

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

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 8 November 2011 at 4.00 pm in Conference Room B, 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](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk))

### **Present**

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

### **Officers**

Mr Harvey Cable, Highway Technician  
Mr Steve Elliott, Team Manager, Highways and Bridges  
Mr Martin Lavers, Assistant Head of Traffic & Transportation Service (Operations)  
Mr Alan Cufley, Head of Community Housing  
Mr Richard Lee, Environment Protection Divisional Team Leader  
Ms Cindy Jones, Civil Contingencies Manager

### **External Witnesses**

Mr Barry Luck – Strategy Manager for Sewerage, Southern Water?  
Mr Andrew Peacock of 4D – Working for Southern Water  
Mr P Ferroni – Colas  
Mr Joss Carter – Environment Agency

#### **26 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Ireland.

#### **27 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.

**28 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2011 (AI 3)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 18 October 2011 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

**29 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 document was circulated to the panel:

- A copy of a recent news article appearing in the Guardian.

**Environment Agency Presentation**

The panel first received a presentation from Mr Joss Carter of the Environment Agency.

(TAKE IN PRESENTATION)

The presentation covered:

- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- Help that was available to Lead Flood Authorities including what needs to be done and what responsibilities there are

Mr Carter explained that several questions were outstanding and had been addressed to DEFRA for clarification. Mr Carter gave some background information on types of flooding including coastal flooding, fluvial flooding, groundwater flooding and surface water flooding.

Mr Carter said that flood risk originated from one or more of four main types:

- Coastal – caused by the tides, local weather conditions.
- Fluvial – caused by high rainfall and runoff causing rivers to use there floodplain.
- Ground water flooding – caused by high water table and saturated conditions
- Surface water – overland flow or surface water that pooled from high rainfall.

In the late 1990's coastal risk was being analysed under Shoreline Management Plans – a programme of work that assessed the coastline in 22 sections.

Between 2002 – 2010 river flooding was investigated, and all sources of flooding, under Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMP).

Surface Water Management Plans are now under way in many parts of the country, with 77 SWMPs funded from an initial Government grant to focus on hot spot areas.

Each of these plans identifies risk areas and puts forward actions or solutions

to improve the odds against flooding. This outcome driven process is driven by the Government through Defra.

Mr Carter went on to say that the emphasis from a planning perspective is currently very much on surface water, surface water management plans and sustainable drainage management issues.

Mr Carter's presentation showed some photographs of the effects of flooding and said that these often affected new buildings which had been built in the flood plains. Although the water may be rainfall, it quickly becomes polluted for example from engine oil or from overloaded foul sewers. Water only needs to be 30 to 40cm deep to move an average car

Mr Carter then explained the responsibilities that Local Authorities had under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

The Act is being commenced in stages since Royal assent.

- The Act requires local lead flood authorities to draft a local strategy on surface water, ground water and ordinary water courses.

(The local strategy is scheduled to be in place by December 2013 and this would provide more information about how to respond to floods. )

- It requires that the LLFA or the partnerships of LLFAs, carry out investigations into flooding.

(Flood investigation partnerships would have a duty to investigate flooding and to determine whose responsibility this was. A report back would also be required. Mr Carter said that Hampshire County Council has done some work on when an investigation should be carried out.)

- The Act gives new responsibilities on consenting and arrangements around funding ...

(With regard to funding – partnerships would be required eventually to bring together local programmes and projects which would become the responsibility of the partnerships. This responsibility is currently with the Environment Agency.)

- The Act requires an asset register to be kept, registering all flood risk management assets within the administrative area.
- The Act requires that the consenting and enforcement will be passed from the Environment Agency to LLFAs

Mr Carter explained that Lead local flood authorities will become SuDS (Sustainable, Urban Drainage Systems) Approving Bodies or SABs.

SABs will be unitary authorities and where unitary authorities don't exist these will be the County Councils

SABs will be providing advice to local planning authorities on SuDS matters associated with new development.

Mr Carter recommended the National Audit Office website and the NCE magazine for information on SuDs .

## **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)**

Sustainable drainage systems have to be included in all new developments but there are questions that are unanswered about who has responsibility for ongoing maintenance of these sustainable drainage systems. The panel received a handout on this. There would also be a transfer of powers from the Environment Agency to the Local Lead Flood Authority. The panel received a handout on consenting and enforcement orders.

Mr Carter then explained that Under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 certain responsibilities were given to Local Authorities:

1. A requirement to produce a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). Portsmouth had already produced theirs.
2. To identify key flood risk areas (Portsmouth is not one of the 10 hotspots agreed by the Government nationally)
3. A requirement to produce Flood Hazard Maps – but only in respect of the 10 identified hotspots.
4. Flood Risk Management Plans for key flood risk areas had to be produced.

### **Colas Presentation**

The chair of the panel next invited Mr Paul Ferroni of Colas to provide his presentation.

(TAKE IN PRESENTATION)

Mr Ferroni outlined the topics that would be covered in his presentation and said that Colas was preparing to move to a risk based approach targeting specific problem gullies rather than just having an annual inspection of all the gullies. He explained that there were many issues and members of the public were able to report on problems 24 hours a day.

