

Report of	Head of Operational Services	Author	Matthew Young
Title	North Essex Parking Partnership – Extension of Joint Committee Agreement		282902
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report concerns the decision on whether the Council signs up to the four year extension to the Joint Committee Agreement offered to the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) by Essex County Council (ECC)

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 That the Council delegates to the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Licensing authority to sign up to the four-year extension to the Joint Committee Agreement (JCA) offered by ECC at the NEPP Joint Committee meeting in December 2016. This would extend the agreement until March 2022.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To agree the Council's position in relation to the four-year extension to the JCA offered by ECC.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council can choose not to sign up to the four-year extension. However, if other authorities do, and a new lead authority is identified, then on-street enforcement services would still continue in the Borough and the Council would not be able to influence priorities and request new schemes.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The NEPP was formed in April 2011 and reports to a Joint Committee (JC) of ECC under a seven-year agreement.
- 4.2 The six District and Borough Councils in North and West Essex are Members of the JC and are represented by Councillors at the Committee meetings. These Councillors must be 'Executive Members', in other words members of the Cabinet. Essex County Council (ECC) attend the meetings and this is normally the Portfolio Holder responsible for Highways & Transportation.

- 4.3 The JC meets four times a year, with its AGM in June. The NEPP JC receives operational, financial and other relevant reports from officers. The officers are employed by Colchester Borough Council which is named in the Joint Committee Agreement (JCA) as 'lead authority'. Each of the District and Borough Councils (the "client authorities" of NEPP) has a client officer with whom the NEPP officers maintain regular contact and an officer from ECC also attends.
- 4.4 ECC has an Agreement with the NEPP JC to delegate the delivery of its on-street parking function. The NEPP provides these services in the districts/borough of Tendring, Colchester, Braintree, Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest. ECC has also delegated powers to make parking Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to the NEPP. These are the underpinning regulations for the making of parking restrictions/permissions such as "yellow lines" and parking bays and permit areas.
- 4.5 As part of the original agreement there was financial support provided by ECC and this is covered in section 9 of this report.
- 4.6 The current JCA includes an option to extend for a further four years when it terminates in March 2018. ECC have indicated their intention to take up that option and offer both the North and South partnerships an extension to the existing JCA through to March 2022.
- 4.7 The JCA will retain the vast majority of its existing clauses. However, the following amendments have been made by ECC in relation to the offer of the four-year extension:
- For the last two years of original seven year agreement:
 - 16/17 - ECC S&L subsidy at reduced levels (NEPP - £120k and SEPP - £30k)
 - 17/18 - No ECC subsidy, but business cases brought forward in 2016/17 for investment consideration
 - change to funding and more innovation/ efficiency/ modernisation with ECC operating as a co-investor providing capital funding, against agreed income generation and innovation business cases
 - The Partnerships to produce a review and report on best value approach for delivering Signs & Lines maintenance and creation of new schemes
 - The Partnerships to consider ways to improve links to Local Highways Panel (LHP) possibly via link to Highways Liaison officers to provide meeting dates and scheme information
- 4.8 In addition the project team that worked on the extension agreement, involving Members and officers from ECC and both Parking Partnerships, agreed a development plan to be implemented through the life of the extended agreement. This is attached to this report as Appendix One.
- 4.9 The Council has invested a significant amount of staff time and energy in making the partnership work and improved the enforcement operation in all areas, both on the street and in the back office systems used. It has also created effective processes to maintain signs and lines across the partnership area and create new Traffic Regulation Orders that did not exist before the NEPP came into being. Over the five years that the NEPP has existed it has delivered:

- 432 sign and line maintenance schemes
- 163 new TROs
- Two major scheme reviews

To give some idea of the positive impact that this has made the schemes developed and introduced in Colchester are listed in Appendix Two to this report. These are addition to the major review of the Colchester Residents' Parking schemes which had been promised since 2001 and were finally delivered and part-funded by the NEPP in 2014.

- 4.10 The NEPP has also introduced Body Worn Cameras (BWC) for Civil Enforcement Officers that are proven to reduce violent and aggressive incidents and the Parksafes vehicle which makes patrolling of high profile areas like Schools more efficient and effective.
- 4.11 Furthermore, when the Partnership commenced the on-street service it was running at a deficit of approximately £600k and predicted to increase further. This has been turned round over the five years of the existence of the NEPP to run at a significant surplus for the last three financial years.
- 4.12 Members of the NEPP JC can also elect to have their off-street car park services provided as an annex to the JCA. This option has been taken by Colchester, Braintree, Uttlesford and Harlow and Epping Forest.
- 4.13 Following the conclusion the on-street contract extension the discussions will commence on the arrangements for the off-street services and the plan is to no longer use an annex to the JCA and negotiate a separate agreement with the lead authority's off-street partners. This will allow an agreement to be agreed that better represents the needs and usage of the authorities involved.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 That the Cabinet delegates to the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Licensing authority to sign up to the four-year extension to the Joint Committee Agreement (JCA) if the terms are agreed by the NEPP Joint Committee.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Ensure transport infrastructure keeps pace with housing growth to keep the Borough moving.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 ECC went through a thorough consultation process involving lead Members and officers from both Partnerships which has led to the extension offer being made.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Any publicity will be issued by ECC in conjunction with both Parking Partnerships

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 In the initial agreement ECC agreed to provide:
 - Implementation and transitional arrangement costs up to a maximum of £124,000

- To cover any deficits on the on-street accounts for the first two years that the Partnerships operated
- To provide a one-off sum of £250,000 for the Partnerships to deal with the backlog of sign and lines work
- To provide £150,000 per annum for maintenance of signs and lines subject to the Annual Business Plan demonstrating that this level of support is required.

9.2 In the extension to the agreement the funding of £150,000 from ECC for maintenance of signs and lines has been withdrawn as both partnerships' financial results show that these works can be funded from the on-street surplus.

9.3 However, this does not stop the NEPP applying for capital funding from ECC to introduce innovative projects that will generate further on-street revenue. Examples already identified relate to commuter parking opportunities on ECC highway land adjacent to railway stations and major transport hubs.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 An updated Equality Impact Assessment for the NEPP is available here <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5106&p=0>

The decisions will not impact on the promotion of equality or discriminate in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 There are no community safety implications as a result of these decisions

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There are no Health and Safety implications as a result of these decisions

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 The financial risk for the Council relates to any deficits incurred by the NEPP which are shared equally amongst all partners. However, the on-street account has been in surplus for the last three financial years and also the NEPP has maintained a reserve fund of at least £100,000 to cover this eventuality.

13.2 There is a risk that the withdrawal of the £150,000 funding for maintenance of signs and lines will mean that some areas become unenforceable and new schemes will not be developed. However, the NEPP has demonstrated over the last three years that it can generate enough surplus on its on-street account to continue this level of funding.

13.3 The NEPP does maintain a comprehensive risk register that is reviewed annually by the Joint Committee.