

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 18 October 2011 at 4.00 pm in the Executive Meeting Room, floor 3, Guildhall, 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 David Fuller (deputising for
Councillor Les Stevens)
Councillor Mike Blake

Officers

Mr Harvey Cable, Highway Technician
Mr Steve Elliott, Team Manager (Transport Engineering
and Major Projects)
Mr Martin Lavers, Assistant Head of Traffic &
Transportation Service (Operations)
Ms Jane Tume, PFI Commercial Manager

21 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Margaret Foster, Councillor John Ireland, Councillor Robert New and Councillor Les Stevens.

22 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Caroline Scott declared a personal non prejudicial code of conduct interest in that many years ago she worked for Southern Water.

23 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2011 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 27 September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

24 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 (AI 4)

The chair of the panel, Councillor Caroline Scott, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves which they duly did. The following documents were circulated to the panel:

1. Surface Water Drainage presentation dated 18 October 2011
2. Portsmouth Surface Water Management Plan – Hotspots Storyboard

3. Portsmouth Surface Water Management Plan Stakeholder Progress Meeting dated 30 September 2011 produced by Halcrow
4. Draft PCC Statutory Flood Investigation Guidance – according to Flood and Water Management Act 2010
5. An email to Councillor Caroline Scott from Penny Hodge at Southern Water giving an update on Eastney pumping station.

Mr Steve Elliott and Mr Harvey Cable gave a presentation on surface water drainage.

(TAKE IN PRESENTATION)

The presentation first dealt with water definitions and Portsmouth flooding.

- Surface Water - Rain water which falls on land, includes run-off from roofs and melting snow. This can result in localised flooding, normally caused by blocked gullies or insufficient sewer capacity.
- Foul Water - Waste water from residential and business properties, without any other water present. This normally stays within foul water systems and is not exposed to the elements. Flooding from this source is not common in Portsmouth; any flooding is caused by blocked sewerage systems and manhole overflow. Due to the nature of Portsmouth's sewer network, most floodwater has been diluted by surface water.
- Combined Water - A combination of surface and foul water. This is the most common flood water in a heavy rainfall event. For example Southsea flooding in 2000 was combined water.
- Ground Water - In relation to the water table this is not normally a problem in Portsmouth – there are very few records of groundwater flooding.
- Sea Water - Overtopping of sea defences, and sewer infiltration in a few areas. This can also work in other direction for example foul water getting into the sea. In Portsmouth the areas where this commonly occurs are Old Portsmouth, the Seafront, and Tangier Road.

The PCC surface water drainage system at local level was explained to the panel. The panel heard that all gullies within PCC are mapped and that although some areas are more susceptible than others, flooding from blocked gullies is not a major problem for Portsmouth. The PFI is a performance specification contract which limits flooding at gullies to 10mm after an event storm. Service points can be awarded for poor performance. Members heard that all gullies are cleaned once a year but there is potential for enhanced cleaning at critical gully locations subject to funding.

The panel was shown a map headed “PCC Surface Water Drainage System – Strategic Level” and heard that the western interceptor pipe was already at capacity. This was as a result of more development taking place on the western side of Portsmouth. The panel heard that water originating from the north of the city and from the mainland flows down the eastern interceptor. All the water goes through Eastney so that if the Eastney pumping station breaks down there could be a problem. The maximum that Eastney pumping station could cope with was 18 cubic metres of water per second.

Mr Harvey Cable then explained to the panel that the preliminary flood risk assessment had been produced as it is a requirement of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and represented a tool for recording a flood history and reporting major flood incidents in Portsmouth to the European Economic Community (EEC). The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) had now been signed off by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Eleanor Scott and had been submitted to the Environment Agency in June 2011 which was within the deadline given.

The Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) is a work in progress and

- aims to reduce flood risk by identifying areas which can be targeted to reduce surface water flooding
- proposes structural measures to reduce likelihood of flooding (SuDS schemes, construction schemes, etc)
- proposes non-structural measures to reduce the consequences of flooding (flood resilience eg property level flood protection, flood warnings, development control policies)

The SWMP is not developed as a result of a statutory obligation.