Mr Ferroni explained that the city is divided into 88 zones and the cyclical gully cleansing operates on a zone by zone basis. One gully tanker operates on a full time basis and a second gully tanker supports this when not dealing with response maintenance issues.

Colas have recently begun to amend the programme of gully visits so that more visits are made to those gullies which are prone to being blocked. All reports of blocked/ smelly gullies are reported on the PEM system and are attended to on site within 24 hours. The gully is cleaned and jetted if necessary. Gullies that are still defective are recorded and a drainage crew attends on site to carry out a permanent repair within 28 days.

With regard to leaf fall Mr Ferroni explained that this had a significant impact from October to mid-December and that a dedicated crew visited areas that had been mapped as being likely to be prone to leaf fall. Crews worked around the city methodically and recorded the number of bags of material removed from gullies in each road in order to refine the programme in future years. Public enquires are monitored through PEM and the programme is adjusted to react to problem areas.

Mr Ferroni then told the panel about the Deep Cleanse Program which is used in areas where routine cleansing is not possible due to the high volumes of parked cars. In these cases, signs and notices are erected about the road closure and residents are notified in writing. The road is swept, the gullies cleaned and any repairs are undertaken. The work is normally completed by lunch time although particularly long roads have to be dealt with in stages. 110 City roads have been deep cleansed so far in 2011. There is close liaison with PCC with regard to the Deep Cleanse programme.

Mr Ferroni explained that some sections of the surface water drainage system are subject to tidal flow. Historically, some areas of the city have suffered from localised flooding when heavy rain coincides with the high spring tides. This can result in water being pushed up through the manholes as the covers are forced off due to water pressure. The flap valves in the sea wall are regularly checked to see they are working properly to try to mitigate the effects of tidal flow.

Mr Ferroni said that Colas works with PCC and together have jointly mapped the known hot spot areas and have instigated a programme of works to address these issues. To date works have been completed in '13' areas and the effectiveness of the works is being monitored. There are '16' areas that have still to be addressed.

Mr Ferroni explained that during periods of heavy rain Colas works closely with the PCC Flood Response Room. Colas Highway Inspectors drive around the city monitoring the hot spots and in particular the major highway network. Any flooding emergency will be attended to within one hour and this is on a 24 hour a day basis. During the working day 2 gully tankers are available and up to 24 highway operatives. Out of hours 1 gully tanker is available and up to 8 operatives

In the event that PCC declares that a 'major flooding incident' has occurred Colas will suspend some or all of the following services: routine operations. Including street cleansing, street lighting/ highway maintenance and highway improvement scheme works. This potentially could provide PCC with approximately 200 operatives with vehicles and equipment, plus managers, staff and supervisors. Additional resources can also be provided through Colas' supply chain partners. Colas would work closely with PCC's emergency planning team to address the incident effectively.

In the event of a major incident for example when Eastney Pumping Station failed in 2000, Colas had the potential to provide 200 operatives and 10 vehicles to help out. If such a case happened again, Colas would work under PCC guidance and was sufficiently resourced to be able to respond.

In response to questions the panel heard that the turnaround time required in a non-emergency situation was 28 days but that the average response time for Portsmouth was 14 days. Non emergency incidents mainly concerned blocked gullies and could be remedied by jetting.

It was confirmed that almost all complaints came via the City Help Desk but that out of hours calls were dealt with by drivers being available by phone.

### **Southern Water**

The chair of the panel next invited Mr Andrew Peacock to provide his presentation on behalf of Southern Water.

### **(TAKE IN PRESENTATION)**

Members heard that the surface water separation scheme had been planned to separate surface water from foul water. There were two main interceptors in the city – the eastern interceptor and the western interceptor. The panel heard that Eastney Pumping Station pumps water to the treatment centre and then into the sea. Eastney Pumping Station had been constructed in 1865 and was therefore quite old. In dry weather it only needed to pump 750 litres per second but storm flows required 17,000 litres per second and this represented an extremely high increase. 17 cubic metres per second flow is statistically equivalent to a 1 in 30 year storm event, however, on two occasions in Autumn 2010 this speed of flow was exceeded.

The panel heard that the objectives of the water separation scheme were as follows:

- To reduce combined flows
- To improve the pumping station to a 1 in 75 year storm event
- To reduce the risk to properties prone to flooding
- To separate the surface water at source to avoid the need for treating it.

The panel heard that ways in which the flow could be reduced included:

- Surface water separation
- Resolving tide-locked outfalls
- Reducing tidal infiltration

Mr Peacock showed the panel a map indicating the way in which flow separation was intended to work. The panel heard that £½m had already been spent on surveys and modelling of the proposed network. He explained to the panel that interaction with PCC was of major importance. The areas of tide-locked outfalls were shown on the map.

