

TRAFFIC ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Traffic Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 27 March 2012 at 4 pm in Conference Room L, 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 Margaret Foster

Witnesses

Mr Harvey Cable, Highway Technician
Ms Jane Tume, Highways PFI Manager
Ms Claire Upton-Brown, Assistant Head of Planning Services

5 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Ireland.

6 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

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

7 Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2012 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Traffic Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 17 January 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

8 Review in to how the Council Responds to the Issues of Surface Water Flooding in the City (AI 4)

The Chair of the Panel welcomed Mr Harvey Cable, Ms Jane Tume and Ms Claire Upton-Brown to the meeting.

Mr Harvey Cable first provided extra information about the MIFAS (Mainland Interceptor Flood Alleviation Scheme) and said that this was currently a proposal which was to build a sewer that runs right across the top of the island going straight to Budds Farm taking water from the mainland directly there rather than allowing it to flow into the existing sewer system for Portsmouth. Mr Harvey Cable confirmed that the estimated cost of this scheme would be between £5M and £7M and that there was as yet no funding for this scheme. Mr Harvey Cable explained that water was stored in an underground tank at Budds Farm.

Mr Harvey Cable said that part of his job involved driving around the city following heavy rainfall events to discover any areas where there were flooding problems and he confirmed that he liaised with Colas.

Ms Claire Upton-Brown was consulted by the Panel concerning planning issues. Ms Upton-Brown said that Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) had now been superseded by the National Policy Framework which had been published earlier that day. During discussion the following points were clarified:-

- Many gardens in Portsmouth had been concreted over thus reducing the amount of ground that water could soak into.
- It would be possible to set aside materials to be used in new developments of any scale, for example specifying that hard surfaces should be permeable.

However, in the city itself there was no space for development of any size so that it would be difficult to argue on highway safety grounds that use of non permeable hard surface cover would create a big problem.

- The Panel heard that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a tax on development which was used to pay for infrastructure in the city. This levy was corporately collected and distributed. In the CIL Regulations there is a provision that a percentage (between 5% and 10%) was to go back to the community where the development occurred and that the money should be spent according to the wishes of that community.

Provided that the infrastructure is on the 1, 2, 3 list, the community infrastructure levy can be used for any infrastructure in the city.

Ms Jane Tume, Highways PFI Manager confirmed that with effect from 1 April the number of staff in her team would be increased. Part of their job would be to check that gullies were being properly inspected and maintained by Colas whereas up until now it had not been possible to monitor the service provided by Colas very closely.

Ms Tume explained the See-Phone-Fix Initiative which had been put in place by Colas. The See-Phone-Fix Campaign was a scheme which encouraged employees going about their ordinary business in the city to report any defects in infrastructure such as blocked gullies, defective street lighting etc and offered an incentive scheme whereby the employee reporting the greatest number of defects each month would receive £30. Ms Tume explained that Colas employees were issued with a particular note pad on which they could easily report defects in the infrastructure. Ms Tume explained that it was intended that the See-Phone-Fix Campaign should be extended to the city council starting with the Transport Environment Service. The details of the scheme had not been fully worked out but it was unlikely that the bonus incentive could be offered.

Ms Tume confirmed that with regard to gullies, all of the top part of the gullies ie the pot and the grill were the responsibility of Colas and all the pipes leading to the gullies were the responsibility of Southern Water. Ms Tume said that currently there were gaps in information being received by Colas and Southern Water and that it would be useful if all complaints could go through Colas so that Colas could take the responsibility for then reporting to Southern Water those matters which were the concern of Southern Water rather than expecting members of the public to know which of the two bodies the various defects should be reported to. It was suggested that flooding could be added to the See-Phone-Fix Campaign.

Ms Tume confirmed that every defect has a timescale within which Colas is expected to respond and if Colas does not fix the defect within the set time, a penalty was issued. For example if a defect occurred on a major road there could be a penalty of £100 each day imposed on Colas. If it was not possible to calculate a financial penalty, service points could be awarded. Once 150 service points had been accumulated by Colas, a formal warning would be issued and if Colas reached 250 service points in any year, the contract could be terminated. The Panel heard that 83 points was the maximum that had been awarded against Colas in any one year so far.

A discussion took place about the See-Phone-Fix Campaign. Initially this would be introduced into the Traffic Environment Service with the intention of extending it across the whole of Portsmouth City Council at a later date. At that point it could perhaps be advertised through market place or somewhere on the Intranet.

The meeting concluded at 4.55 pm.

Chair

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