

NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ON-STREET PARKING

**19 December 2022 at 1.00pm
Council Chamber, Uttlesford District Council Offices,
London Road, Saffron Walden CB11 4ER.**

Members Present:

Councillor Richard van Dulken (Braintree District Council)
Councillor Richard Freeman (Uttlesford District Council)
Councillor Alastair Gunn (Harlow District Council)
Councillor Kane (Epping Forest)
Councillor Dan Land (Essex County Council)
Councillor Alex Porter (Tendring District Council)

Substitutions:

There were no substitutions at the meeting.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from
Councillor Goss (Colchester Borough Council)

Also Present:

Richard Walker (Parking Partnership)
Jason Butcher (Parking Partnership)
Rory Doyle (Colchester City Council)
Jake England (Parking Partnership)
Amelia Hoke (Epping Forest District Council)
Owen Howell (Colchester Borough Council)
Linda Howells (Uttlesford District Council)
Michael Kelly (Harlow District Council)
Samir Pandya (Braintree District Council)
Ian Taylor (Tendring District Council)

129. Have Your Say

There were no speakers for the general Have Your Say section. Two speakers addressed the Committee, at the Chairman's discretion, ahead of the agenda item relevant to their points.

130. Minutes

Richard Walker, Group Manager, explained that figures given in the final paragraph of pg. 2 were incorrect, due to a mix-up in what was said at the meeting. The correct percentage division of surplus income was that 45% would go to Essex County Council, whilst 55% would be retained by the Parking Partnership.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2022 were approved as an accurate record, subject to the aforementioned amendment.

131. Urgent Item

An urgent item was raised, relating to the proposed pilot traffic regulation order [TRO] for single yellow lines, which had been approved by the Joint Committee on 27 October 2022, relating to Purlieu Way and Harewood Hill, Theydon Bois. This decision had been called in when the notice of decision was published by Essex County Council [ECC] and a subsequent additional consultation exercise carried out to obtain residents' views. At the Chairman's discretion, a number of members of the public addressed the Joint Committee, with a further number of written statements from members of the public being read out by Owen Howell, Clerk to the Joint Committee.

Ms. Nicola Bishop attended remotely and addressed the Joint Committee to voice her opposition to the planned installation of single yellow lines in the two streets concerned, and to give the reasons for her opposition. Ms. Bishop referenced a statement made by a member of the Joint Committee in October 2021, which was an assurance that TROs would not be implemented if these would make things worse for people. Ms Bishop drew the Joint Committee's attention to the Parking Pressure Review Report of March 2022, which stated that 'we [NEPP] do not consider that the parking demand evidenced at this time provides a solid basis for recommending parking restrictions', and that 'the majority of on-street parkers are residents, or visitors to residents throughout the day.' Furthermore, the report observed that on-street parking was never observed to be at capacity, albeit that 'parking levels would prevent some residents from parking in close proximity to their own property, or make it less convenient to enter or exit their own driveway.' Ms Bishop referred to the Joint Committee's rules and policies in place to ensure that members of the public could respond to proposed changes which would directly impact them. The

current parking situation could not be challenged on grounds of safety, congestion or new developments, with the NEPP having a duty to heed residents concerns when managing parking in the area.

Ms Bishop referenced the NEPP's TRO Policy, which stated that if the majority of properties in a street or area had off-street parking (with 89% having such parking in the area concerned here), then 'any parking on the highway will not impact on the available off street parking for residents. If the residents with off-street parking finds they are in a position where they request to have a parking restriction implemented to prevent vehicles parking in the street, but are happy for relatives of visitors to park in the area this will be considered as preferred parking and therefore a recommendation to decline the requested scheme.' Ms Bishop argued that, if the Committee had adhered to this policy, the proposal for parking restrictions should have been rejected, which would have saved money and time on consultations and information gathering. No majority of residents existed in favour of restrictions in either road and Ms Bishop requested that the consultations and work be ceased and the proposed parking restrictions be rejected by the Joint Committee, in line with policy. Ms Bishop expressed concerns at the process undertaken with regard to this matter, but also expressed her hope that the Joint Committee would choose not to impose restrictions.

