

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Tuesday, 27 February 2018

Present:

Cllr M Mackrory (Chairman)
Cllr M Buckley
Cllr M Hardware
Cllr J Moran
Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr R Pratt
Cllr W Schmitt
Cllr M Steptoe

The following officers were also in support:

Richard Buttress, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Garnett, Cllr I Henderson, Cllr D Louis, Cllr J Beavis and Cllr J Abbott.

It was noted that Cllr M Maddocks was a substitute for Cllr M Garnett.

2 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were received from Cllr M Steptoe, Vice Chair of the South Essex Parking Partnership and Cllr R Pratt, Chair of the South Essex Parking Partnership.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4 Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

5 Parking Partnerships briefing

Members received report CSC/26/18. Cllr M Mackrory welcomed Liz Burr, Head of Network and Safety/Traffic Manager to the meeting who presented a briefing to the Members on the Parking Partnerships.

Upon conclusion of the briefing, Members made various contributions and received responses:

- The Parking Partnerships were created to resolve some issues, mainly to remove the deficit and create better working relationships
- Both the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) and the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) were asked to create a business case

which identified how much funding was required, to which Essex County Council (ECC) then provided

- Following review of the business cases, NEPP required less funding than SEPP
- Both partnerships receive maintenance funding from ECC. SEPP terminated this funding two years earlier than intended. NEPP's maintenance funding has been extended for a further year
- Both NEPP and SEPP are self-sustaining and have surplus funds available to use
- The difference in the surplus funds between NEPP and SEPP was due to SEPP taking on TRO enforcement earlier than NEPP. The deficits were not equal on day one and NEPP had more than SEPP
- Smart cars are used by both NEPP and SEPP – they add great value and are very visible. The Smart car helps monitor school parking issues
- Parking initiative (3PR) has been introduced outside schools. The school, along with support from SEPP, establish a zone where do they do and do not wish for people to park in the local area
- There are a number of disabled parking bays in areas that are generally not used and both parking partnerships review this to ascertain the number of bays actually being used
- The Committee asked whether there is a criteria for the number of disabled parking spaces in shopping area car parks – a response to this will be provided in writing after the meeting
- The 3PR scheme is currently only being actively promoted in the SEPP area. NEPP are currently monitoring the progress/success of the scheme. That said, the website is accessible to any school who could choose to become engaged themselves - <http://www.schoolparking.org.uk/>
- The installation of a static camera as part of planning applications to monitor parking is feasible however; there are technicalities around what members of the public can be fined for from an unattended camera. A response as to what exactly static cameras can be used will be provided in writing after the meeting
- Parking on pavements can only be enforced by the Police at the moment however, Cllr R Mitchell, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, is exploring the possibility of ECC taking these powers on.
- Parking on pavements can be enforced by the Essex Act however, the options are very limited. Another option would be to install grasscrete to improve parking in local areas
- It is no longer the case that only executive members can vote on decisions
- The voting arrangements were changed by central Government, not at local level
- Legislation around any legal order means we are required to consult residents and are restricted to using the local press. It is difficult to find local press that covers enough of the local area in question. Also, ECC are required to use the printed press to advertise
- Maldon District Council has Community Protection Officers who have taken on responsibility for parking enforcement. This arrangement in is

different to the rest of the County and they provide an additional resource on top of existing staff

- Where a school is reluctant to engage with the 3PR initiative, Cllr I Grundy, Cabinet Member for Highways is informed and also, officers look at engaging with the school using partner organisations, such as Fire Officers, Police etc
- It was asked why the implementation of parking restrictions along Chelmer Valley Road took so long – a written response will be provided after the meeting
- It was reported that SEPP had a significant financial windfall following the installation of a bus gate. It was noted that enforcement of bus gates is actually undertaken by ECC and any funds received as a result of contraventions are initially used to cover costs. Any surplus is then used on bus services and any funds remaining are then recycled into highway maintenance work.

Cllr M Mackrory thanked Liz Burr for attending and answering the Committee's questions.

6 Member Enquiries/Highways Report It Tool

Members received report CSC/27/18, which provided an update on the recommendations put forward by the Task and Finish Group in 2017.

Cllr M Mackrory introduced the item by stating the Members will recall at a previous meeting that the Task and Finish Group, for which Cllr M Buckley was the lead member for, made several recommendations and the response to these recommendations are detailed within the report.

Cllr M Mackrory welcomed Mark Godson, Head of Communications and Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency to the meeting.

Joanna informed the Committee that the Member Enquiries function (enquiries from Members, MP's and MEP's) is moving to Democracy and Transparency from 1 April 2018.

