

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 24 MARCH 2022

TITLE: NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR ALASTAIR GUNN, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR GOVERNANCE

LEAD OFFICER: JANE GREER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT (01279) 446406

CONTRIBUTING OFFICER: DEAN JAMES, OPERATIONS MANAGER (01279) 446687

This is a Key Decision
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I013649
Call-in Procedures may apply
This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that

- A** From 1 April 2022, Harlow Council continues membership of the On-Street and Off-Street North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) and delegates authority to the Director of Communities and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Governance to:
- i) Approve the new Parking Partnership Joint Committee Agreement on terms outlined in paragraph 6 of the report.
 - ii) Approve the new Off-street Parking Service Level Agreement.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** The current agreement under which parking management and related services are provided expires on 31 March 2022. Entering into a further agreement will permit the continuation of successful service arrangements.

BACKGROUND

1. North Essex Parking Partnership was established in April 2011, primarily to manage on-street Civil Parking Enforcement arrangements on behalf of Essex County Council (ECC) via a joint Committee to discharge its executive functions in relation to the civil parking enforcement.

2. The Partner Authorities constituting NEPP are Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, Harlow District Council, Tendring District Council, and Uttlesford District Council, with Colchester Borough Council being identified as the Lead Authority. An analogous South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) was created at the same time. The Council entered into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Colchester Borough Council to manage its off-street parking.
3. Each Partner Authority's appointed Executive Member is responsible for reporting to its relevant authority 'separate arrangements, ensuring that each Partner Authority complies with the arrangements for scrutiny of decisions, as laid out in the Agreement'.
4. The following functions are excluded from the Joint Committee being retained by the individual Partner Authorities:
 - a) Disposal/transfer of items on car-park sites;
 - b) Decisions to levy fees and charges at off-street parking sites;
 - c) Changes to opening times of off-street parking buildings;
 - d) Ownership and stewardship of car-park assets;
 - e) Responding to customers who contact the authorities directly; and
 - f) Responding to the outcome of internal and external audits.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

5. The NEPP Agreement was made for seven years with provision for a four-year extension. This option having been taken the agreement finally expires on 31 March 2022. The Council's SLA with Colchester Borough Council expires on the same date
6. The NEPP Joint Committee at its meeting of 28 October 2021 considered proposals brought forward by officers of the Partner Authorities for a further similar agreement to run from 1 April 2022 for a 5 year period, with the option to extend thereafter on an annual basis up to 31 March 2030.
7. The proposals for the renewed agreement are outlined at Appendix A to the report.
8. At its meeting of 28 October 2021, the NEPP Joint Committee agreed that the proposals would be referred to the respective Partner Authorities for formal

consideration with a view to approval through appropriate governance mechanisms.

9. Prior to the creation of the parking partnerships on street parking functions had accrued a deficit of £1,000,000 county wide. This was cleared within three years of the partnerships' commencement, and since this time the NEPP has generated a surplus allowing each partner authority and ECC to fund new schemes aimed at improving parking and the safety of our roads. The NEPP is thus considered the best option for the Council, delivering both the countywide and local policy objectives through an integrated service that joins enforcement, signs and lines maintenance and Traffic Regulation Order [TRO] activity, and providing at no cost the "Mi Permit" parking app which allows cashless parking within our car parks.
10. The current proposals offer the continuation of a proven established model to deliver service in a cost neutral manner with any surplus deployed in line with legislation. Further they provide the opportunity for 'invest to save' initiatives which meet other countywide and local aims. The existing delegation of control for local parking policies and the management of the associated functions would be retained to the Joint Committee.
11. Proposals would enable shared income initiatives between the parties and build on existing successful innovation and collaborative working, facilitating a win-win for ECC, the NEPP and all Partner Authorities
12. The Council has the option of discontinuing involvement with the NEPP and negotiating a separate SLA with another provider: however, no value or benefit to the Council in pursuing this option has been identified as the advantages of working within a highly successful and proven strategic partnership, including the ability to influence and shape the future of on-street parking in Harlow, would be lost.
13. It is therefore proposed that the Council continues membership of the NEPP Joint Committee from 1 April 2022 and that it renews the Service Level Agreement with the NEPP for the provision of off-street parking services.

IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Growth and Regeneration

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance

None specific.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

None specific.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Communities and Environment (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

As contained in the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance and Corporate Services (Includes HR)

None specific.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposals for renewed NEPP agreement to take effect from 01 April 2022

Glossary of Terms/Abbreviations Used

ECC – Essex County Council

NEPP – North Essex Parking Partnership

SEPP – South Essex Parking Partnership

SLA – Service Level Agreement

TRO – Traffic Regulation Order