The Clerk read out a statement from Mr and Mrs Kingscote, who objected to the proposed restrictions on the following grounds. An independent report confirmed that there was no problem with commuter parking on these two roads, meaning that the only impact would be on residents, especially those with visitors, carers or tradesmen visiting. Some residents would be forced to pave over more of their front gardens, with associated financial and environmental costs to this action. The impact on residents would be significant, especially with many working from home and in regard to residents with infirmities who would struggle to move their car twice a day. The proposed restrictions would cause problems for a range of service providers and carers and potentially damage services and care upon which some residents relied. Mr and Mrs Kingscote expressed concern that an already-agreed decision to not impose restrictions had been overturned without those who opposed them knowing that this was planned. Concern was also expressed at how the process had gone ahead, with evidence and previous decisions being set aside, and at how the latest consultation exercise had counted abstention from the survey as a vote in favour of new restrictions, with the argument being that this would skew results unfairly.

The Clerk read out a statement from Ms. Mandy Davies, who emphasised that there was no commuter parking problem in the two roads in question, with empty parking space always available, and argued that the implementation of restrictions would cause more disruption for residents who relied on on-street parking and would require her family to have to look at overcoming significant challenges if they were to park their three vehicles off-street, including the current position of a tree on the roadside. Ms. Davies also argued that restrictions would harm those people who do need to park before using public transport to travel to London, potentially for vital medical treatments, condensing such parking into the remaining roads without restrictions, which would potentially cause disruption to

traffic. Ms. Davies referenced NEPP policy to only introduce such a restriction where commuter parking was a problem, and the survey report which stated that there was no such problem on Purlieu Way and Harewood Hill, and stated her family's opposition to the introduction of any parking restrictions there.

The Clerk read out a statement from Mr. Kevin Butler, who wrote to make known his and Mrs Butler's objection to any changes to the current parking arrangements, excepting where restrictions are to address safety concerns such as at junctions. Mr Butler noted that the NEPP and independent assessors had concurred that new restrictions were not needed and would impact on residents' parking. The NEPP report had confirmed that commuter parking was not a current problem, with reduced demand since the pandemic, and states that the main effect of restrictions would be on the residents of the two streets. Mr Butler noted the Guidance notes of the Traffic Management Act which stated that restrictions should not simply be about restricting parking in a way that makes responsible parking harder. The environmental impact of residents having to convert gardens into off-street parking was again raised and Mr Butler argued that restrictions should not be brought in against the wishes of most residents.

Mr Michael Palmer attended and, with permission from the Chairman, addressed the Joint Committee to state his objection to the proposed parking restriction. As a resident of Purlieu Way for the past 26 years, Mr Palmer explained that he had seen TROs as they had been deployed around that area over time, and how these had often displaced parking into neighbouring streets. Mr Palmer referred the Joint Committee to 2009, when residents of Purlieu Way rejected a TRO proposal. In 2019 a new TRO was proposed, citing issues with commuter parking, but ignoring issues of displaced resident parking, identified from TROs elsewhere. Mr Palmer informed the Joint Committee that, in 2019 and 2020, he had been told that he was the only objector to the proposal for parking restrictions to be implemented. Site surveys had been carried out by the NEPP and an independent review, both showing that most vehicles were resident-owned and not commuter cars. Both surveys concluded that restrictions were unnecessary, and the independent survey by Buchanan Order Management recommending an 18-month moratorium to allow time to monitor post-pandemic patterns of use.

In October 2022, the Joint Committee approved the piloting of a parking restriction scheme in Purlieu Way and Harewood Hill, seemingly ignoring the conclusions of both surveys/reviews. Mr Palmer noted that the member of the public who had led the request for restrictions had moved from arguments relating to commuter parking, and raised arguments regarding obstructive parking instead. The decision of the Joint Committee was then called-in, having been published by Essex County Council, and additional surveying/consultation was then carried out by Epping Forest District Council, which showed that neither street reached the necessary threshold of support for parking restrictions, even after non respondents were counted as being in favour of restrictions. Mr Palmer raised concern about the accuracy of the levels of support which had initially been stated regarding proposed restrictions, and explained his view that the experimental TRO would benefit no-one, as the problem it was designed to mitigate did not exist. Mr Palmer posited that the proposed restrictions would only

harm local residents and requested that the Joint Committee revoke them.

