

## **TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL**

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 26 January 2015 at 5.30 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### **Present**

Councillor Stuart Potter (in the Chair)  
Simon Boshier  
Phil Smith  
Lynne Stagg

**24. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)**

Councillor Lee Hunt sent his apologies.

**25. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

No interests were declared.

**26. Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 24 October and 17 November 2014 (AI 3)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 24 October and 17 November were agreed as correct records.

**27. Review of Road Safety Around Schools (AI 4)**

**PC Stephen Ellis gave his views on road safety around schools:**

- He is part of the Cosham, Drayton & Farlington team safer neighbourhood team which works well with many schools, particularly Portsdown primary Solent and Court Lane.
- A bollard and the lines were removed outside Court Lane School and the zig zag lines extended.
- Operations are carried out with the parking enforcement and road safety teams. Parents' behaviour is generally good during these but afterwards parents revert to their normal behaviour.
- Parents feel that they don't have time to park in the correct place especially those who arrive from 8.50am onwards.
- He has witnessed children being ejected from cars.
- There are more parking infractions in inclement weather.
- Ultimately parents are responsible for their children's safety.
- Over the last five years, taxi drivers caused 500 accidents.
- In the past, naming and shaming parents led to pupils being bullied.
- The Chief Constable and senior officers will review the role of the police and the deployment of resources in April. The use of beat surgeries will be looked at as part of this review.
- Speedwatch campaigns are carried with residents out in roads where there is a proven issue. There is only one road in Cosham, Drayton and Farlington where the police can use a radar gun. Prior to the campaign, the police walk the road to ensure that every sign is located in the corrected position and is the correct height, colour, font and size in

accordance with government legislation. The Department for Transport is currently consulting on legislation to allow local authorities the authority to decide on signage in non-trunk roads.

- A large number of PCs are trained on the procedure for using speed guns which are stored at Fratton Police Station.

**PCSO Krissy Howard asked the panel to note the following points:**

- She currently works with many schools in her area but this may change after April when her duties will be reviewed.
- The majority of the abuse she receives is from parents when carrying out her duties outside schools.
- She regularly sees parents stop outside schools just long enough to throw their children out of the car.
- The police would not be able to commit to a rota to cover schools every school day with Community Wardens, Civil and Enforcement Officers (CEOs) because of other duties.

**Oliver Willcocks, Road Safety Officer explained his role:**

- He works with the Safer Neighbours Teams throughout the city. The Cosham, Drayton and Farlington team is one of the most pro-active. The police does not have a consistent approach across the city.
- He is also involved in joint operations involving PCSOs, CEOs and Community Wardens which last up to one week. Joint operations are more effective. However, enforcement is not effective in changing long-term behaviour.
- He recommends a drip-feed, consistent approach to educating parents undertaken by a full time officer dedicated to this role.
- Education should start from the first parents' evening.
- Child safety is the most important message to get out.
- Given that in the majority of accidents involving pedestrians, the driver is not at fault, teaching children road sense is essential.
- In addition to tickets, letters are sent to people who park illegally outside schools explaining that the lines and zig-zags are there to protect children. After the second infringement, a road safety officer visits the offender to discuss the issue and advises that if there is another incident they may be taken to court.
- The database of repeat offenders includes a disproportionate number of foreign drivers mainly with middle-eastern heritage and taxis drivers.
- Taxis are involved in 42% of accidents in Portsmouth.
- The nationality of drivers is not captured in accident data.
- When the scheme was originally devised, it was agreed that drivers would be taken to court if there were three separate infringements. However, the police have indicated that they do not want this to happen.
- The road safety team prioritises its time according to casualty data.
- The amount of yellow lines has reduced and subsequently children often cross the road from behind parked cars.
- Primary schools tend not to be as willing to engage with the road safety team as secondary schools.
- Portsmouth has 172 miles of roads with speed limits of 20mph (94% of residential roads) and 80 miles with 30mph limits. Accident black spots

are not in 20mph areas. Outside schools at the start and end of the day, the traffic may be slow-moving, so speed is not an issue.

- Drivers caught speeding are sometimes offered the option of attending a speed awareness course run by the council rather than have points on their licence. This is offered to drivers who were only exceeding the limit by a small margin.
- The Chief Inspector is in discussions with the Highways Agency about the Safer Roads Partnership.
- The Roads Policy supports the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Members included the following points in their discussion:

- Ticketing seems to be a good way of focussing drivers' minds because there is a direct financial consequence to their actions.
- A rota could be drawn up between the road safety team, CEOs and the police to ensure an increased presence outside schools in the morning and afternoon.
- It could be useful to obtain legal advice to clarify whether the council could take people to court after three infringements.
- Education is also important.
- The railings in front of Solent Junior School were installed seven years ago to protect children from walking in the road. Initially, there was anger from some parents who complained that this meant that they had to stop, get out of the car and lift their children over the railings.
- It is important that at every parents' evening in every school, officers attend to discuss road safety; this message needs to be reinforced every year.
- It is disappointing that only one Head Teacher and one teacher responded to the consultation.
- It might be useful for the Cabinet Member for Children & Education to write to:
  - 1) Taxi companies asking them to remind their drivers to comply with the law particularly around schools.
  - 2) Head Teachers reminding them of the importance of working together with the road safety team, the CEOs and the police to ensure the safety of pupils outside their schools.
  - 3) The Chief Constable requesting that he prioritise road safety and working with schools when reviewing the service.

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm.

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Councillor Stuart Potter  
Leader of the Council