



*North Essex
Parking Partnership*

Annual Report

2016/17

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Service overview

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) is a council-run organisation which brings together all street based parking in north Essex on behalf of Braintree, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Tendring and Uttlesford Councils.

Parking is not just about issuing fines

Although management of parking is one of our key roles, we view enforcement as a last option. We aim to improve everyone's understanding of parking management and encourage innovation in its delivery through education.

We believe that by working together, within the parking industry and with local authorities, we can achieve a positive step change in public attitudes about parking management. More details can be found in section 4.

The digital future

As more people move to use online services, we are embracing new technology to ensure more of our parking services are available online.

We now have a fully paperless solution for resident and visitor permits, and are phasing out the use of scratch card visitor permits. This was made possible with the use of Chipside's MiPermit, where residents can buy virtual resident or books of visitor permits as required.

We also use MiPermit to manage parking at a leisure centre, staff parking and it is available throughout 69 NEPP operated car parks as a cashless solution to pay and display. You can read more about this in section 2.



We now have a fully paperless solution for resident and visitor permits.



Preparing for the future

We are continuing to work with Chipside to develop our online services for customers and to make the best use of our data to inform decisions and build evidence-based parking policies.

We are looking into electronic vehicle charging points and investigating automated sensor parking bays, which (if deemed feasible) we hope to trial in Colchester next year.

Partnership working

We have supported town and parish councils in north Essex to bring in pay and display schemes, including Dedham Parish Council, West Mersea Town Council, and Wivenhoe Town Council. Car park tariffs range from 20p-50p an hour, with the first 30 minutes free. We are working to develop links with other areas.

In partnership with Tendring District Council we have been tackling inconsiderate parking outside schools. Tendring Council enforcement officers are supporting our regular patrols around selected schools in Clacton. We believe these extra patrols have had a positive impact and have raised considerable awareness about this issue.



2 On-street parking

ParkSafe car

The new ParkSafe car project, the first Parking Partnership-owned and operated ParkSafe vehicle, was launched during 2015/16.

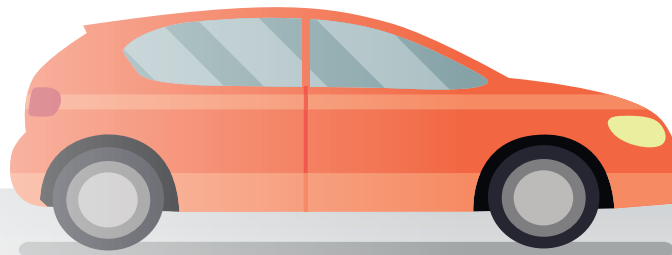
The role of the ParkSafe car is to provide a more effective deterrent against motorists taking the chance of parking on school zig-zag markings. Being mobile, it can cover more sites more effectively than an officer on foot. Several schools are patrolled every day, particularly at school start and finish times. Its use also supports existing Police and Essex County Council road safety campaigns.

Virtual parking permits

We have continued to improve our online permit service so all 6360 residential permits sold this year were purchased through the MiPermit online system. This means we have removed the need to display a physical permit within the vehicle.

We have also seen a substantial increase in visitor permits being purchased through MiPermit. We have kept a small supply of the traditional visitor scratch-cards to ensure all our customers can buy the permits they require. The demand for these has decreased and is now only 23% of sales. These are sold at a slight premium which represents the increased administration cost of the card based system.

“Our ParkSafe car is an effective deterrent against motorists parking on school zig-zag markings”



3 Off-street parking

Parking payment

We currently manage 69 pay & display car parks, four of which are multi-storeys - along with 4 free car parks.