The Clerk read out a statement from Ms. Sue Baxter, who wrote of her disappointment that the two parking surveys, which had shown there was no need for parking restrictions, had been ignored and that single yellow line restrictions were to be introduced, especially after a previous decision that restrictions would not be introduced. Ms. Baxter argued that the appeal to have restrictions introduced was based on one resident's views, whilst it would have an effect on many other residents. Ms. Baxter explained the effect such restrictions would have on her and her family, causing difficulties in meeting the terms of those restrictions, whilst meeting work commitments.

The Clerk read a statement from Ms. Cheryl Taylor who wrote that she had lived in the area affected for the past 26 years and had never experienced difficulty parking. Following the pandemic there were even fewer cars parking on the street, a point which had been demonstrated to the officers carrying out the NEPP survey. Ms. Taylor had relied on visits from carers and health professionals for her elderly, very ill mother, and restrictions on parking would make such visits very difficult. Restrictions would also mean a loss of hedges and gardens, repurposed as off-street parking spaces. Ms Taylor complained that there had been bullying and boasting from one quarter, regarding the proposed pilot restrictions, and that she had been informed that the issue would be reconsidered in early 2023, rather than at a meeting in October 2022 of which she had not been informed. Ms Taylor stated that her family were disappointed in the undemocratic way a decision had been made, and in the NEPP and the local Council.

Mr Radek Nešpor attended via Zoom and, with permission from the Chairman, addressed the Joint Committee, as a resident of Purlieu Way. Having followed the TRO process go forward since 2019, Mr Nešpor argued that the Joint Committee had been given misleading opinions and representations which exaggerated levels of support [for parking restrictions], both via written communications and in verbal presentation to the Joint Committee. This compared to the independently-produced reviews and consultation carried out, and Mr Nešpor expressed the Joint Committee's decision making would be guided by the review, the consultation, the facts and the wishes of the majority of local residents. The independent report, commissioned by NEPP in 2021, reported that there was not a parking problem on Purlieu Way, and no safety concerns, with most vehicles belonging to residents. Mr Nešpor noted that only 33% of residents in Purlieu Way actively voted in favour of restrictions in the latest consultation, and that even if households which had abstained were counted as being supportive, this would still not reach the supermajority threshold, which was 70%, set out as being necessary for a TRO to be granted. Mr Nešpor raised concern that households who did not respond to the consultation had been assumed to be in favour of restrictions, and argued that this was an improper assumption to make, skewing the results. Mr Nešpor noted that support for parking restrictions was even lower in Harewood Hill, that residents there would be negatively impacted if Purlieu Way was subject to parking restrictions, and that restrictions would violate residents' right to enjoy their properties.

The Clerk read a statement from Mr and Mrs Beeby, who strongly objected to any parking restrictions being introduced to Purlieu Way. No commuter parking problems were experienced, as shown by two surveys conducted by the NEPP, and Mr Beeby questioned the results of an early poll which had been conducted by a local resident with an interest in the matter. Mr Beeby described the difficulty and cost which parking restrictions would cause him and his wife, including the need to concrete their front garden and remove trees.

The Clerk read a statement from Mr and Mrs van der Westhuizen, who wrote to oppose the proposed restrictions, arguing that residents and visitors should be able to park on the street. Mr and Mrs van der Westhuizen emphasised dissatisfaction that the decision to approve a pilot restriction was at odds with the previous notification that a restriction would not be introduced, and that opponents of restrictions were not given the opportunity to have their say at the meeting on 27 October 2022. Mr and Mrs van der Westhuizen noted the review and surveying which had concluded that there was no major problem with parking in the area, and described the difficulty that restrictions would cause their household.

Mr Peter Davies attended via Zoom and, with permission from the Chairman, addressed the Joint Committee, as a resident of Harewood Hill. Mr Davies expressed his agreement with the objections which had already been made by resident's statements given to this meeting, and expressed his view that the overall view of residents had been clear and that the matter had been handled badly. Residents had participated in surveys and expressed their concerns.