The panel were shown a map of Portsmouth showing the critical areas of surface water flood risk. The panel heard that there were various proposed schemes under phase 1 which included

- location 6 of the map (Copnor – Amberley Road) where the scheme was for underground storage and swales. A swale is a pond by the side of the road with reeds to encourage water to dissipate into the ground. The panel heard that there are no swales in Portsmouth as yet.
- Location 9 (Copnor – Monkton Road). The proposal here is for underground storage and flap valves.
- Location 14 (Great Morass). This is a scheme to provide a strategic soakaway and to harvest rainwater and also to provide a surface water separation scheme.

The panel heard that Mr Cable had attended a meeting with Southern Water recently concerning the separation and said that the current intention was to start this project in 2013 – which was a delay from the original start date of 2012 – and that it was intended that this would be completed by 2015. There are eight separate schemes across Portsmouth, all planned to be started on site by the end of 2013.

In answer to questions, Mr Cable confirmed that this would be co-ordinated with sea defences and was intended to be an umbrella scheme covering surface water as well as coastal defences, but the current scrutiny review was concentrating on surface water flooding.

Under the Mainland Interceptor Flood Alleviation Scheme (MIFAS) scheme, the intention is to reduce the amount of water coming onto Portsmouth north from the mainland in order to reduce the pressure at Eastney pumping station..

In response to a question the panel heard that certain times of the day increased the pressure on sewers and therefore there was an increased risk of flooding at certain times of the day.

The panel next heard about the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA). It was explained that Portsmouth City Council is a designated Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and has the following duties as stated in the Act.

- (1) The LLFA must develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for Local Flood Risk Management in its area.
- (2) The LLFA may request information under 'powers to request information'
- (3) On becoming aware of a flood in its area the LLFA must, to the extent that it considers it necessary, investigate and publish findings
- (4) A LLFA must establish and maintain an assets register
- (5) It is the responsibility of the LLFA to designate assets involved in flood defence.
- (6) Coastal erosion risk management
- (7) It must set up a SuDS Approval Body to assess drainage submissions of planning applications.

Mr Cable explained that progress to date was summarised in the presentation. With regard to (1), PCC was awaiting completion of the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP). The Local Flood Risk Management scheme includes inputs from SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment), PFRA (Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment), SMP(Shoreline Management Plan, and SWMP.

With regard to (2), this had already been exercised in order to obtain historic flood information.

With regard to (3), the team was presently drawing up a flow chart for reference during an investigation into a flood event.

With regard to (4), (5), (6) and (7) the team was awaiting DEFRA consultation and guidance.

The panel heard that PCC successes to date included

- Creation of dedicated drainage team from nothing in mid 2010 to a fully externally funded part time drainage engineer team now.
- An Environment Agency/DEFRA drainage student has been secured with full external funding.
- A total of £288,000 of flood related external grants had been awarded to date.
- An additional £105,000 Property Level Flood Protection (PLFP) external grants obtained from Environment Agency.
- PCC was the only local authority within Solent & South Downs area to successfully return a Medium Term Plan for future external funding of surface water and flood alleviation schemes in 2012/2013 under the FDGiA (Flood Defence Grant in Action) programme. All of these capital schemes will be 100% externally funded. The team was working on applying for future funding for the 2013/2014 financial years and onwards.

The panel heard that the existing status concerning funding for 2011-2012 was as follows –

Strategic funding

- £10,000 PFRA obtained.
- £150,000 SWMP funding obtained.
- £128,000 (£193,000 in 2012/2013 onwards) LLFA grant obtained.

Capital funding

- £105,000 (PLFP) grant for flood resilience measures in Southsea – approximately 20 properties. These are presently at the survey stage,
- MTP (Medium Term Plan) submitted to carry out phase one capital drainage works from Surface Water Management Plan findings (ie critical locations 6, 9 and 14 referred to earlier in the presentation).

