

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 27 September 2011 at 4pm in Conference Room K, Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting which can be found at www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

Present

Councillor Caroline Scott (Chair)
Councillor Les Stevens (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Margaret Foster
Councillor Mike Blake
Councillor Luke Stubbs (deputising for
Councillor Robert New)

Officers

Mr Alan Cufley, Head of Community Housing &
Regeneration
Richard Maidment, Public Protection Officer
Martin Lavers, Assistant Head of Traffic & Transportation
Service

17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Ireland and Councillor Robert New. Councillor Luke Stubbs was deputising for Councillor Robert New. Councillor Jacqui Hancock who was to deputise for Councillor John Ireland sent her apologies as she was unable to attend owing to ill health.

18 Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of members' interests.

19 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 5 September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

20 Review into how the council responds to the issues of surface water flooding in the city - to include a plan that outlines the actions PCC would take in the event of extreme flooding from surface water in the city

The chair of the panel, Councillor Caroline Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves which they duly did. The Assistant Head of Service for Traffic & Transportation then gave the

panel a general introduction on surface water flooding and the emergency transport and environment service's emergency response document. He explained that the TES emergency response covers more than just surface water flooding. However, this panel would be invited to make suggestions in relation to the surface water flooding part of the document only.

The panel heard that the specific area that this review would be concentrating on in terms of the TES emergency response could be found at page 4 part 1 of the document headed "Citywide Flood Event".

Following heavy rain events, Portsmouth is susceptible to surface water flooding. The role of PCC during these events is to first protect human life and secondly to safeguard property. Following severe flooding a multi-agency response may be required as detailed in the flood response plan. The panel heard that the recent flash flooding event in Bournemouth earlier in 2011 could happen in Portsmouth. Measures that are currently being taken include

- Looking at existing sewer structure – this copes if it is kept clean and in order to do this specific streets known to have particular problems need to be targeted. Most of the time the sewer system in Portsmouth is able to cope. However there is a lack of capacity on occasion because the pipes are old and small. The situation is made worse because the pipes not only take surface water but also foul sewage. In addition overtopping of sea defences adds to surface water and when these factors are combined the sewers cannot cope in some areas which leads to surface water flooding.
- plans to improve the system. There is a surface water/foul sewage separation scheme which is planned for 2012. Although this is in its early stages, communications with stakeholders have begun and the aim is to remove foul sewage from the same pipes as have to cope with surface water.

The panel heard that pressures that impinge on sewage and water pipes include future housing. For example some building work can increase the risk of surface water flooding. If a person decides to build a patio or concrete over the garden for parking then rainwater goes into the road which then makes it the council's problem. There is a need to pass the ownership of responsibility for drainage to property owners themselves.

The Assistant Head of Traffic & Transportation said that the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) imposed certain duties on local authorities. In Portsmouth the preliminary flood assessment required under the Act has been carried out. There is also a need to formulate a plan on how to take surface water away from the city. Portsmouth is not looking at this in isolation as there could be efficiency savings by involving other bodies. The Isle of Wight authority and Southampton City Council are sharing some work with Portsmouth. Regular meetings are held with Southern Water which is also attended by the portfolio holder for the Environment, Councillor Eleanor Scott.

There are three stages

- The planning stage (being carried out at the moment)
- An assessment of what needs to be done
- Obtaining funding so that actions can be put in place.

The panel heard that coastal flooding is only relevant to this review in cases of overtopping at which point it becomes surface water which then makes it the city council's responsibility to deal with. Colas is employed through a PFI contract and has a legal duty to clear flooded roads within two hours. This cannot always be delivered.

PCC also receives many calls from members of the public when the road outside their houses starts to flood. At this point there is a need to manage the logistics of a flood situation. The Assistant Head of Traffic & Transportation said that floods are reasonably predictable and that they abate reasonably quickly. The emergency response is contained on pages 4 and 5 of part 1 of the TES emergency response document and this sets out priorities for dealing with flooding which is

- (1) properties affected by surface water containing foul sewage
- (2) properties affected by surface water (no foul sewage)
- (3) road network priority routes
- (4) road network non-priority routes

If the flooding gets worse then the incident could be escalated to involve the Civil Contingencies team which may then set up a major incident room.

In response to questions the following points were clarified:

- If private property is not the responsibility of the city council, the fire brigade could be called out to assist the property owner. However this may be a goodwill gesture rather than an obligation.
- Under recent legislation PCC is now a lead local flood authority and has certain responsibilities as a result of this.
- The whole area to the east of the railway line is a flood risk area. The severity of events is often dependent on the state of the tide at the time.
- Members of the panel said that they would welcome more information of precisely how the separation of sewers by Southern Water would be carried out.
- Certain areas of the city are below sea level and often the water comes out of the gullies rather than draining into them.
- One of the two main interceptor sewers is at capacity and Southern Water are looking to see whether they can divert some of the contents of one sewer into the other main interceptor sewer in order to minimise the effect of flooding.

- In terms of who pays for improvements to the problem of surface water flooding, contributions are made by developers through section 106 agreements but these do not cover all the work required.

Mr Alan Cufley said that as much funding as possible is obtained through a Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) and section 106 agreement but that the city council attempts to get money from any available source. He said that there was also money available through PUSH.

The panel looked at the scoping document which was agreed subject to ongoing revisions if required during the course of the review.

RESOLVED that the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel agrees the scoping document as attached to these minutes but agrees that revisions can be made during the course of the review if the panel thinks appropriate.

The meeting concluded at 4.55 pm.

VJP/DMF
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