

The Members undersign request that decision FP/051/02/24 (North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee Draft Minutes 01.02.24) be called-in for review.

We are requesting this specifically in relation to Agenda Item 10 (Additional On-Street Paid parking) and our concerns with these proposals. Our concerns can be broken down into two categories.

Process:

- North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) stated that it had been considering the identified locations for paid parking for some time, but only Harlow District Council has given explicit support to the locations identified in their locality.
- Elected Members had no prior notification of locations within their ward/division, with most first made aware from reports in the media.
- On street parking is an Essex County Council (ECC) responsibility and when a Traffic Regulation Order request is made by a member of the public etc it has to have Councillor support before it will proceed:
<https://northtro.parkingpartnership.org/Pages/TROApplication.aspx>. It is therefore considered a significant overreach of NEPP officers to put forward proposals for agreement that have been included in the NEPP 2024/5 budget where ECC Cllrs only found about these proposals via residents raising concerns on social media.
- The Joint Committee (JC) was asked in a prior agenda item to approve the NEPP 2024/25 budget which had accounted for a full 12-months revenue generated from the proposed charging scheme. Thereby, in effect, predetermining/pre-empting members that they would approve the decision to go ahead with introducing parking charges.
- Later in the agenda, under the item in question, it then states that not going ahead with the proposals will *'result in an increased risk of NEPP not meeting its 24-25 Financial Year budget'*. This is an unacceptable situation to place JC members in – a 'Hobson's choice' as referred to by Cllr Graham Butland (Braintree District Council) at the meeting.
- It is stated at the JC that revenue raising is not solely the reasoning behind these proposals but the *"Immediacy of the financial situation has dictated the pace at which this has happened."*
- Modelling has not yet been undertaken to demonstrate how traffic flows will improve in each location because of these proposals. We believe traffic flows smoothly in the locations we have local knowledge of.
- No consultation has been agreed to prior to going to the statutory consultation. It was acknowledged in the meeting and stated in the minutes that once this formal legal process has been triggered that it is hard to stop or amend the scheme.
- Deficiencies in the reach of the statutory consultation were also highlighted. Legally, NEPP would only be required to display a statutory notice on nearby street furniture and in the local press.
- Reviewing the resolutions, there are no mechanisms or backstops to prevent this scheme being fully implemented. Delegated powers allow full discretion.

Decision:

- No impact assessment has taken place on the effect this will have on high street businesses.
- Proposals are against ECC's Everyone's Essex commitment of supporting local businesses and driving future economic growth.

- SEPP is not introducing similar proposals. This means that high streets such as Billericay, Hockley and Shenfield, for example, will continue to offer at least 1-hour free parking bays to visitors in business hours. Creating a disparity and unnecessary unfairness across Essex.
- Residents rely on these bays not for just retail but also to provide easy access to vital health services such as doctors, dentists and pharmacies.
- Antidotally, we believe these bays are relatively well self-policed and have seen no evidence of the contrary.

Cllr Ross Playle – Witham Northern

Cllr Derrick Louis – Witham Southern

Cllr Chris Siddall – Halstead

Cllr Lynette Bowers-Flint – Bocking

Cllr Lewis Barber – Constable

19th February 2024