Mr Cable went on to explain the intended future works for 2012-2013. These included

- Creation of formal drainage team within Transport and Environment Service to sit within the TSM 'New Build' team from April 2012.
- Consolidation of seven core FWMA duties (with Isle of Wight and Southampton)
- The construction of four surface water drainage schemes (phase one) in critical areas 6, 9 and 14 in the 2012/2013 financial year.
- Pre-grant feasibility works for 2013/2014 MTP funding to fund phase two drainage capital works.
- Detailed feasibility into MIFAS (Mainland Interceptor Flood Alleviation Scheme) option.
- Possible proactive maintenance for enhanced gully cleansing / sweeping in critical locations.

Mr Cable explained that MIFAS would cost approximately £5-7 million but that the Environment Agency has not yet given its support to this scheme, but may part support this as a minor funding partner, if more substantial contributions were received from developers and Southern Water.

In response to questions the panel heard that the creation of the new team should result in lower consultancy costs as more work could be done in house. However there would still be some necessity for using external consultants because some of the areas involved are very specialist. As PCC has been successful in getting some external funding, this could be used to pay for consultants but the team would look to see if it could achieve savings. Mr Martin Lavers explained that some of the modelling software used by external consultants was extremely expensive.

Ms Jane Tume then provided the panel with more details on gullies. She explained that there were approximately 18,000 gullies in Portsmouth and these were all mapped. Ms Tume explained that there were three types of work done on gullies.

1. Cyclical – Colas split the city into approximately 80 zones and the two gully machines visit each gully on a rota system to lift the grill, remove debris, flush the pot and watch the water decline to assess if pipes are blocked. If they are blocked the pipes are then jetted to clear. If there is still a problem this will be forwarded for further action. Ms Tume explained that Colas was responsible for the grille, the pot and connection pipes but the rest was Southern Water's responsibility. Daily worksheets are completed for every gully attended and a works order is raised for any defects I e jammed grill/ blockages.

2. Deep Cleanse – Ms Tume explained that this involves closing a road in full, removing all vehicles and a mechanical sweep of the road and gullies. Deep Cleanses are instructed either following a cyclical cleanse where a gully could not be accessed due to too many cars in the road or if an issue has been raised in the road.. 7 day notices are placed on lamp columns in the road to advise, a letter drop to all houses is carried out and then the day before the works are started signs are erected at either end of the roads. Vehicles are moved to the nearest empty space in the next road, there are no charges to owners for this. Works will start between 7.30am and 8.00am, with the road closure starting from 8.30am and the road will be opened as soon as work is complete.
3. Reactive Works - These are ad-hoc requests from members of the public or councillors which are then reported on the Public Enquiry Manager (PEM a communications line to Colas) system and forwarded to Colas for actioning. Response times can be 24 hours for an emergency or 28 days if non emergency and additional 15 days if a TRO is required. Gully machines are on call 24 hours a day.

Between April 2011 and October 2011 there had been 325 PEM cases concerning gullies. 218 were blocked gullies, 86 smelly gullies and 21 broken gullies. Members heard that a database and map had been set up to monitor all known problem areas in the city. These would then be attended to as a priority as soon as heavy rain starts. Some of these areas have already been attended to for things like infrastructure problems where Colas have rebuilt the problem area.

The panel heard that there had only been 1.5 people in the PFI team for more than a year but that this should increase to seven after Christmas 2011.

The panel heard that PCC monitors Colas and this forms the quality assurance check. PEMs are monitored to check that Colas is attending within the time limit set in the service contract. Ms Tume explained that in addition to residents and councillor reporting problems Colas and PCC have introduced a See Phone Fix campaign to encourage staff to report as well.

Members suggested that as PCC have many parking attendants, community wardens etc, they could perhaps be used as part of the see, phone, fix campaign.

Members were given a handout of PCC statutory flood investigation guidance under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 so that they could take it away to comment on at any later meeting. A series of questions and answers were provided to the panel which are attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

25 Date of Next Meeting (AI 5)

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8 November at 4.00 pm in Conference Room K.

VJP/DMF
1 November 2011
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