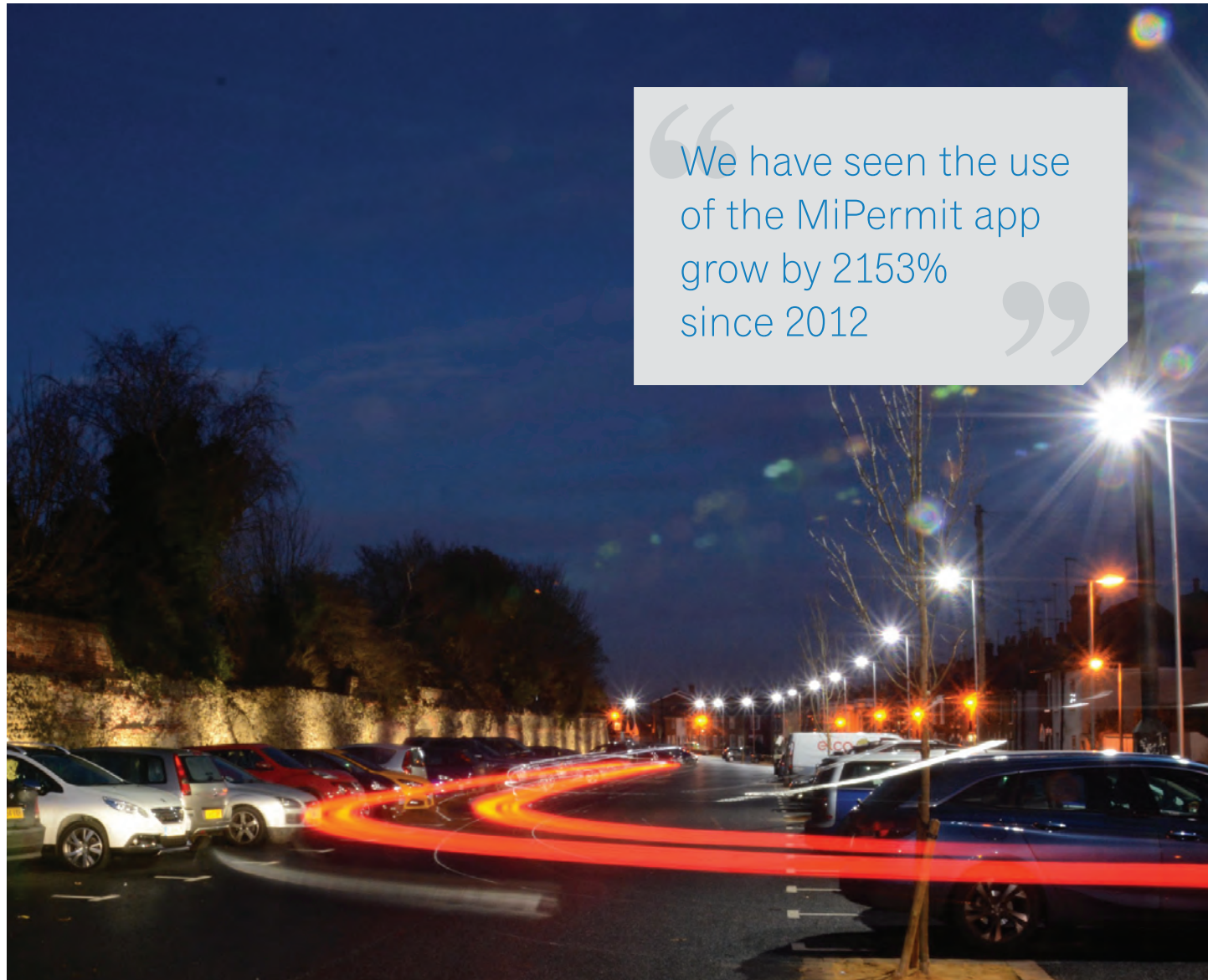
Since we introduced MiPermit in 2012 we have seen a continuous growth in the use of this service. During 2016-17 more than 381,988 transactions took place using a cashless payment option.

We converted all 157 of our cash payment machines to accept the new £1 coin. This work was completed by the time the new coin was issued to the public.

