

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 13 February 2017 at 5pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Stuart Potter (in the Chair)
Steve Hastings
Lee Hunt
Frank Jonas
Ian Lyon

5. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)

Councillor Tom Wood sent his apologies. Councillor Lee Hunt apologised for having to leave early.

6. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

No interests were declared.

7. Minutes of the Previous Meeting. (AI 3)

RESVOLED that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Councillors Hunt and Lyon had sent their apologies for absence.

8. *Review of general parking issues in Portsmouth with a view to considering alternative strategies (AI 4)

Introductions were made.

In his deputation, Mr David Lycett expressed concern regarding parking in the LA zone in the city. He suggested four solutions in order of preference:

- 1) All three of the parking meter zones shown in the written evidence pack be converted to all residents' parking.
- 2) Convert two of the parking meter zones to allow residents with LA permits to park there.
- 3) Convert one of the parking meter zones to allow residents with LA zone permits to park there.
- 4) Convert all three of the parking meter zones to 9 to 5pm parking meters.

The Chair explained that he would take these proposals to this week's T&T meeting on behalf of Mr Lycett.

Fiona Bell, Director of General Estates & Campus Services, University of Portsmouth informed the panel that:

The university provides parking for staff as far as is possible.

It encourages staff to use alternative modes of transport.

The university's Travel Plan is currently being reviewed and this should be completed in May 2017.

A limited number of visitors' parking is provided.

Students are only issued with permits in exceptional circumstances e.g. if they have mobility issues.

In response to questions from the panel, she explained that:

Part of the agreement with the university signed by students who live in halls of residence prohibits them from bringing their cars. There have been no recorded breaches of this element.

As part of the review, students will be asked a number of questions regarding their travel arrangements. Panel members are very welcome to contribute their views as to what type questions might be asked.

The university car parks are pay and display and this is enforced by the council. They are open to the public from 5pm to 8am on week days and all day at the weekends at a charge of £2 per day.

Students who do not live in halls have agreements with private landlords.

She did not if it would be possible to build a database of student car details.

She does not know the details of the residential parking zones (RPZs).

All staff are encouraged to use alternative modes of transport including the park and ride service. However, some staff find that it closes before they finish work.

The Langstone Campus has approximately 60 parking spaces which as well being used by students, are made available for community and sports events. The university's Strategic Plan does not predict an additional 5,000 students over the next few years, which was the figure that members quoted.

Members' Comments

- The pay and display car parks could be opened up for free parking from 8pm to 8am.
- If students live in a RPZ, they are entitled to a permit as long as their car is registered at that address.
- There is an ongoing problem with student cars being left on residential roads for weeks at a time.
- If there is a problem with a car parked on a residential street, the council could contact the DVLA to obtain the owner's details. It was a student's car, they would speak to the university.

It was agreed that the following information would be sent to members:

1. Details of all the car parks owned by the council.
2. The deadline for sending the university suggested questions for the Travel Plan consultation.

Eric Brangier, Ensign Managing Director informed the panel that:
He has lived in Portsmouth for the last five years.

Ensign Highways Ltd is a special purpose vehicle created to manage the Highways Private Finance Initiative project, which is in year 12 of its 25 year contract. It employs seven people.

Colas is the business unit of Colas Ltd.

Ray Muscat, Business Unit Manager, Colas explained that:
The Colas depot is in Walton Road.

Colas provides a 24/7 service.

There are 50 members of staff in the office.

There are approximately 130 to 140 operatives working out of our Portsmouth depot, all of which are working within the boundary of the city.

We also have 95 vehicles operating out of the depot, with only 27 of them being taken home by staff most evenings.

The contract is a highways PFI maintenance contract working in partnership with Portsmouth City Council.

They also operate out of hours call out system where we are required to attend within one hour.

Staff who drive the caged vehicles start at either 5, 6 or 7am. They collect other staff on their way to work.

In response to a letter from the Leader of the Council last year, Colas reduced the number of vehicles that are not kept in the depot overnight.

Winter maintenance vehicles have to be collected from the depot.

In response to questions from members, they clarified the following points:
The Block Sweep team's four vehicles each pick-up 5 other members of staff.
The Tidy Team each pick up two.
The C - all Team each pick up two.
The Dog Bin Team picks up one.

