

Cllr Derrick Louis, Chairman
Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny
Committee

Date: 30 September 2016

Dear Cllr Louis,

The Chairmen of the two Parking Partnership Joint Committees and I would like to thank the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee for its scrutiny on the review of the formal arrangements and operation of the Parking Partnerships.

The Parking Partnerships take this opportunity to reassure County Councillors that they remain committed to working with the Scrutiny Committee moving forward, and will continue to build on the current success of the Parking Partnerships.

We have considered the seven recommendations, as well as the reasons behind each recommendation as set out in the scrutiny report, that were reached by the committee.

Our responses to the individual recommendations are set out below.

1) That the Essex Parking Partnerships and Essex County Council (ECC) Cabinet Member be advised that on balance the Committee support the proposed four year extension of the NEPP and SEPP agreements.

We are pleased that the scrutiny committee has acknowledged the value of the on street parking services that the partnerships are developing across Essex.

2) That the ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport be advised that the Committee considers that the County Council should not withdraw its subsidy from the Parking Partnerships until such time as they are able to be wholly self-financing.

Following the review, both partnerships will be developing business plans detailing how they will move forward to be fully self-financing during the four-year

extension period. It should be noted that both Partnerships have agreed to move to a situation where they do not require subsidy from ECC by 2017/18.

3) That the Essex Parking Partnerships be urged to provide greater clarity on the role of external funding upon the implementation of new schemes.

This recommendation has been noted and plans to provide further clarity on the role of external funding will be developed by both NEPP and SEPP.

4) That the NEPP and SEPP publish a regular newsletter for all elected county and district councillors to inform them of local parking issues within each Partner Authority area and in addition, circulate to those councillors all agenda and minutes associated with the joint committees together with the current reports produced by the partnerships.

We would like to emphasise that both partnerships already produce a variety of materials that are accessible to the public, including councillors, as well as information that is sent directly to local councillors. Nevertheless we have taken on board the scrutiny committee's observations.

SEPP will continue to email its monthly activity reports regarding requests and proposals for new Traffic Regulation Orders and approved maintenance schemes to the relevant ECC members for each area. It is acknowledged that the scrutiny committee considered this as good practice and the same approach will be adopted by NEPP, together with the development of a database to assist its distribution.

Currently, all agendas, minutes and reports are published via each partnership's respective website. In addition to this, both NEPP and SEPP will make the commitment to send an e-mail alert to all members alerting them when minutes have been published.

Furthermore, NEPP is planning to hold member briefing sessions, with relevant partners, to enhance communication. This follows a successful councillor training evening hosted by Braintree District Council in early 2016. In addition, NEPP operate an award-winning online blog.

5) That the Essex Parking Partnerships review current practice with a view to further improvements being made to raise public awareness of their role and activities.

This recommendation is noted and both Partnerships are considering how best to take this forward.

For information, NEPP has already begun to introduce improved ways of trying to raise public awareness of its activities, for instance the development of the Area Manager role to include communication.

- 6) That the Committee support the introduction of a job description for the Partner Authorities' representatives on the Joint Committee, and propose that it should include a responsibility for ensuring that all elected members of their respective administrative areas are kept informed about NEPP/SEPP activity, and the dates of Joint Committee meetings.**

This recommendation is noted and is currently being discussed with the Chairmen of the two Joint Committees.

- 7) It was recommended that the Partnerships formal response to these recommendations be forwarded to the Committee before any final decisions on their future are determined.**

Whilst this letter comprises the response to the scrutiny committee recommendations, the decision on the future of the Parking Partnerships will be taken by the two Joint Committees in the autumn this year, in line with the process set out in the formal Joint Committee Agreements. A formal decision on their future will be made by the end of the year.

The Committee has also drawn our attention concerns on the current levels of enforcement, and has suggested that the Partnerships should liaise with District Councils on how off-street parking attendants might be utilised in respect of enforcement of on-street parking regulation. The current situation is as follows in each area:

SEPP currently has a Service Level Agreement between the Lead Authority and the Boroughs of Basildon, and Castle Point, and Chelmsford City Council to provide off street parking enforcement in these areas. Rochford, Brentwood and Maldon currently provide their own off street parking enforcement. SEPP has a partnership working arrangement with Maldon District Council whereby the Maldon Park Rangers provide additional on-street parking enforcement, outside of the core working hours. SEPP will continue to discuss the feasibility of providing off street parking enforcement or joint working on-street functions in Rochford and Brentwood

NEPP currently provides both on-street and off-street enforcement using the same Civil Enforcement Officers in Braintree, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford Districts. It also has an agreement with Tendring District Council, which manages its own off-street, for specific on-street areas.

In conclusion we wish to thank the Scrutiny Committee and officers for their time and hard work on this report, and look forward to working closely again in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eddie Johnson', written over a light blue grid background.

Cllr Eddie Johnson
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Cllr R Mitchell via email

Cllr R Pratt via email

Councillor Robert Mitchell
Chairman, North Essex Parking
Partnership

Councillor Ron Pratt
Chairman, South Essex Parking
Partnership