

## **Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 1 September 2009 at 3 pm in the Executive Meeting Room, Guildhall.

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

### **Present**

Councillors Caroline Scott (Chair)  
David Fuller  
Jim Patey

### **Also Present**

Councillor Paula Riches, Ward Councillor for St Thomas  
Councillor Terry Henderson  
Simon Moon, Head of Transport and Street Management  
Bob Colley, Senior Planning Officer  
Bill Murphy, Highways Manager  
Ray Privett, PFI Contract Manager

Jane Di Dino, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Anna Martyn, Scrutiny Support Officer

### **30 Declarations of Interest (AI 1).**

No interests were declared.

### **31 Apologies for Absence (AI 2).**

Councillors Mike Blake and Richard Jensen sent their apologies.

### **32 Minutes of Last Meeting (AI 3).**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 August 2009 be agreed as a correct record.**

### **33 Review of the City Council's Contract with Colas (AI 4).**

#### Street Lighting

Councillor Scott invited members to comment on streets and lighting in Old Portsmouth. Ray Privett said that with regard to street lighting the terms of the PFI contract allowed Colas to space columns further apart with six-metre lighting columns initially installed in ten streets. As a result of concerns raised by residents, Councillors Mike Hancock and Gerald Vernon-Jackson agreed that Colas would use a revised methodology in conservation areas. Subject to a report to the Traffic & Transportation Committee and Planning, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee, the following was agreed: to standardise lighting design, to keep square lanterns, to investigate the possibility of reducing the height of lighting columns. There could be some compromise on six streets with columns reduced to five metres but this was not possible in the other four streets without reducing street lighting to an unacceptable level. Bob Colley showed photographs of Warblington Street and St Nicholas Street. In the former

the six-metre columns looked unsatisfactory so they could either be removed or left as they were.

Councillor Riches requested that it be noted that there had been a meeting of the Friends of Old Portsmouth Association (FOOPA) regarding Colas' work. FOOPA had about ten committee members and a noticeboard outside the Co-op on which details of the proposed work were displayed and comments invited. Additionally, samples of proposed paving stones had been displayed by the Garrison Church so there had been plenty of opportunity for public consultation. FOOPA is happy with the paving stones that were chosen.

#### Re-Using Lighting Columns

Councillor Henderson said that he was amazed that the current height of the columns would remain as they looked ugly, cheap and inappropriate for the oldest conservation area in Portsmouth. The term "conservation" meant to improve and conserve. Bob Colley replied that the City Council had been trying to surpass basic standards but it had to be accepted that as there were not enough of the old style columns, new ones with enhancements had been used.

In response to a query from Councillor Patey, Ray Privett explained that the city would bear the cost of removing columns. Furthermore, under the PFI contract columns up to a height of six metres were allowed and that the style was included in the approved document 'Road and Street Furniture in Historic Areas' where height was not stipulated so maybe this should be reviewed. Other roads have lighting columns of that style. As only a few of the 26 original cast iron columns remained, decisions had had to be made regarding location. For example, four were used in Kent Road as they matched the other columns there. Councillor Fuller thanked Councillor Henderson for the tour of Old Portsmouth.

#### Column Height

Ray Privett said that most bidders had wanted to install eight-metre columns and that one benefit of six-metre columns was that they could be spaced further apart than the traditional five-metre columns. Five-metre columns would have looked inappropriate in the High Street. Councillor Fuller pointed out that in conservation areas items that had been removed should be replaced. Ray Privett said that where possible the original cast iron columns had been kept and that Colas could have installed modern style columns and lights in Warblington Street. Bob Colley said that the policy document would be modified with recommendations on column heights. In response to the Chair, he said that any money saved by Colas was put back into conservation areas, mainly Old Portsmouth.

#### Sourcing Old Style Lights

Councillor Riches said that residents in Old Portsmouth had been consulted about street lighting and accepted that there were not enough old style lights. There had only been one complaint, which was from a resident in Warblington Street. Councillor Henderson asked why no effort had been made to obtain old style lights as these still could be sourced. For example, there were no old style lights in Cosham's conservation area and Colas had used modern lights in Medina Road. Old Wymering Lane had had a tarmac lane laid which was unsatisfactory in a conservation area. Ray Privett replied that the city council

had lit Old Wymering Lane before the PFI contract. Bob Colley added that converting new columns had been considered if a budget could be found. He added that the city council always kept old style columns unless they were damaged. Bill Murphy mentioned investigating the possibility of old lamps being replicated by a mould being made from the current old style lamps.

Councillor Patey noted that the sea front was regarded as a prime location and that lanterns had to have specialist repairs. In many respects conservation areas in the city had been failed. The GIA programme had made a great deal of effort not to do anything which could be detrimental to the area. Work was not carried out until "like for like" replacements had been obtained. Old Portsmouth was a public and visitor attraction with considerable historical interest so the city Council should spend whatever was necessary to rectify the situation. In view of its historical value corners should not be cut and it might be worth investigating to see where there had been problems with the PFI contract. Councillor Scott noted that the PFI contract had been a steep learning curve. She suggested that a budget be created for columns; the Cabinet could be asked for this. Councillor Riches suggested that in view of the City Council's need to reduce spending areas such as social care and housing were more important.

#### Paving and Kerb Stones

Ray Privett explained that in the High Street between Lombard Street, Pembroke Road and Museum Road saxon paving and conservation kerbs had been used. The existing granite kerbs had been retained and old concrete kerbs had been replaced with conservation-style kerbs. Bob Colley added that areas of tarmac were being replaced. Colas thought they could source salvage granite kerbs for the High Street but could not find them. They had compiled a document for FOOPA, which was also available to members.

Ray Privett said that he was only aware of one complaint, which related to the timing of works on Broad Street whereas Councillor Henderson said that he had received several complaints from local residents. In view of the two different views, Councillor Fuller asked if the number of complaints the Council had received on this issue was recorded. Councillor Riches said that although residents sometimes requested the best materials when their street was being refurbished she had received only one complaint, which was about parking on the pavement. The Chair noted that Councillor Jensen had intended to write to Colas about the length of time taken to paint the columns but had not done so. In response to Councillor Henderson's remark that was no natural stone paving for the High Street, Bob Colley said that the High Street between Pembroke Road and Lombard Street to Broad Street would have natural stone paving.

Councillor Patey said that there was a concrete bollard near Penny Street, which was not in keeping with other bollards, which were cast iron. Other towns and cities were very strict regarding replacements and he asked if Portsmouth intended to maintain a conservation area or not. If a conservation area was to be kept then standards were necessary. Ray Privett said that the bollard had been installed before the contract with Colas but that it would be replaced. Councillor Riches noted that the lack of dropped kerbs near Poyning's Place by a school was causing inconvenience to people with pushchairs. Ray Privett explained that materials would now be standardised. Granite could be rough or

uncomfortable for wheelchair users and a document on inclusive mobility published by the Department of Transport said that setts were not suitable, even in conservation areas.

The Chair informed the Panel that in addition to the letter received from Mr Thompson on 10 August she had received another letter dated 1 September at the start of this meeting. The letter would be copied and circulated to the Panel for consideration at the closed session, which followed the public meeting. Mr Thompson read out his points and reminded the Panel that after three months he had still not received a reply from Colas.

**34 Date of Next Meeting (AI 5).**

Thursday 24 September 2009 at 3pm in the Executive Meeting Room, Guildhall

The meeting closed at 4pm.