Chelmsford City Council
Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
Paul Brookes – Chelmsford City Council
William Butcher – Chelmsford City Council
Jo Heynes – Essex County Council
Stuart Jarvis – Castle Point Borough Council
Michael Packham – Chelmsford City Council
Russell Panter – Chelmsford City Council
Jack Sharp – Chelmsford City Council
Alan Underdown – Basildon Council

Shadowing:

Jack Doyle – Chelmsford City Council
Nicola 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 Laureen Shaw (Essex County Council), Nicola Syder (Maldon District Council), Sharon Braney (Rochford District Council)

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

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

4. Public Question Time

Stock Parish Councillor John Pye raised a question regarding next steps for introducing parking restrictions in Stock village following withdrawal of TRO Amendment No. 66. Members discussed previous consultations, site visits, and objections that led to withdrawal. The Parish Council sought clarity on whether a new application would be required after the Essex Highways safety audit or if the existing TRO could be amended. Officers explained that Essex County Council (ECC) retains responsibility for TROs, and any revised scheme must meet ECC criteria and funding requirements. Safety concerns, including emergency vehicle access, were highlighted. ECC will undertake a safety audit, and engagement with County officers will determine the way forward.

5. Operational and Performance Report (Verbal Update)

The Committee received a verbal update on operational enforcement matters. It was reported that recruitment remained challenging, with two agency staff filling Brentwood vacancies and one vacancy in Chelmsford likely to remain until 2026. Maldon's new CEO had settled well. School engagement continued at Sawyers Hall Lane and Wickford schools promoting sustainable travel. Digital projects included development of an enforcement mailbox, QR links to services, and secure data sharing via Oppidatim.

Camera enforcement projects progressed in Chelmsford, focusing on Duke Street red route to protect bus gate access. Members discussed technical limitations of mobile cameras and legislative requirements. Updates were provided on NPED and Blue Badge digitisation, RMC resource expansion, and research into vehicle removal policies.

The second reading of the Pavement Parking Bill in the House of Commons, originally scheduled for 11 December, had been postponed to 16 January, with no further update. A two-page feature in Parking Review magazine included RAC research showing strong public support for action and detailed statistics on the impact of footway parking. The articles also covered political discussions, legislative proposals, and advocacy from charities calling for nationwide enforcement similar to London and Scotland.

The British Parking Association (BPA) had urged the government to raise penalty charge levels nationwide, citing evidence that current fines are not a sufficient deterrent. Data from a summer trial by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council showed that increasing fines significantly impacted driver behaviour. The Department for Transport is reviewing these findings. Higher PCN charges were considered necessary to maintain their deterrent effect and reflect inflationary pressures. SEPP had provided data to the BPA for this.

Business plan performance varied across authorities: Basildon improved after staffing issues; Rochford recovered following long-term absence; Castle Point and Chelmsford reported strong consistency; Maldon maintained stability; Brentwood improved with agency support. School parking initiatives faced low engagement, with limited responses from targeted schools.

Questions from Members were around camera enforcement scope, school engagement strategies, agency staff permanency, and RMC's role in enforcement. Members also

discussed funding models for additional officers and explored AMPR technology limitations for enforcement.

RESOLVED that the operational and performance update be noted.

(2.00pm to 2.40pm)

6. Financial Report

The Joint Committee received a financial report regarding the financial position of the South Essex Parking Partnership for the period covering 1 April 2025 to 1 December 2025. 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 £274,538, while the TRO account showed a deficit of £295,479. The overall position for the Partnership, including the TRO account, was therefore a deficit of £20,942, which was £33,826 better than last reported.

The Joint Committee noted that income from Penalty Charge Notices between April and November 2025/26 totalled £1,121,239, compared to £997,544 in the same period of 2024/25. This represented just over 112% of the previous year's level, although members were advised that PCN income was still unlikely to reach the budgeted level of £1,731,000 unless there was a significant increase later in the year.

The impact of the inflationary increases to residents' parking charges was also highlighted, with income for April to November 2025/26 totalling £553,959, compared to £458,341 over the same period in 2024/25. This represented just under 121% of the 2024/25 level and was on target to achieve the £750,000 budgeted for 2025/26.

