

NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ON-STREET PARKING

1 October 2020 at 1.00pm

**Online meeting, held on Zoom and broadcast via the
YouTube channel of Colchester Borough Council.**

Members Present:

Councillor Nigel Avey (Epping Forest District Council)
Councillor Michael Danvers (Harlow District Council)
Councillor Richard Van Dulken (Braintree District Council)
Councillor Deryk Eke (Uttlesford District Council)
Councillor Mike Lilley (Colchester Borough Council) (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Robert Mitchell (Essex County Council) (Chairman)

Substitutions:

None.

Apologies:

Councillor Michael Talbot (Tendring District Council)

Also Present:

Richard Walker (Parking Partnership)
Lou Belgrove (Parking Partnership)
Liz Burr (Essex County Council)
Trevor Degville (Parking Partnership)
Rory Doyle (Colchester Borough Council)
Qasim Durrani (Epping Forest District Council)
Jake England (Parking Partnership)
Linda Howells (Uttlesford District Council)
Samir Pandya (Braintree District Council)
Miroslav Sihelsky (Harlow Council)
Ian Taylor (Tendring District Council)
James Warwick (Epping Forest District Council)

74. Have Your Say!

Dr Andrea Fejős and Professor Christopher Willett attended and, with the permission of the Chairman, addressed the meeting to ask that proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) T29664816 [Manor Road, Colchester] be approved. Although the TRO had been recommended for rejection by Colchester Borough Council, due to lack of local support, Dr Fejős argued that the Committee could still approve it.

The TRO had been requested by Dr Fejős and Professor Willett in order to stop vehicles parking in front of a flat's front window which they noted was the only alternative exit/fire escape for the property. It would prevent such parking and involve moving the parking space to further along the road, on the opposite side of the road. Councillor Mike Lilley (Colchester Borough Council) explained that the area was covered by a parking permit scheme, with the only available parking spaces being bays, thus necessitating the support of a majority of residents for any new traffic regulation to change the available parking. The spaces mentioned were already often used by commercial vehicles, however if evidence of resident support could be shown, Councillor Lilley explained that the TRO could be reconsidered the following year.

The Committee asked questions about the road and kerb outside the property in question. Professor Willett explained that work had been recently done by private contractors to improve an unkempt gully. The County Council Highways department had been informed, however the area itself was not considered part of the highway.

The Committee discussed whether alternative measures could be instituted to solve the problem, such as use of an H bar. Trevor Degville, Parking Technical Manager, noted that the only solution would be to remove the parking, however the reasons provided [primarily lack of local support] were why this was recommended for rejection. A Committee member did however request that alternative possibilities be explored and reviewed by officers.

Professor Willett stressed the unreasonableness of high-sided vehicles parking and obstructing the window. The Chairman directed that this issue be discussed with officers following the meeting to give further examination of the situation.

Councillor Rod Jones, Uttlesford District Council and Great Dunmow Town Council, attended and, with the permission of the Chairman, addressed the meeting to support proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) T8560459 [Godfrey Way, Great Dunmow] which had been recommended for approval. Visitors parking in the street were obstructing residents' parking and the thoroughfare. Restrictions would prevent the problems and remove obstructions.

75. Minutes

Councillor Mike Danvers queried why most contributions recorded in the minutes were ascribed to 'the Committee' or 'a member of the Committee' rather than to

identified individual members.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting held on 25 June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

76. Traffic Regulation Order Application Decision Report

Councillor Mitchell declared a non-pecuniary interest in scheme T174114475 [High Street, Kelvedon] and therefore left the meeting during discussion of the Braintree schemes.

Trevor Degville, Parking Technical Manager, introduced the report and recommended decisions, as submitted by the partner district and borough authorities. The report presented proposed TROs for the following year, and the recommendation from the appropriate local authority as to whether to approve, reject or defer each one. It was noted that there were more proposed for the coming year as waiting restrictions on bends no longer counted towards the quota of six schemes proposed for approval by each local authority. The Chairman then gave an overview of the approval, design and implementation process for new schemes. This went from local authority consideration, to recommendation to the Joint Parking Committee. Once approved, schemes were designed and planned over the Winter and then implemented the following Spring.

A member of the Committee queried how a TRO could be removed or changed to reflect a change in circumstance or demand. It was explained that schemes can be fine-tuned where necessary and that existing schemes would be amended over coming years.

The applications recommended by Uttlesford for approval were all approved by the Committee, being T8560459, T18396735, T18555702, T21435336 and T21459249. Application T7620142 was deferred.

[At this point, Councillor Mitchell left the meeting, having declared an interest]. Councillor Lilley chaired the meeting for the discussion of Braintree's schemes. The applications recommended by Braintree for approval were all approved by the Committee, being T267259210, T15357706, T23412799, T174114475, T153929810. Application T20446337 was deferred.

[Councillor Mitchell re-joined the meeting]. Councillor Danvers presented the Harlow schemes proposed for approval, explaining that a number of them were for school safety. The Parking Technical Manager informed members that the Partnership were moving to use double-red lines outside of schools [instead of zig-zags]. These could be enforced using CCTV or 'Parksafe' vehicles. The applications recommended by Harlow for approval were all approved by the Committee, being T22410535, T26422261, T27611206, T27614513, T27634136 and T16638968.