Car park improvements

We worked in partnership with Colchester Borough Council on the refurbishment of Priory Street Car Park. The works ran for 16 weeks and the new car park benefits from a high quality surface, improved landscaping, architectural lighting to celebrate the Town Wall and improved layout for vehicles and pedestrians with wider spaces. We also installed new payment machines enabling motorists to pay by card via contactless and chip card, alongside options including ApplePay, MiPermit, online, text, phone and coin.

“ We have seen the use of the MiPermit app grow by 2153% since 2012 ”



“Cllr Mitchell, NEPP Chairman

“I couldn’t be more proud of what the Parking Partnership has achieved this year.

Nobody likes getting a parking ticket, but the truth is that we don’t really like giving them either! I’m pleased to say that, through education, our connection with local motorists and engagement with the public has been significantly strengthened.

We’ve achieved this by having a presence on social media, along with our (award winning) Anna Tendant blog, which has been a huge success. We plan to build on all of these over the coming year.

There’s a real desire in the parking sector to deliver a more positive and consistent parking experience for our customers, and we fully support this.

This is much easier to achieve when authorities work together and share best practice so, over the next few years we will continue to work closely with the British Parking Association to bring around a step change in the perception of parking management.”



Councillor Robert Mitchell, Chairman, North Essex Parking Partnership
Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Essex County Council

”

4 Parking education

We're leading the way in changing the perception of parking management. By working with the British Parking Association, we plan to have a set of key messages that will help to build public confidence in the parking sector by changing perceptions, challenging misconceptions and to make the parking experience better for all.

Over the last year, an effective way of raising awareness of all matters parking has been through our award winning blog 'Anna Tendant'. The blog, written by a fictional Civil Enforcement Officer, offers information on a range of parking issues such as pavement parking, Bank Holiday restrictions, school parking and why we've started to use bodyworn cameras. Anna's blog can be read at www.northessexparkingpartnership.wordpress.com

We are also developing our social media presence to improve communication and education with customers through

 [@nepp_parking](https://twitter.com/nepp_parking).



Our blog won Gold at the Essex Digital Awards



5 People and Performance

During 2016-17 our focus changed from “People, Performance, Policy and Process” to the four new priorities of “Innovation, Efficiency, Education and Communication”.

Innovation

To improve recruitment we started running Assessment Days to give prospective staff a flavour of the service prior to holding interviews. These days have helped us to find the right people for this challenging role. Civil Enforcement Officers not only issue Penalty Charge Notices but also offer public advice on directions, parking locations and parking restriction education – they are the first port of call for visitors when seen on their patrols.

We also produced a recruitment video to encourage people to take up a career as a Civil Enforcement Officer. It focusses on a young mother who works as a Civil Enforcement Officer and depicts the varied role that she undertakes, including her interaction with the public. It helps to challenge misconceptions about what parking officers do. You can see our video at parkingpartnership.org/jobs

Since June 2016, all of our Civil Enforcement Officers have been equipped with bodyworn video units. These were introduced after a number of aggressive and violent incidents towards our staff. These devices help to bring officers a greater peace of mind and a feeling of security, which makes a massive difference to them when out on patrol. Since introducing our bodyworn cameras we've seen a 90% decrease in the number of low level aggressive incidents and 15% reduction in higher level aggressive incidents towards staff. The Civil Enforcement Officers have noticed a difference.