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

RESOLVED that the Financial Report be noted.

(2.40pm to 2.48pm)

7. Annual Business Plan 2026/27

The Joint Committee received a report seeking approval of the Business Plan for 2026/27, which set out the proposed budget, objectives, and funding allocations for the forthcoming year.

It was reported that the Business Plan estimated total expenditure of £2,446,400 and income of £2,684,300, resulting in a projected surplus of £237,900 from the parking enforcement account. This surplus would be applied to cover the costs of the TRO function, maintenance of signs and lines, and the implementation of new traffic management schemes. The Partnership would continue to maintain the agreed reserve of £400,000.

The Committee noted that the proposed funding for 2026/27 included £63,000 for additional out-of-hours and weekend enforcement patrols and £152,000 to address the projected TRO operational shortfall for sign and line maintenance and new TROs. It was also confirmed that an additional £100,000 had been secured from a commuted sum for the Beaulieu Park Train Station development, ring-fenced to fund TROs and resident parking schemes in surrounding areas, with £35,000 allocated specifically for new resident permit schemes.

The Business Plan also outlined objectives for 2026/27, including monitoring the budget and service provision, maintaining performance and staff resources, reviewing patrol rotas, continuing resident parking schemes and school parking initiatives, and exploring efficiencies and digital improvements. Risks to the Partnership had been reviewed, and an updated action plan to address the top three risks was included.

In response to questions, it was shared that:

- The £100,000 ring-fenced for Beaulieu Park was considered adequate, noting that many cycle paths and walkways had already been implemented and that the funding would be monitored continuously.
- In relation to Brentwood High Street the Red Route option had been withdrawn and replaced with relining works on the new tarmac surface. Officers confirmed that a total of £100,000 had been allocated for Brentwood and Chelmsford, which had been revised to £80,000 to take into account the adjusted Brentwood scheme.
- Red Route Tow-Away would not generate income and was explained that implementing tow-away areas would involve significant costs for depots, 24/7 access, and compliance guidance, and that London was moving away from this approach due to high setup costs.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee:

- approved the 2026/27 budget and the proposed actions and objectives
- approved the proposed allocation of funding (Table 3 page 16) for 2026/27
- agreed to maintain a reserve of £400,000 for financial year 2026/27
- approved the risks identified and the action plan to address the top three risks in Appendix B.

(2.49pm to 3.15pm)

8. One-year extension to the Joint Committee Agreement

The Committee considered a proposal to extend the current South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) Joint Committee Agreement by one year beyond its existing term, which is due to end on 31 March 2027. The extension would take the agreement to 31 March 2028, aligning with the timeline for Local Government Reorganisation and the creation of new unitary authorities in Essex from April 2028.

Members were advised that Essex County Council (ECC) must decide by 31 December 2025 whether to allow the extension. Each partner authority is then required to provide written consent by 31 March 2026, with confirmation requested by 20 February 2026 to enable reporting at the March Joint Committee meeting. The extension would ensure continuity of parking enforcement and Traffic Regulation Order functions during the transitional period and avoid disruption to staff and services.

It was noted that SEPP can fund the additional year without financial risk to partner authorities. If the extension is not agreed, the current agreement will end in March 2027, and functions would revert to ECC before transferring again to the new unitary authorities in April 2028, creating significant operational disruption. If any partner authority withdraws, SEPP would continue to operate in that area without elected representation on the Joint Committee, provided the quorum of three authorities is maintained.

The Committee agreed 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.

(3.15pm to 3.21pm)

9. Forward plan of meetings

The Board received a report setting out the forward plan of agenda items for approval by the Joint Committee and the proposed meeting dates for the Joint Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.

It was shared that a standing item on Local Government Reorganisation would be added to the work programme starting September 2026.

The Committee agreed:

- the forward plan of agenda items
- the future meeting dates of 25 June 2026, 10 September 2026, 10 December 2026, 11 March 2027, each commencing at 2pm
- that the above meeting be held at the Chelmsford City Council offices

(3.21pm to 3.23pm)

10. Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be on 12 March 2pm, in the Marconi Room, at the Chelmsford City Council offices.

The meeting closed at 3.24pm

Chairman