If the council asked for the number of vehicles that are taken home to be reduced, the operational efficiency would be affected because people would have to travel to the yard before they start their shift. The costs would therefore not be able to be absorbed.

Members' Comments

In some parts of London car park spaces are delineated.
Members gave two examples of where the drivers of caged vehicles have regularly disturbed residents when getting ready to leave early in the morning.

It was agreed that the following information would be brought to a future meeting:

1. Details of Colas vehicles.
2. Details of the council's vehicles.

Ian Saunders, Acting Chair of the Portsmouth Cycle Forum informed the panel that:

The forum is an independent campaigning group that promotes cycling safety.

In 2014 the Leader challenged the forum to produce a vision for Portsmouth. The result was a report called A City to Share which focused on road users sharing the road. She said that the five key points should form the basis of sustainable transport in the city.

It is essential that there is a modal shift towards active and sustainable travel in the city. This would have significant benefits for health and air quality. There is insufficient space for cars to park outside narrow terraced houses as cars are getting bigger. This has led to more dangerous parking e.g. at junctions.

The comments raised were with regard to the old-style echelon parking on Clarence Parade. More recent implementations have been to current draft guidelines where the motorist is encouraged to reverse in. Some echelon parking is dangerous as motorists where it allows motorists to reverse out onto the road despite not being able to see oncoming traffic and the rears of some cars stick out.

There have been incidents where motorists have not checked for cyclists before opening their doors.

Cycle lanes positioned next to parking spaces without a buffer strip are also dangerous e.g. Albert Road.

The benefits of cycling should be promoted.

Cycle storage bays could be installed at the end of residential streets.

Portsmouth P&R is not big enough.

A Workplace Levy has been introduced in Nottingham where employers pay a levy if they provide 11 or more parking spaces for their staff. The money raised would fund improvements in the transport system.

The dependency on cars must be reduced.

Members' Comments.

- It is difficult to encourage people to take up cycling particularly older people as traffic is dense.

- There needs to be consideration between all road users. In Holland, the priority for road users is pedestrians, cyclists and then motorists.
- It would be difficult to find additional spaces for cyclists.
- It is important to work with human nature not against and many people don't want to walk.

Bruce Hall, General Manager Aqua Cars explained that Aqua Cars has over 790 cars and 900 drivers. 85% of drivers live in the city.

There are 72 full time office staff.

It carries out more than 80,000 movements per week. There were 1.4 million journeys last year and approximately 1.7m people were transported.

He disagrees with the decision not to permit taxis to wait in bus stops after 11pm.or to drive in bus lanes at any time.

The office receives one or two calls a week about taxis parked in residential streets.

More could be done to encourage taxi companies to move to electric vehicles. A Tesler costs £70,000 and it is not possible to complete a round trip on one charge. There are no charging points in the city.

By September, all taxis must have two onboard cameras (forward and backward facing) and the footage available for 31 days for inspection.

He would not support a work place levy.

He recommended that more parking spaces be found and parking charges reduced.

In response to questions from members, he clarified the following points: 235 taxis have two drivers. Twenty years ago it was the norm, but owners prefer the flexibility of not owning their car and not having to negotiate the cleaning and filling the tank. He would be happy to promote car-sharing to his fleet.

In the last five years, the number of private hire vehicles has risen from 55,000 to 108,000 in London.

Uber floods the city with cars when there are events in Portsmouth. This leads to congestion. The city should be a controlled licensing district.

The charge for the first mile is £3. Portsmouth is 5 by 4 miles wide. The average journey is 1.5 miles. A short journey would be up to 0.8 miles.

City Wide taxi service has 120 cars. There are 234 hackney vehicles of whom 84 work for Aqua. There are approximately 1,400 taxis overall in Portsmouth including Uber. Portsmouth has a higher proportion of taxis than London.

Public transport not as good as it should be. It is expensive and stops at 23:00.

85 cars are wheelchair friendly.

Members' Comments.

- In London and Southampton it only costs £1 to travel by bus to the end of the line.
- The taxi market works well as is evidenced by the fact that there are so many vehicles.
- The camera footage might be useful to see the usage of the 24/7 pay & display roads.

The meeting concluded at 7pm.

Councillor Stuart Potter
Chair