The Colchester schemes were introduced by Councillor Lilley, who explained that most were for junction protection and therefore were not counted towards the

limit of six schemes. Councillor Lilley confirmed that the residents who had spoken at the meeting about Manor Road would be contacted to discuss the problem they had raised and that a scheme would be reconsidered if local support could be shown. The applications recommended by Colchester for approval were all approved by the Committee, being T21365603, T19379733, T19381166, T19469718, T14362139, T15291502, T22592695, T19741980 and T104751311.

Ian Taylor, Head of Public Realm, Tendring District Council, confirmed that Councillor Michael Talbot had approved the recommendations put forward from Tendring District Council, which included a number of junction protection schemes. The applications recommended by Tendring for approval were all approved by the Committee, being 50122, T15394746, T14639662, T14644039, T20562948, T20645046, T20650006, T20581649, T205709910 and T17562405.

Councillor Nigel Avey introduced the Epping Forest schemes and it was explained that there were more than six, with a number of schemes being of types not counted towards the annual limit. The applications recommended by Epping Forest for approval were all approved by the Committee, being 60007, 60157, T103023910, T267051910, T21399017, T25439219, T22681295, T18382466, T19298873, T13419282, T18943800 & T15448472 and T13488598.

The Parking Technical Manager gave an overview of the previously approved schemes. Much work had been possible, even under Covid-19 restrictions.

RESOLVED that: -

All applications recommended for approval by the partner authorities, as included in the agenda, be approved by the Joint Committee

77. Finance Report to end of period 5 2020/21

Richard Walker, NEPP Group Manager, gave an overview of the Partnership's financial position, giving assurance that a reserve had always been kept in case of need, should an unforeseen reduction in income be experienced, such as the Covid-19 crisis, which had been very bad on finances. The projections made in the report were 'worst-case' numbers.

Savings had been made by furloughing some enforcement officers and through lowered costs from parking charge notices not being issued during the suspension of parking enforcement. The suspension meant that no expected parking charge income for April to June had been collected, however there had been a small income from older tickets being paid off. The handling of this and of the 3-month extensions to resident permits had resulted in compliments being made by service users, and online communications with customers were strong.

All additional costs were expected to be covered by the Partnership's reserves. The Committee discussed areas of spending, including the purchase of two extra cars in 2019-20 and two in 2020-21. These were for use by Civil Enforcement

Officers (CEOs) and would help safeguard them by minimising contact with members of the public not carrying out social distancing correctly.

Councillor Mike Danvers enquired as to whether it would be possible for cash collection machines in Harlow to be updated to process card payments. The Group Manager recommended that the MiPermit system of paying for parking was best. This could easily be accessed via smartphone and avoided physical contact with payment machines. MiPermit was already operating in Harlow and the Partnership could look at ways to promote and increase its use.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Finance Report's content.

78. Annual Report Data for 2019/20

RESOLVED that the Committee approved the data and the report in which it was shown.

79. Obstructive and Footway Parking Update

Richard Walker, Partnership Group Manager, provided an update on the situation regarding obstructive parking and the current consultation being held to seek views on the management of pavement parking and the Traffic Regulation Order making process. The Partnership would respond, but individual submissions could also be made. The three main possibilities were discussed, namely: Change highway regulations and the TRO process, decriminalise footway parking, or potentially regulating against all footway parking.

The Group Manager explained the background to this issue, the work done on it by the Transport Select Committee and their recommendations. The Partnership was in favour of making permanent the simplification of the TRO process and of decriminalising obstructive parking (to allow civil enforcement of the offence). The Group Manager recommended against full prohibition of all footway parking as this would not permit any use of discretion by enforcement authorities in deciding when and where enforcement was appropriate. Enforcement could then be decided according to local policy and be limited to where obstructions were found, rather than any instance of footway parking.

The Chairman detailed the situation regarding junction enforcement, where currently only the police could enforce against junction parking/obstruction, unless double-yellow lines are marked on the junction. This prevented CEOs from using their ability to enforce against obstructions and it wasted police resources.

Members of the Committee discussed what could be covered by their individual responses to the consultation, including ways to best use resources and officer time. A Committee member suggested that all parish and town councils be informed about the consultation and encouraged to participate.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Footway Parking Consultation being undertaken by the Government.

80. Forward Plan 2020-2021

The Chairman outlined the expectation that a future meeting would be used to look at existing TROs/schemes which had been identified as needing changes or amendments to reflect changes in circumstance or changes in car use.

It was noted that venues would be removed from the Forward Plan until such time as in-person meetings were again possible.

In response to questions, the Chairman explained that there used to be a sub-committee for off-street parking, but this had been folded into the Joint Committee and off-street matters were now conducted between the Partnership and each local authority in a series of separate meetings. It was clarified that only four of the partner local authorities utilised the Parking Partnership's services to administer their off-street parking.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan 2020-21 be approved.