Members made various contributions and received the following responses from both officers:

- Essex Highways are continually looking at ways to improve online tools, including the introduction of an automated email with a reference number once an issue has been reported online
- Also looking at stating the last date of inspection onto the online tool
- It was accepted that forward planning can be improved for Members so they are aware of what is happening in their areas (not for every repair but programme information)
- Essex Highways are aligned with ECC in terms of managing expectations and building better relationships with external services
- UK Power Networks (UKPN) have produced an online mapping tool which shows the defects they are dealing with, including timescales for repair

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- Essex Highways use Twitter to promote messages – online tools are the most cost effective way of engaging with the public
 - The Contact Centre are provided with a lot of information which is used to inform those calling/emailing ECC
 - It was suggested that the members of the public are informed of significant events (i.e. flooding) by telephone and text message – this is something that would need to be considered against criteria (cost, feasibility etc)
 - All broken highway assets are risk assessed and programmed accordingly. Road signs are a low priority and unless they are safety critical, will remain a low priority
 - The cost of signs damaged by vehicles can be recouped if evidence is provided
 - ECC/Essex Highways are looking at being more transparent on the Report It tool so a more factual answer is provided
 - Essex Highways are looking at ways of providing information to areas with and without Parish Councils
 - It was noted there are 'quirks' in the system around the notification of emergency works
 - Essex Highways are looking at being clearer with regard to reports disappearing from the online tool – currently, they disappear after 28 days
 - If every report was left on the map, it would not be visible at all
 - The detail around risk assessments was included as part of the member induction in May 2017 and has also been repeated with District/Borough/City Councils. The minimum intervention level is 50mm and if an issue does not meet this, it's recorded but no further action is taken
 - It was noted that there has been an improvement in the Member Enquiries service – the work has been first class, outstanding and the officers are polite and professional
 - Roadworks.org is available for all to access – you can opt-in to receive daily, weekly or monthly updates
 - It was noted that not all Members use the Member Enquiries service however; it is felt the Report It tool is being bypassed
 - It was asked if the UKPN service could be tendered to another provider – this is decision that could only be made from a commercial point of view and a full response was not available to the Committee.

Cllr M Mackrory thanked both officers for attending and responding to the Committee's questions.

7 Work Programme

Cllr M Mackrory posed a question to the Committee to think about any future topics they may wish to discuss.

Joanna Boaler informed the Committee that following the Independent Property Review Commission's review of fire safety standards in ECC buildings, a recommendation was put forward that the relevant scrutiny committee assess the extent to which the recommendations made in the

review have been effectively implemented. It was suggested this is carried out in twelve months' time however; Officers will look to bring this to the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee in six months' time to see how the implementation of the recommendations is moving forward.

Cllr M Hardware declared an interest as he was a member of the panel who carried out the review – Joanna Boaler informed this would not have an impact on the Committee's review at the timescales mentioned above.

Cllr M Buckley suggested looking into ECC's capability of procuring large/high value contracts (non-routine business contracts).

Cllr M Buckley also suggested the Committee have input in the budget for 2019/20.

Joanna Boaler reminded Members of the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee:

- The overall strategic direction, policies and priorities of the Cabinet and of Council
- The Council's financial position and management of the Council's finances and budgets (revenue and capital)
- Corporate policies
- Internal and external communications
- Customer Contact Centre
- Registrations of births, death and marriages
- Coroners
- Matters relating to the activities of support services including:
 - Commercial/procurement
 - Property and facilities management
 - Legal services
 - Performance and organisational intelligence
 - Transformation
 - Internal audit
 - Risk and insurance
 - Health and Safety
 - IT
 - Human Resources
 - Business Support
 - Democratic Services
- The Council's role as an employer
- Services which operate via a trading account
- Essex companies and other legal entities (and ECC's shareholder role)
- Democratic engagement and representation

Cllr J Moran informed the Committee that he was aware of a survey that was sent out by ECC at a cost of around £36,000. ECC expected to receive 5,000 responses however, experts he has spoken to suggested 2,000 responses was a more realistic target and questioned whether this is something the Committee could review in terms of cost effectiveness. Cllr J Moran stated he

would put together a briefing note for the Committee to which a decision could then be agreed.

Richard Buttress suggested to the Committee that the contract with Ringway Jacobs and Fujitsu is a topic that could also be looked into by the Committee.

The Committee were informed that they will be receiving a briefing in May 2018 on ECC's Pay Policy Review.

8 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is due to be held on Tuesday 27 March 2018, commencing at 10:30am. Members will not be required to book the whole day as the meeting will likely conclude before 1:00pm.

9 Urgent business

No urgent business was raised.

10 Urgent exempt business

No urgent exempt business was raised.

The meeting concluded at 12:26pm.

Chairman