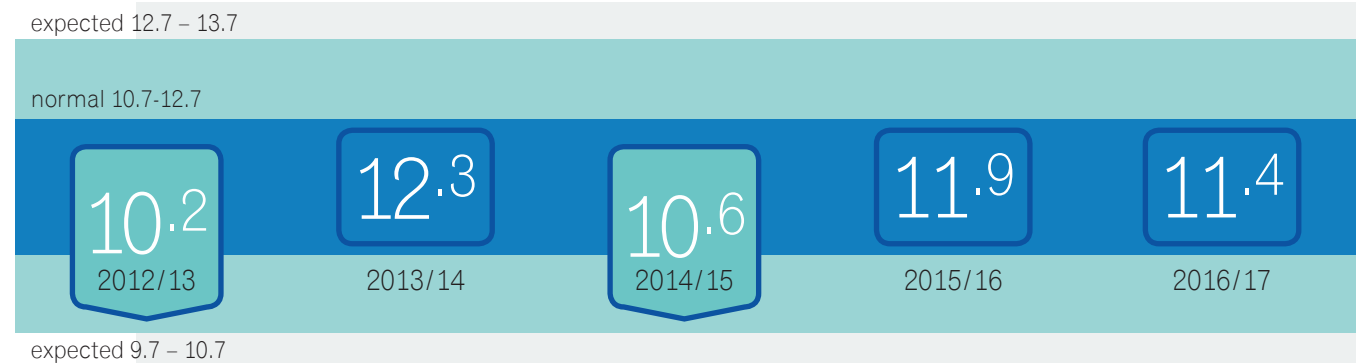
“Since introducing our bodyworn cameras we've seen a 15% decrease in the number of aggressive incidents towards staff”



Efficiency

In 2016-17 we saw a 5% increase in the number of Penalty Charge Notices paid, compared with the previous year. This is as direct result of the focus our patrol teams have had on the importance of giving 'fairer' Penalty Charge Notices and shows that there is a much greater understanding about only issuing fines that will stand up all the way through the appeals process.

Index of Penalty Charge Notices issued 2012/13 to 2016/17



Education

15% of our 40 Civil Enforcement Officers have broadened their remit by applying for Police accreditation, giving them extra powers to direct traffic and issue Fixed Penalty Notices if they see anyone littering. It is useful for the Police and local Councils to have extra people on the street, and has improved working partnerships.

To help improve the perception of our Civil Enforcement Officers, the frontline of our Partnership, we've focussed the teams on the importance of giving fairer Penalty Charge Notices. This not only helps our public perception, but also reduces the amount of challenges raised, which in turn reduces the cost and resource spent on the challenge process.

Communication

We have increased our internal communications with staff by introducing a newsletter, TV screens at offices, regular team meetings and our internal social media platform Yammer.

Team members from across the Partnership have contributed to creating a Staff Charter that sets out a shared mission – everyone is now signed up to seven statements on attitude and behaviour, responsibility and accountability, professionalism and team work. Our aim was to set out the responsibilities and expectations of staff and implementation is going well.

Our three Area Managers have been improving our relationship with County Councillors, Parish Councillors and the Essex Local Highways Panel by ensuring they are up to date with important local matters. They regularly attend meetings to represent the Parking Partnership to discuss patrol routes, new and existing Traffic Regulation Orders, residential permit areas and maintenance of parking restriction lines and signs.

6 Work Programme

Our future aims will help shape our work for the coming financial year. Here is just a taster of the projects that we will be focussing on.

We will continue dialogue with the British Parking Association and Department for Transport over parking management issues, such as parking close to junctions (junction protection), about the need to mark and make a Traffic Regulation Order for these locations, and associated issues which we would happily take over, such as patrolling and managing footway parking and obstructive parking.

We will continue work on improvements to our website to enable a new challenge system and a new Traffic Regulation Order page enabling more of our customers to self-serve whatever time is convenient to them.

We will be looking into the feasibility of the Parking Partnership taking over financial responsibility for new Traffic Regulation Orders, parking signs and parking restriction line maintenance from Essex County Council. We will be carefully looking at ways to fund the work programme, this funding review being part of the wider Essex Review of the Partnership Agreement.