Mrs Sue Palmer attended via Zoom and, with permission from the Chairman, addressed the Joint Committee, as a resident of Purlieu Way for over 26 years, to voice her objections to the proposed restrictions. Mrs Palmer noted that the original rules had stipulated that 75% of residents would need to be in favour of implementing a TRO in order for one to be requested, or 36 out of 48 households. This meant that only 25% of households would need to oppose a potential TRO in order to prevent it from being implemented. An independent survey had now been completed which showed that 16 households had positively stated that they did not want a TRO for restrictions, with the potential that other households had responded likewise but had had their responses delayed in the postal strikes. Even with a total of 16 non-responding households being counted as being 'in favour' of the proposed TRO, the total does not reach the supermajority required for implementation. Mrs Palmer disputed the validity of assigning a 'for' or 'against' view to any household which had not responded as being unfair, especially given that some households may well have been dealing with crises and have been unable to respond in time. Mrs Palmer argued that no views should be assigned, for or against, by the NEPP to households from which responses had not been received and that, given the threshold of support had not been met, the TRO application should not proceed.

The Clerk read a statement from Ms Susan Pallett, who gave her concern that despite numerous surveys, including a recent NEPP survey which showed no need for restrictions, single yellow line restrictions were to be introduced on Harewood Hill. Ms Pallett remonstrated that residents had not been advised of

the meeting where this decision had been taken [NEPP Joint Committee meeting of 27 October 2022], meaning that residents had not been given the opportunity to raise their objections. Mrs Pallett gave the view that it would be unfair to impose restrictions on Harewood Hill, even if these were wanted by residents on Purlieu Way, and that there were significant differences between the two, with Harewood Hill being wider and straight.

Ms Pallett argued that there had been no sign of increased commuter parking in the area following the end of lock-down, had never been a problem before the pandemic and that this was unlikely to become a problem, with more people working from home more often. Arguments in favour of restrictions which cited an improved street aesthetic should be disregarded as insignificant, compared to the damage that would be done by widening driveway spaces. Ms Pallett stated that the majority of residents of Harewood Hill were against parking restrictions, that the cost of enforcing them would outstrip the income from enforcement, and that the local Council had wasted thousands of pounds in re-surveying the area for residents' views.

The Chairman explained that this item had been scheduled as an urgent item for this agenda due to the calling-in of a decision, taken by the Joint Committee on 27 October 2022 and relating to the item 'Purlieu Way and Harewood Hill, by Essex County Councillor Holly Whitbread, whom had been contacted by a number of residents regarding the matter. Talks had then been held to ascertain potential ways to resolve the call-in, involving Councillor Whitbread, ECC, members of the Joint Committee and NEPP officers. Additional context could be provided by officers on the background to the situation and on the recent additional survey work carried out by officers of Epping Forest District Council.

Jason Butcher, Group Development Manager, provided detail on the results of the survey conducted in the run-up to this meeting. The response rate had been 72.9% for Purlieu Way (following receipt of three responses delayed by postal strikes) and 84% for Harewood Hill. The first question asked had been whether residents wanted a one-hour no-waiting restriction during the day, asked of both streets. 66.7% support was recorded on Purlieu Way, falling beneath the 70% majority stipulated as being necessary. 28% of responses from Harewood Hill were in favour of restrictions. The second question, posed only to residents of Harewood Hill, asked whether they would support restrictions on that road, were restrictions to be imposed on Purlieu Way. A majority still did not support restrictions in such a situation. There was therefore no supermajority in favour of restrictions and the decision remained with the Joint Committee as to whether to approve the TRO to proceed with imposing restrictions. Owen Howell, Clerk to the Joint Committee confirmed that the Joint Committee could choose to uphold their original decision taken on 27 October 2022, withdraw that decision or amend the details of it.

Councillor Kane, the Joint Committee member representing Epping Forest District Council, noted that the NEPP had policies and rules and argued that the Joint Committee should revert to these in order to assure objectivity. Parking restrictions should only be implemented where there was both a need for them, and support for them. Two surveys had been conducted, neither finding a need

for restrictions, and the independent surveyors confirming that there was no need. The recent survey confirmed that the necessary supermajority had not been reached and therefore Councillor Kane urged the Joint Committee to withdraw its most recent decision [to implement an 18-month pilot parking restriction] and revert to the prior decision to impose an 18-month moratorium on any consideration of restrictions, with a potential review at the end of it.

A member of the Joint Committee stated that the Joint Committee had, at its last meeting, been informed that the proposed restrictions had the majority of support, which had led him to agree for the restrictions to have been voted upon. The Committee member highlighted the right of residents to enjoyment of their properties as being guaranteed under the Human Rights Act and proposed that the decision taken on these restrictions by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 27 October 2022 be rescinded and withdrawn.

