

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 10 NOVEMBER 2016

TITLE: NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP
(NEPP) – EXTENSION OF JOINT
COMMITTEE AGREEMENT

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR DANNY PURTON,
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT

LEAD OFFICERS: GRAEME BLOOMER, HEAD OF PLACE
(01279) 446270

JOE MCGILL, PROPERTIES & FACILITIES
MANAGER (01279) 446800

This is a Key Decision

It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I006503

The decision may be subject to Call-in procedures

This decision will not affect any ward specifically

RECOMMENDED that

- A** Cabinet approves the Council's membership of an extended On-Street and Off-Street North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) to March 2022.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** The current agreement includes an option for a four year extension when it terminates in March 2018. Essex County Council has indicated its intention to take up that option and offer both the North and South Partnerships an extension to the existing agreement through to March 2022.

BACKGROUND

1. The Governance arrangements are fully inclusive for each district council and have improved significantly since inception. The districts now have the opportunity to vote at each stage of the process as well as comment on the technical assessments prior to any order being made. Harlow Council has played an important role in working across the districts to provide technical assistance by way of GIS mapping and the drafting of Orders in support of Colchester as the lead authority. There have been numerous occasions

when Harlow Council has received recognition for its contribution from other district councils within the partnership.

2. The work of NEPP has resulted in a significant number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) being implemented in comparison to the previous Essex County Council structure. In some districts, they had waited more than 7-10 years to get a TRO implemented.
3. Membership of NEPP includes off-street parking enforcement (i.e. car parks and cash collection) with the exception of Harlow Council, which continues to operate cash collection at more competitive rates due to the proximity of the car parks.
4. The Council and its Cabinet representatives (two of whom have been deputy chairs on NEPP) have been and continue to be, key contributors to the success of the Partnership.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

5. In 2015/16 Essex County Council appointed Blue Marble consultancy to carry out a review of the progress made by the Parking Partnerships and to consider/recommend further efficiencies. This review included consultation with the district councils' portfolio holders on NEPP. Essex County Council's options for the review of the partnerships were:
 - a) Cost benefit for continuing.
 - b) Efficiency derived from the Partnerships.
 - c) Local determination of schemes.
 - d) Essex County Council terminating current arrangements.
 - e) A single contract for both the North and South Partnerships.
 - f) Continuation of the agreements as they are.
6. The recommendation by Blue Marble to Essex County Council was the continuation of agreements as they are with a move towards more back office support and sharing of best practice.

HARLOW COUNCIL

7. The Council's membership includes the provision of office accommodation at the Latton Bush Centre, GIS mapping and drafting of on-street traffic orders for approval by NEPP.
8. The Off-Street membership is for the patrolling of car parks from the central resources allocated by Colchester Borough Council. The centrally delivered parking enforcement offers greater efficiency in terms of patrol rotas and costs than that achieved by individual districts.

9. The key issue for the partnering district councils was Essex County Council's position regarding ongoing revenue funding for the making of traffic orders and line signing maintenance. The partners have, by working collaboratively across the districts, reduced the deficit year on year. Thus enabling the partners to develop a sustainable business plan to address the revenue requirement going forward
10. If Harlow Council chooses to exit the Off- Street partnership then costs would rise as a direct result and there would be a need to invest in a new IT system to ensure compliance with traffic management processes. In addition, more civil enforcement officers would be required to cover holidays, shift patterns etc. Additionally, an independent administrator to deal with appeals would need to be employed
11. If the Council were to withdraw from the On-Street element of the Partnership, it is likely that the back office regime would vacate the offices at the Latton Bush Centre along with the loss of income for GIS mapping and drafting of traffic orders.
12. The importance of being a key player in the Partnership that enables the Council to contribute and influence local traffic orders for residents and business should not be underestimated. It is the view of Officers that it is in the Council's interest to remain in the Partnership by way of this extension.
13. Epping Forest District Council has served the mandatory 12 months' notice period to NEPP advising that they no longer wish to be part of the Off-Street Partnership and will self-manage their own car parks as of 1 April 2017.

IMPLICATIONS

Place

Author: **Graeme Bloomer, Head of Place**

The reasons for continuing to be a member of the North Essex Parking Partnership are set out in this report.

Finance

Author: **Simon Freeman, Head of Finance**

The financial implications are contained within the report

Housing

Author: **Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

None.

Community & Customer Services (includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

Author: **Jane Greer, Head of Community and Customer Services**

None

Governance

Author: **Brian Keane, Head of Governance**

None.

Background Papers

None

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

Traffic Order (TRO)

Geographical Information System (GIS)