

Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 24 September 2009 at 3pm in the Executive Meeting Room, Guildhall.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting).

Present

Councillors Jim Patey (acting Chair)
Mike Blake
Margaret Foster
David Fuller

Also Present

Simon Moon, Head of Transport and Street Management
(arrived partway through the meeting).
Angela Gill, Team Manager Traffic Engineering
Amber Kerens-Bathmaker, Team Leader Road Safety &
Sustainable Travel.
Jayne Rodgers, Sustainable Transport Officer.
Jane Di Dino, Scrutiny Support Officer

35 Declarations of Interest (AI 1).

No interests were declared.

36 Apologies for Absence (AI 2).

Councillors Caroline Scott and Richard Jensen sent their apologies.

37 Minutes of Last Meeting (AI 3).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1 September 2009 be agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment on page 22:

This line be deleted: 'He had still not received a reply from Colas' and replaced with 'It is now more than three months since Mr Stunell handed his photographic evidence of defective workmanship to Colas for action, and to date Colas had not yet commenced remedial work.'

38 Review of the City Council's Contract with Colas (AI 4).

The Chair informed the Panel that he had received a letter from Mr Thompson regarding the review; a summary is attached to these minutes as appendix one.

He read out the following update from Ensign regarding the work in Waverley Road:

We will be carrying out remedial works to a number of sites previously identified (Waverley Road and the surrounding area) to put right defects in workmanship and subsequent damage. I have been advised that a meeting has been arranged with Steve Elliott, and Cllr Stubbs to look at damaged paving in

Waverley Road on Monday 28th, we are attending and will program the works in to follow shortly after.

The Scrutiny Support Officer explained that Mr Privett, PFI Contract Manager would write to Mr Thompson as agreed at the last meeting.

The Chair thanked all the officers and members for their contributions and in particular Mr Thompson for his commitment to this review. He reminded the Panel that its report would be considered by the Cabinet within 8 weeks and that deputations could be made at that meeting.

Councillor Fuller noted that at a recent Neighbourhood Forum he had been asked how the public could be more involved in the Council's decision-making. He had responded by giving this review as an example of how members of the public could make a valid contribution to members' deliberations.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Review of the Council's Contract with Colas be approved and published.

39 Review of Cycling in Portsmouth (AI 4).

The Chair reminded the Panel that it had considered this topic at its meeting on 4 December 2008 and had resolved to wait until the draft cycling strategy be prepared before contributing. A copy of the draft strategy was circulated with the agenda.

Jayne Rodgers, Sustainable Transport Officer explained that the draft strategy had been produced following public consultation but further comments are still very welcome. A copy of her presentation is attached to these minutes as appendix two. During her contribution, the following points were raised:

The cycling strategy outlines the issues that have identified as barriers to cycling and sets out measures to address them.

There is a potential for conflict between parking and cycle lanes

A network of quieter roads to get around the city is being promoted, which may appeal to less confident cyclists.

Bicycle theft is a problem in the city and the number of incidents has increased this year. As part of a series of measures to tackle this problem, the Council has conducted a campaign to educate cyclists on how to secure their bicycles. It also directs people to the police's website which posts photographs of retrieved bicycles in an attempt to reunite them with their owners. The Council monitors the number and locations of bicycle theft and accidents involving cyclists and works with the police to find solutions

A budget is available for the installation of new bicycle racks.

There is scope to encourage more cycling to the ferry ports.

Cycle training is offered to both children and adults.

Angela Gill, Team Manager Traffic Engineering, who has taken on most of the former Traffic & Road Safety Manager's responsibilities, explained that the cycling strategy fits in with a number of other Council strategies, which together work towards ensuring people are safe and healthy.

The Chair noted that since the work carried out to encourage cycling in the city since 1997 was a credit to the city.

In response to questions from the Panel, the following points were clarified:

Two Bike Recycling Projects have been set up in garages in Paulsgrove and Hillside where people can get help to build a bicycle using recycled parts. Once completed, the bicycle belongs to the person who built it. There are plans to introduce other garages in Southsea Community Centre, the Stacey Centre (Copnor), Bransbury Park (Milton) and Buckland Community Centre. The Council is working with the police to obtain a supply of bicycles and parts from the police. The project will not be widely promoted until all the projects are up and running.

Whilst the installation of CCTV to monitor bicycle racks is effective in deterring bicycle theft, it is equally important to ensure that cyclists secure their bicycles properly. It is often difficult to get this message across to visitors who come to cycle in the city.

Ms Gill left the meeting at 3.55.

One school has been in the news recently for refusing to allow a pupil to cycle to school despite the route being relatively safe and his parents being supportive. Amber Kerens-Bathmaker, Team Leader Road Safety & Sustainable Travel explained that the Safer Routes to Schools project incorporates the School Travel Plan. She works closely with all the city's schools and governors to offer risk assessments, free bicycle storage and advice on cycling and walking to school initiatives. The school mentioned is willing to listen to officers but chooses not to permit its pupils to cycle to school. Its Travel Plan is regularly reviewed so there is the possibility that its stance might change at some point in the future. Councillor Blake informed the Panel that he is meeting with the Head of Governors of the school mentioned shortly and will raise this issue.

The general attitude to cycling is becoming more positive.

Bike Ability Standard training is offered to all year 6 pupils.

When the national Cycling Proficiency Scheme was stopped some time ago, some local authorities, including Portsmouth City Council introduced their own cycling training schemes. The Government has recently decided to offer funding and aims to standardise the schemes.

If a school can demonstrate that they are actively encouraging cycling to the school, they can apply for free cycling storage facilities.

It would not be possible to introduce cycle lanes on all Portsmouth's roads due to on road parking and the width of the carriageways.

The Council encourages people to use other sustainable means of transport as well as cycling in order to reduce traffic in the city.

Councillor Blake informed the Panel that Basingstoke introduced a network of shared cycling and walking routes on the footpaths. He was very impressed with this network. However he was concerned about the potential impact on traffic flow of on-road cycle lanes in Portsmouth due to having fewer car lanes.

Simon Moon entered the meeting.

The maintenance of the cycle ways is part of the rolling programme with Colas.

Councillor Fuller noted that he was pleased with the new cycle racks designed by the University of Portsmouth.

Cyclists are encouraged to report problems on the cycle network to the City Helpdesk. Colas has been quick to respond to problems with overhanging vegetation on public land.

The Panel's comments will be incorporated into the draft strategy.

Simon Moon, Head of Transport and Street Management explained that the strategy would be presented to the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation.

RESOLVED that the draft cycling strategy be approved for presentation to the Cabinet Member for Transport & Transportation.

40 Date of Next Meeting (AI 5).

To be arranged.

The meeting closed at 4:25pm.

APPENDIX ONE

In his letter dated 23 September 2009, Mr Thompson raised the following concerns:

- An informal meeting held on 23 June had not been recorded in the report.
- A formal meeting held on 7 August had not been recorded in the report.
- The Panel had not requested an explanation from Ensign regarding the delays taken on the Waverley Road works.
- He suggested three minor technical amendments to the report.
- He asked whether Councillor Hall's concerns had been addressed.
- An apparent lack of consultation with residents regarding tree removal, vacant tree pits and paving stones replacement.
- He asked whether the works carried out in Waverley Road conformed to the necessary standards and whether the quality of the work there was indicative of that carried out elsewhere in the city.
- He expressed disappointment that the works carried out in Waverley Road were not mentioned in the report's conclusions.