The Joint Committee discuss the situation, with the suggestion being made that, in light of additional evidence collected, it would be right to re-look at the decision which had been made. The survey conducted was discussed and it was confirmed that the most-recent survey had been conducted by officers of Epping Forest District Council.

RESOLVED that the decision taken by the Joint Committee on 27 October 2022 and relating to the item 'Purlieu Way and Harewood Hill Update Report' [as shown in minute 125] be rescinded, and that no parking restrictions be introduced on Purlieu Way and Harewood Hill.

132. Finance Update

Richard Walker, Group Manager, presented the report and the additional detail provided in the extra addendum circulated at the meeting. Financial pressures were described, including pay and pandemic issues. A pay settlement was being worked upon by Colchester City Council and was pending at the time of drafting this report. The Group Manager explained that the supplementary budget information provided at this meeting had not been available at the point of agenda publication.

The new budget was set to break even, allowing maintenance of some reserves. The relationship between reserves, service funding and potential reserve payback to the County Council were explained. The details were shown as to how reserves were divided with the County Council and how any future deficits would be addressed. The proposed fees and charges, drawn up in light of current inflation rates, were given. The Joint Committee was asked to decide whether to, in principle, raise fees and charges. More data could be given at the next meeting if the Joint Committee was willing to agree to increases in principle at this meeting.

Parking Charge Notices [PCNs] were discussed, including the scope for Department for Transport to raise their value and the potential for the NEPP to lobby for this. NEPP forecasts for PCN numbers and income were necessary for budget setting, but the Group Manager stressed that the Partnership did not set

targets for the issuing of PCNs.

The report noted the risks and pressures on the NEPP, and the Group Manager highlighted that the majority of NEPP staff were operational. Table two of the report showed potential changes caused by the movement of officer roles, and the Joint Committee were shown the tables which showed what would happen if reserves were entirely spent and a deficit incurred.

A Committee member voiced concern at the talk of increasing PCN income and of lobbying Government for PCN value to be increased and questioned how £2.2m of income from PCNs could be predicted for next year. The Group Manager clarified that the NEPP would not lobby Government if the Joint Committee did not want this to be done, but highlighted that evidence had been collected that the current rate charged for a PCN was not always a deterrent. When asked if the NEPP was intending to use a more weighty PCN level to increase deterrence but lower income to the NEPP, the Group Manager explained that the expectation was that the overall income from PCNs would not change greatly, with a forecast that if the cost of a PCN increased, this would balance the increase in deterrence that was expected to lead to a drop in PCNs being issued. A Joint Committee member emphasised that laws would be ineffective without enforcement. One member urged caution and noted that there was a risk associated with assuming an increased level for PCN value would balance out any reduction in overall income from PCN, whilst another member emphasised that PCNs were for deterrence, rather than primarily for use as a tool to raise income.

The Joint Committee noted that PCN income for the year was below the forecast level. The Group Manager acknowledged this and highlighted that there was always a lag in receiving income from people paying off PCNs, exacerbated by payments made through payment plans for amounts incurred during recent lockdowns. In answer to questions as to whether PCN income covered enforcement costs, the Group Manager explained that this would not be simple to ascertain and would require examination of deployments and their costs, the different costs for enforcing different types of restrictions and different costs for different types of enforcement. A case study had however been carried out in Aberystwyth in 2011 to examine the effects of no enforcement. Councillor Sam Kane queried how financial data were compiled for offences and enforcement operations in Epping Forest. The Group Manager explained that this would necessitate the analysis of patrol data and enforcement costs.

The Group Manager was also asked what constituted 'other income.' The Group Manager explained that 'other income' referred to extra income from performing additional duties for the County Council. The NEPP was awaiting expected work from the County Council at this time. In response to queries as to why the figure for 'other income' was lower in the updated budget than the budget report published, the Group Manager explained that this was due to the original figure being split between parts one and two of the supplementary budget. The extra work from the County Council consisted of work such as school schemes, country park enforcement and delivering of disability parking spaces for residents who required them. The figures given were projected income and were awaiting

confirmation from the County Council that the work would be given the go-ahead.