“Working together will help change the perceptions of parking management”



7 Our accounts

Income and expenditure account 2016/17 and balance sheet as at 31 March 2017

ON-STREET ACCOUNT YEAR END POSITION 2016/17

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2016/2017	2016/2017	2017/2018
Direct costs	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget
EXPENDITURE					
Employee costs:					
Management	62	57	53	3	66
CEOs & Supervision	976	1,024	1,272	(248)	1,200
Back Office	259	290	285	5	302
TRO's	78	83	83	1	79
Premises / TRO Maintenance costs	16	182	93	89	163
Transport costs (running costs)	35	37	38	(2)	32
Supplies & Services	150	269	342	(73)	322
Third Party Payments	31	45	35	9	34
Total Direct Costs	1,607	1,988	2,203	(216)	2,198



ON-STREET ACCOUNT YEAR END POSITION 2016/17

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2016/2017	2016/2017	2017/2018
Direct costs	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget
INCOME					
Penalty Charges (PCNs)	(1,778)	(1,867)	(1,663)	(204)	(1,724)
Parking Permits/Season Tickets	(495)	(534)	(500)	(34)	(515)
Parking Charges (P&D etc)	(188)	(249)	(200)	(49)	(213)
Other income	(1)	(162)	(150)	(12)	(50)
	(2,462)	(2,812)	(2,513)	(299)	(2,502)
Total Direct Costs	(855)	(824)	(310)	(515)	(304)
Non-direct Costs	444	395	412	(17)	454
Sub total	(411)	(429)	102	(532)	150
Contribution from Surplus					150
Contribution to Capital		46			
TOTAL					
Deficit / (Surplus)		(283) out-turn			0 out-turn



OFF-STREET ACCOUNT YEAR END POSITION 2016/17

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2016/2017	2016/2017	2017/2018
Direct costs	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget
EXPENDITURE					
Employee costs:					
Management	16	15	14	1	3
CEOs & Supervision	275	289	359	(70)	267
Back Office	111	124	122	2	129
Off-street Account	206	209	188	21	185
Premises costs	6	12	3	9	9
Transport costs (running costs)	14	15	19	(4)	16
Supplies & Services	392	418	290	128	250
Third Party Payments	13	19	15	4	14
Total Direct Costs	1,033	1,102	1,010	91	873
INCOME					
Braintree District Council	(147)	(147)	(147)	0	(147)
Epping Forest District Council	(272)	(272)	(272)	0	0
Harlow District Council	(68)	(68)	(68)	0	(68)
Uttlesford District Council	(154)	(154)	(154)	0	(154)
Other income	(41)	(29)	0	(29)	0
Colchester Borough Council	(676)	(674)	(663)	(10)	(663)
Total Non-direct Costs	(1,358)	(1,343)	(1,304)	(39)	(1,032)
Sub total	(325)	(242)	(294)	52	(159)
Non-direct costs	191	145	159	(14)	159
TOTAL					
Deficit / (Surplus)	(134)	(97) out-turn	(135)	38	0 out-turn



8 How we invest and develop

In 2016-17 after direct costs we have a reserve fund of £840k.

We will continue to invest in new Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) including parking restrictions, loading bays and residential permit areas.

We will maintain parking restriction signage, restriction and permit area lines and invest in mapping updates and website accessibility and transparency improvements.

We will be looking into the feasibility of the Parking Partnership taking over financial responsibility for new Traffic Regulation Orders,

parking signs and parking restriction line maintenance from Essex County Council.

We will be continuing to invest in our staff communications, including raising the profile and use of our internal social media platform Yammer, moving our printed newsletter to a digital version and creating a Communication Corner in our Enforcement Offices.

We will refresh our Twitter page to make our posts more engaging by including, quizzes, polls and imagery to vary and break up more serious content and particular aspects of its work; helping to make a difficult subject easily available, engaging and understandable.

We will increase the use of the ParkSafe car over the next year, with a focus on schools and bus stop bays.

We will be reviewing the mapped restrictions in all areas, especially in Epping and Colchester, with a view to transferring these and all the parking restrictions we are responsible for to a new mapping system in 2018/19.



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