

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 26 March 2013 at 4pm in Conference Room A, 2nd Floor, The 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 Sandra Stockdale (Chair)
Phil Smith
Les Stevens
Luke Stubbs

Councillor Jason Fazackarley, Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation (arrived at 4.40pm)

Officers

Amber Kerens-Bathmaker, Acting Assistant Head of Service for Transport
Simon Brownlie, Traffic & Network Manager
Richard Lee, Environmental Health Manager

1 Apologies for Absence (AI 1).

Apologies had been received from Councillors Caroline Scott and Neill Young.

2 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2).

No interests were declared.

3 Air Quality in Portsmouth (AI 4).

Amber Kerens-Bathmaker, Acting Assistant Head of Service for Transport and Simon Brownlie, Traffic & Network Manager gave an update on progress with the Air Quality Action Plan:

Focus groups are being held in Environment & Transport and Children and Adult Social Services departments to look at how staff travel to and from work and what transport they use for business travel during the day. This will be opened up to the whole council and the results will feed into the **travel plan**.

Local Sustainable Transport Funding has enabled the creation of an **Influencing Travel Officer and a School Travel Advisor** post. These are two-year fixed term contracts and will end in March 2015. The officers will investigate how to encourage people to use sustainable methods of transport.

A new marketing campaign has recently been launched called **My Journey** and an article on this has been published in the Easter edition of the residents' magazine Flagship. This includes a reminder to give child cyclists

plenty of room on the road (Give Me Space). Research has shown that the main obstacle to cycling is fear of injury.

On Street Advisors will shortly be available to direct people around the city in the most sustainable way.

A **shared staff bus pass** will be available for business travel within the city. The two bus companies have contributed towards the cost. If it proves successful, other businesses will be encouraged to buy them.

The local bus companies have shown an interest in the **Park and Ride** contract for which the tender process will start in July.

Cycle racks have been installed around the city.

Some **cycle lane routes** have been extended.

A **wayfinding post** will be installed in the city centre in late July/ early August showing how long it would take to walk to key attractions.

Between 200 and 250 ten year olds took part in **cycle training** last year. This year, through the new Bikeability Programme it is expected that more than 1,000 will be trained. The aim is to create more confident adult cyclists and has been welcomed by schools.

700 five year olds will have received **pedestrian training** by the end of this academic year.

An **Assistant Traffic Engineer** should be appointed shortly and will review all the junctions in the city.

In response to questions from the panel, the following points were clarified:

Many **junctions** have no detection system so are part of the Urban Traffic Control System which has a minimum detection time of between 12 and 15 seconds. Problems reported through the City Helpdesk are usually resolved within a few hours.

A **travel to work staff survey** is conducted every two years and has a high response rate. This provides very useful information for the travel plan.

Portsmouth & Southsea train station does not have a car park nearby for commuters.

A marketing campaign will precede the launch of the **on-street travel advisors** so that people will know who they are.

Councillor Jason Fazackarley, Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation asked the panel to note the following points:

His aim is to reduce **traffic volume** because the city has a finite space. Mid-

term predictions estimate that there will be 16% more traffic on the roads by 2020. The more traffic on the roads, the more air pollution is emitted. The local authority cannot impose limits on the number of cars owned; it can only use its resources as effectively as possible.

Investment in the city is required to ease **congestion**.

A significant amount of work has been carried out to reduce **carbon levels**.

Air pollution has been an issue for many years and is the joint responsibility of many departments.

The introduction of a **congestion charge** is not a viable option.

In response to questions from the panel, Councillor Fazackarley and officers clarified the following points:

The **Speed Watch** scheme, which allows the public to get actively involved in monitoring the speed of vehicles travelling through their neighbourhood, is progressing slowly. A new website has been designed which makes it easier for volunteers to register their interest. Councillor Stubbs commented that some volunteers were only interested in monitoring their own streets.

The speed at which a **car engine** is most efficient is 55mph.

Traffic is the main contributor of **nitrogen dioxide**. The council is not meeting targets set out in the National Air Quality Objectives (NAQO) for this pollutant.

The **particulate** size monitored in the NAQO has been reduced from PM₁₀ to PM_{2.5}. The council has only one station in the city that can monitor levels of size of particulate. These monitors are expensive but it is hoped that government funding would be available for this.

The **maintenance contract** for the monitoring stations expires in 18 months' time. It cost £56,000 the last time that it was renewed and it is expected to be more this time.

Cyclists have not raised any concerns about air quality.

The standards for measuring air pollution relate to exposure to medium term exposure to **sensitive receptors** e.g. buildings not people.

Although it is illegal to leave your car engine running whilst the car is stationary, this is not enforced. The legislation stipulates that if a driver is witnessed **idling their engine** for 2-3 minutes, a uniformed police officer must give a warning. If the driver does not desist, after a further 2-3 minutes the officer has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. It is important that drivers are informed that idling their engines wastes fuel.

When companies are reported to the council for this, the Environmental

Health department will often contacts their headquarters and has had some success in stopping this practice. A leaflet is circulated with the paperwork given to taxi drivers about this issue when they renew their licences.

The meeting concluded at 5pm