The Joint Committee discussed the finance sheets, noting that the total on-street budget was net to zero, and concern was raised that the County Council might use the NEPP as an income generation tool, potentially limiting the NEPP's ability to use reserves to improve services. An additional concern was raised that, were the Partnership to incur losses, the partner local authorities would be expected to share the cost of this and be forced to provide extra funding for the NEPP. Such a possibility was raised by several members as being a concern. A Committee member asked whether a deficit would mean that staffing levels might be reduced, a reduction in Traffic Regulation Orders [TROs] introduced and enforced or the loss of the Partnership's electric vehicles. The Group Manager gave assurance that the County Council had clarified that they would only withdraw their 45% of profit for the year from the NEPP's reserve. Regarding the making of savings, the Joint Committee was informed that vacancy factor savings from unfilled posts had helped improve the financial position, as had income from visitors and kerbside payment options.

The Joint Committee discussed the income from Service Level Agreements for off-street parking and how that and the service to which they related fitted in with the on-street budget and services. The Group Manager clarified that off-street finances were kept separate, but the enforcement of off-street parking restrictions/sites was carried out by the same officers who enforced on-street parking restrictions. Off-street parking services were contribution-based.

A Committee member asked for clarification as to how management functions were split between on- and off-street parking services, expressing concern as to whether time and resources were being taken from on-street work and deployed to off-street functions instead.

Queries were raised regarding the line items on transport costs, projects and project management. The Group Manager gave assurance that more granular information on these could be provided, if the Joint Committee wished this, on line items within the budget. The reduction in transport costs was as a result of additional cars having been provided to Civil Enforcement Officers, in order to ensure social distancing whilst working during lockdowns. The additional usage had reduced, allowing for reduced future transport costs to be forecast. A Client Officer noted that there was no ambiguity regarding project costs, as the details of the projects had already been given to the Joint Committee when the Joint Committee approved those projects. Jason Butcher, Group Development Manager, expanded on this to explain that much of the project costs were wrapped up in work done for the NEPP by the County Council, such as operation of ParkSafe cameras. A large percentage of the costs stemmed from a project for Uttlesford District Council, which was coming to completion. Other projects included the cost of employing a full-time officer to work on the 3PR [Three Parking Rules] scheme.

The Group Manager was asked what the Partnership's plan was, should income fall short of the forecast for the coming year, and gave assurance that a reserve would be maintained to cushion such an eventuality. The current reserves level

was £336,000. Other sources of income were also expected. More Civil Enforcement Officers had been recruited, which would allow more patrolling where contraventions were identified.

In response to questions regarding the separation of budget information for TROs from the main budget, the Group Manager explained that this was to satisfy Essex County Council's wish to have this information managed and shown separately.

A Committee member requested a full breakdown of all costs and their sources.

The Joint Committee discussed whether it wished to receive a report at its next meeting as to whether to increase permit prices in 2023-24.

RESOLVED that the JOINT COMMITTEE: -

- a) Notes the North Essex Parking Partnership's Joint Parking Committee (JPC) financial position at the end Period 7 (October) 2022, including the implementation of the decision on fees and charges already made for 2022 and 2023.
- b) Notes the interventions to date to keep the finances within budget this year.
- c) Notes the wider issues which face service delivery now and in the longer term.
- d) Notes that JPC reserves total £336k, and the proposed use of them, after which the measures in Appendix E of the Agreement will apply.
- e) Notes the other measures being taken to reduce spend on TRO schemes in 2023/24 (subject of a separate report).
- f) Approves the draft budget for the Joint Committee for 2023/24, on the understanding that additional information and detail requested will be made available to the Joint Committee, regarding the setting of this budget and the finances of the Partnership
- g) Would receive a report at its meeting on 16 March 2023 to allow it to consider whether to make any further interventions changes in fees or charges of:-
 - (i) First resident permits;
 - (ii) Second resident permits;
 - (iii) Third resident permits;
 - (iv) Digital resident daily visitor permits;
 - (v) Digital resident six-hour permits;
 - (vi) Paper resident visitor permits;
 - (vii) Paper six-hour visitor permits;
 - (viii) Carers permits;
 - (ix) Roadside pay to park/pay & display;
 - (x) Providing a dispensation;
 - (xi) Providing a parking suspension.

133. Traffic Regulation Order Application Decision Report

The Joint Committee considered the Traffic Regulation Order applications and the recommendations from the respective local authorities as to which should be approved, which rejected, and which deferred.

