

MINUTES
of the
SOUTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE
held on 14 December 2023 at 2pm

Members present:

Councillor Ian Fuller – Chelmsford City Council
Councillor Carole Morris – Basildon Borough Council
Councillor Laureen Shaw – Essex County Council
Councillor Darryl Sankey – Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Vilma Wilson – Rochford District Council

Officers present:

Nick Binder – Chelmsford City Council
Heather Binns - Chelmsford City Council
Paul Brookes – Chelmsford City Council
William Butcher – Chelmsford City Council
Stuart Jarvis – Castle Point Borough Council
Russell Panter – Chelmsford City Council
Dan Sharma-Bird – Chelmsford City Council
Jack Sharp - Chelmsford City Council
Alan Underdown – Basildon Borough Council

1. Welcome from Chairman

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

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Fuller, Castle Point Borough Council and Councillor S Morgan, Maldon District Council. Apologies had also been received from Sharon Braney – Rochford District Council, James Hendry – Basildon Borough Council, Mike Packham – Chelmsford City Council and Nicola Syder – Maldon District Council. Alan Underdown substituted for James Hendry – Basildon.

3. Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting 31 August 2023

The minutes of the meeting 31 August 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

No questions were asked at the meeting.

5. Operational and performance update (verbal update)

The Joint Committee received a verbal update on enforcement operational matters. The Joint Committee were updated on the business plan position which detailed a positive increase against previous years, with the figures regarding PCN's issued in the plan being exceeded. It was noted that figures were down in Basildon, Maldon and Rochford but this was mainly due to staffing and sickness issues, some other areas were up against the previous years. The Joint Committee heard that there were currently three vacancies and officers had recently attended a labour day at Basildon employment centre to help advertise the roles. It was also noted that nine vehicles were going to reach the end of their leases in 2024 and officers were looking to replace these with lower emission vehicles. The Joint Committee also heard about the SEPP IT future plan, which was designed to maintain efficiency alongside enhancing and developing the services provided. It was also noted that officers continued to look at possible future issues, such as various digital solutions and moving traffic powers.

RESOVLED that the update be noted.

(2.01pm to 2.13pm)

6. Financial Report

The Joint Committee considered a report on the financial position of South Essex Parking Partnership up to 30th November 2023, which showed a cash-based surplus of £284,171 for SEPP and a deficit of £206,4003 for the TRO account before taking into account items funded from the Reserve. This resulted in an overall surplus position of £78,168 when the TRO account was included, an improvement of £134,628 since last reported. It was noted that the 23/24 figure on PCN income, represented just over 101% of the income received in 22/23 over the same period.

It was noted that the latest projections and incomes received meant the budget was likely to be broadly on target for 23/24 and there had been one item of reserve spend of £33,820 for enforcement costs in Brentwood, leaving the net surplus for the partnership and TRO account after reserves use of £44,348.

RESOLVED that the financial report be noted.

(2.14pm to 2.16pm)

7. 3PR School Parking Initiative update

The Joint Committee received a verbal update on the 3PR School Parking Initiative. It was noted that 64 schools were now enrolled, with 9 further ones under discussion. It was also noted that a successful launch had recently taken place at Milhouse Primary in Basildon, with strong support shown. The Joint Committee also heard that the team were looking to improve on press releases and that a park and stride scheme from Asda to Barnes Farm school in Chelmsford was launching soon, with parents and teachers all being offered permits. In response to a question from the Joint Committee, about the use of the scheme in secondary schools, it was noted that this would require a major rebrand as the scheme had been very much designed with primary school age children in mind.

AGREED that the report be noted.

(2.16pm to 2.21pm)

8. Annual Business Plan 2024/25

The Joint Committee received a report on the proposed annual budget and business aims/objectives that the partnership set out to achieve in the forthcoming year. It was noted that the business objectives for 2024/25 had been set to ensure the Partnership maintained the current level of performance and continued to provide a high level of service delivery. It was also noted that the financial position and budget set for 2024/25 had ensured that all services would continue to be funded from the Partnership account with sufficient reserves to cover any shortfalls should they arise. The Joint Committee also heard that officers were noticing costs across the board starting to increase and that this would be closely monitored in future years.

The Joint Committee heard the proposal that there would be £200k funding available for maintenance of signs and lines and new TROs with an additional £35k for the implementation of resident permit schemes to coincide with the opening of the new Beaulieu Train Station in Chelmsford. It was also proposed that the reserve fund continue to be set at £400k for 2024/25.

In response to questions from members, the Joint Committee heard that;

- The funds set aside for Beaulieu would cover parts of Old Beaulieu and North Springfield that were adopted roads. It was also noted that discussions had taken place with parishes and the partnership wanted to take the initiative before parking in the area became an issue and felt it was important to get ahead of any potential issues.
- The Partnership was part of the British Parking Association and increases to the PCN fees were a topic often discussed by the association.
- It was assumed that interest was earned on the £400k reserve but officers would look into this to confirm.
- The £400k reserve figures had been gradually increased, most recently, after the pandemic and it was felt by officers to be at the correct level to protect the partner authorities.
- Only Brentwood and Chelmsford had pay and display parking areas but this was an option for all partner authorities.

RESOVLED that;

1. the 2024/25 budgets and proposed actions/objectives be agreed and;
2. the proposed funding for 2024/25 be agreed and;
3. the £400,000 reserve for the financial year be maintained and'
4. the risks identified and the action plan to address the top three risks be agreed.

(2.22pm to 2.40pm)

9. Castle Point proposal for the allocation of the agreed share of the operational fund

The Joint Committee received a report detailing the proposal from Castle Point Borough Council on how they intended to use part of the agreed £186,000 allocation from the SEPP operational fund, in accordance with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. It was noted that the funds had been allocated to upgrade the overspill car park at Thorney Bay. It was noted that this would help respond to increased visitor numbers throughout the year and meet Building Regulation requirements in respect of the soon to be built pavilion/toilet facilities and access to it by emergency vehicles.

AGREED that;

1. The proposed scheme totalling £135,000, is in accordance with Section 55 of the RTRA 1984 act and;
2. The SEPP manager be authorised to release the funds to Castle Point Borough Council from the SEPP parking account.

(2.41pm to 2.44pm)

10. Forward plan of meetings

The Joint Committee considered a report detailing the forward plan of agenda items and the proposed meeting dates for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that;

1. the forward plan of agenda items be agreed and;
2. the future meeting dates of 27 June 2024, 12 September 2024, 12 December 2024 and 13 March 2025 all commencing at 2pm be agreed and;
3. the meetings be held at the Chelmsford City Council offices.

(2.44pm to 2.45pm)

11. Date and time of next meeting:

AGREED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be on 14 March 2024 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm

Chairman