The panel also heard that there was a tide infiltration scheme notably on Spice Island which needs to be reduced to alleviate the pressure on sewers. He explained that there were various draft options including the following:

- Copnor Road – where 1,000 litres per second was flowing into the sewage network
- St Mary's /Anson Road - 500 litres per second.
- Gruneison Road – they would like to build a brand new pumping station here to prevent flow going into the combined network.
- Kirtley Close – perhaps looking to build a pumping station.
- Spice Island – sewer relining.

The panel heard that there was a long way to go before the proposed improvements were operational. It was hoped that the project would start in September 2012 and that other projects would follow in quick succession as shown on slide 19 of the presentation. The panel heard about an early warning flood system design which was represented on slide 21 which would monitor levels in the sewage system and would be accurate enough to predict levels and therefore provide early warning of potential problems.

In response to questions it was confirmed that

- the scheme would improve discharge into Langstone Harbour so that flows elsewhere would be lessened but this would be clean water.
- there was a flood relief scheme but that this was not an environment agency scheme. The normal standard was a 1 in 30 year flood event and so to build a network to a 1 in 75 year flood event was a higher standard. Members were advised that a 1 in 75 year flood event capacity at Eastney would still not avoid flooding elsewhere.
- Fort Cumberland was a storage space that was kept empty unless Budds Farm was at capacity in which case the excess water went to the Fort Cumberland storage space.
- stakeholders would be notified at an early stage about the programme of works and that much work would be done in conjunction with stakeholders to minimise the impact of those works. 4D had worked with Southern Water extensively on how to manage the process.

Mr Martin Lavers suggested that a bulletin should be issued to advise people of the timetable for potential works as soon as this was known.

It was confirmed that regular liaison took place between Southern Water and Colas. Southern Water confirmed that the whole series of modelling had been developed but that the information provided to members during this review would be concentrating on surface water flooding.

Mr Barry Luck of Southern Water said that it was essential that planning decisions did not go against the plans for surface water flooding alleviation. - Approximately £20m- had been invested in Portsmouth for a separation scheme and it was vital that this was not undermined by planners allowing combined drainage schemes.

In response to a question about swales, it was explained that these were grass lined ditches that took overland flows and that Copnor Road would lend itself particularly well to this sort of scheme. The panel also heard that tidal flap valves helped to guard against surface water flooding but that some of these are the responsibility of Colas and some of these are the responsibility of Southern Water. He confirmed that there was a map on the Asset Register showing who is responsible for which flap valve.

### **Emergency Response**

The panel next heard from Ms Cindy Jones, Civil Contingencies Manager, who explained to the panel the emergency response programme that PCC had put in place. The panel heard that the system had been developed over the last year.

There had been two intense periods of rain in August and November 2010. The panel heard that the flood response had worked very well during these incidents. There had been 78 PEMS and every site had been visited and dealt with and all members of the public saw that someone had responded to their calls. On both occasions, the city was largely dry by midday on the day after the flooding had occurred.

A corporate level response is the next step up in terms of seriousness. This may involve social care being required so that a number of services would be working together. A corporate level response is invoked when resources become an issue or when there is a need to work with PCC's partners in order to respond adequately to the situation. Members heard that there is a flood response plan on the website and this only differs from the operational plan in that phone numbers are not included on the web.

There is also a multi-agency plan. The most serious incidents are dealt with under the wide area incidents. All programmes are rehearsed e.g. Exercise Watermark took place last year to test that procedures worked satisfactorily. The plans are written, tested and reviewed on a regular basis. The panel heard that PCC's out of hours response is covered by staff volunteers. In response to a question the panel heard that there is a very strong relationship between PCC and other agencies e.g. the Salvation Army, St John's Ambulance and the Red Cross.



After Ms Jones' presentation there followed a general discussion. Mr Barry Luck of 4D said that co-operation between the various agencies was the biggest challenge. He said that it was difficult to know how SuDs would work. Southern Water is a statutory consultee. It would be necessary to develop a local flood risk strategy and Mr Luck was confident this would be helped by the various agencies having good working relationships. He said that there was an officer led flood risk group with partners and this also engaged with councillors.

With regard to resources Mr Martin Lavers said that the surface water flooding response is a small part of a bigger jigsaw. There was a need to improve the sewer network after 2015 if the intention was to ensure a completely dry city. However, Mr Barry Luck said that there will always be a risk of flooding and that it was a question of how much risk was deemed to be acceptable. It may, for example, be better to spend resources on flood doors to protect individuals in houses rather than to spend money increasing the risk level to a 1 in a life time event.

Mr Luck said that coastal defences probably represent the biggest risk of flooding in Portsmouth but that this was outside the scope of this review. It was confirmed to the panel that SuDs is all about planning considerations which were very important in guarding against flooding. Mr Harvey Cable said that he would do all that he could to ensure that this message was widely publicised within PCC.

The Chair thanked all contributors for attending the meeting and providing presentations. The panel agreed that the next meeting would be informal and would be on Tuesday, 29 November at 4.00pm.

The meeting ended at 5.35pm.

Chair

VJP/CB  
16 November 2011  
tecssp20111108m