RESOLVED that the JOINT COMMITTEE accepts and approves the recommendations as detailed in the report.

134. Traffic Regulation Order [TRO] Policy

Jason Butcher, Group Development Manager, introduced this item as the first policy to be reviewed by the Joint Committee in this current round of policy reviews. The report outlined the review process, looking at content and wording. Much of the content of the flowchart for the Policy could not be amended, as it was set by statute. A draft was shared at an early stage with Client Officers, with two previous drafts being drafted before the final draft was produced for this meeting.

The report gives a range of the main options open to the Joint Committee. Officer recommendations were for the Policy to stipulate that each partner authority can put forward three 'normal' TRO schemes and three Tier Four schemes per year.

The Joint Committee discussed the options given, with a consensus being reached that Option 2 [at 3.3 of the report] was the best option to approve, and would provide necessary flexibility.

The officers were asked why an equality impact assessment [EqIA] was not provided for this policy, following on from a report presented to the JPC meeting on 27 October which included a broken link to its EqIA. The Group Manager clarified that this broken link had resulted from the Assessment's host webpage moving, and confirmed that a separate EqIA could be produced for each policy, and that the standard paragraph content where no implications were found could be listed individually, rather than in one section.

In response to questions, The Group Development Manager informed the Committee that the costing work was being done up-front, with investigations into income vs expenditure relating to TROs for residents' parking.

A Committee member asked whether, regarding scoring for prioritisation, greater weight could be assigned to the views of those most affected, to avoid the imposition of unpopular schemes. The member suggested that weighting could be rebalanced by lowering the weighting of political backing to five percent. Officers were also asked if the cost of schemes should affect their scoring, i.e. cheaper schemes receiving a higher weighting.

The Group Development Manager suggested that he return to the Joint Committee with a new draft of the scoring document, separate from the main Policy.

After a discussion regarding finding additional funds for TRO schemes, the Group Manager confirmed that Parish and Town Councils could help fund TROs, and the Group Development Manager explained that section 106 funding was separate to the TRO process, but that some local authorities did require funds to be set aside to help fund measures which they felt new developments would require.

Officers were asked whether there would be any way to have more flexibility, if partners required it. The Group Development Manager suggested that, at the October meeting of the Joint Committee, the Committee could be asked to decide whether to allow greater flexibility. The setting of TROs would be difficult to manage if no restrictions are in place, but the Joint Committee would have the chance to decide what, if any, flexibility to give.

RESOLVED that the JOINT COMMITTEE approves: -

- a) The new TRO procedure flowchart as detailed in Appendix B
- b) A new agenda item to consider a new Prioritisation Scoring Methodology, as detailed in Appendix C, at its meeting on 16 March 2023
- c) A reduction in the total overall number of new TRO scheme allocations, including 'Tier 4' schemes, to 36 per year and the prioritisation mechanism shown as 'Option 2', as outlined in the 'TRO Prioritisation Options' section of the report.
- d) The new general NEPP Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Policy, as detailed in Appendix A

135. Obstructive Parking

Councillor Freeman highlighted problems in the Uttlesford area (specifically in Great Dunmow), where residents felt enforcement efforts would be needed following Christmas. Councillor Freeman gave the view that officer presence was needed, over time, to dissuade contraventions or obstructive parking.

Councillor Jones, Uttlesford District Council, attended and, with permission for the Chairman, addressed the joint Committee to describe the issue affecting two streets in Great Dunmow, which were both narrow in places and experienced obstructions, near-misses for traffic and frustration for users of the roads. Councillor Jones urged that deterrence was needed and praised the enforcement actions which had been carried out and apologised for where these actions had attracted ire from some individuals. Councillor Jones suggested that double red lines at pinch points may ease problems where the issues were concentrated.

The Group Manager gave an overview of the situation where, in Great Dunmow, there were limited parts not subject to loading provisions, and agreed to look at potential options. Councillor Jones noted that there were three car parks run by

Uttlesford District Council within 30 seconds walk of the town centre, which people should be persuaded to use.

The Joint Committee discussed the difficulty of balancing safety considerations with the needs of local businesses when considering restrictions on parking.

There were no resolutions on this item.

136. Forward Plan 2022-23

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee notes and approves the North Essex Parking Partnership Forward Plan for 2022-23, and the meeting dates for 2023-24.