

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Friday 4 October 2019 at 3.30pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Simon Boshier (in the Chair)

Councillors Judith Smyth
 Jo Hooper
 Hugh Mason
 Robert New

17. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)

No apologies were received.

18. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

No interests were declared.

19. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 26 June 2019 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June be agreed as a correct record.

20. Review into the accessibility of the transport network (AI 4)

Felicity Tidbury, Acting Assistant Director of Transport gave a presentation, a copy of which would be published after the meeting.

Transport is an enabler of growth and activity, and is key to building the economy, providing access to employment sites, as well as providing a network for outputs from businesses to be transported to their destinations.

Ensuring that the road links in/out of Portsmouth are well connected and maintained is key to the flow of goods and services in the city. Due to the waterside nature of Portsmouth and its access to the IOW, having road links that allow for goods and services to flow through its ports is essential to capitalising on Portsmouth's unique attributes and economic drivers.

Tourism is a huge factor in Portsmouth's economy, ensuring that tourists are able to enter and exit the city through multiple transport modes is key to maximising the economic benefits of tourism in the city.

Transport is not only important in connecting people to key services such as health, education and employment; but it also provides a social lifeline.

In Portsmouth 16% of the population have a form of disability or long term health condition, which limits their day to day activities. 50% of those people are in paid employment.

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things.

The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for disabled people. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers disabled people more independence, choice and control. Transport has a key role to play in this.

Portsmouth City Council has an adopted Equality and Diversity Strategy 2019 -2022, places accessibility as one of the key priorities. It highlights that all of Portsmouth's residents have the right to expect to be able to easily access services, advice, and information provided or funded by the council. The strategy sets out 5 key priorities:

- Promoting fairness and diversity by tackling inequalities, disadvantage and discrimination
- Leadership and partnerships
- Employment and training
- Service delivery and access
- Promoting community and the voluntary sector

The Department for Transport announced in July 2019, that they are committing to an Inclusive Transport Leaders' scheme that will incorporate a disability awareness training package that sets out how transport operators can provide effective customer service and improve their services for disabled people.

The DfT will also develop and launch an Inclusive Transport Accreditation scheme, to allow for the best transport operators to receive formal recognition for the positive actions they are taking to improve disabled passengers' experiences.

Buses.

All buses are low floor in Portsmouth and allow full access to people in wheelchairs. Any new bus must now be fully accessible.

The Council completed a programme of raised access kerbs at bus stops with clearways at bus stops. Portsmouth City Council were one of the first authorities to complete this programme in UK.

Part of the Local Transport Plan implementation programme, is to provide access for people with disabilities to bus stops. This includes a review of drop kerbs, desire lines and waiting facilities.

Next bus announcements and free Wi-Fi is available on all Portsmouth bus fleet.

The council has refreshed all the real time units in Portsmouth 3 years ago. The council have now been successful for external Department for Transport Funding to implement a further 120 units across the city, which are being implemented this financial year.

The Companion Pass is a discretionary enhancement to the English National Travel Concessions Scheme. Qualifying residents are entitled to a Companion Pass, which entitles the holder to have a companion travel with them free of charge when boarding the bus in Portsmouth. A trial is being undertaken following the revision of the Companion Pass entitlement.

The council issues concessionary fare bus passes to those residents qualifying for a bus pass allowing free travel from 0930. From 29 April 2019 the council are trialling disabled people to travel free at any time. This is being evaluated over the coming months before a decision is made early next year on the outcome of this trial.

Railway Station.

Portsmouth has 5 railway stations across the city – Cosham, Hilsea, Fratton, Portsmouth and Southsea and Portsmouth Harbour. All railway stations in Portsmouth are accessible, with the exception of Hilsea station.

4 years ago, Fratton station received Access for All funding to provide a footbridge with lifts to make the station fully accessible.

As part of the new SWR rail franchise improvements are being made to stations in Portsmouth. This has included improved platform destinations displays which are brighter to see and give calling point journey times, new lighting column lanterns which are LED so offer a brighter safer feel to stations. Additional displays showing ferry departures have been provided at Portsmouth Harbour station.

Further to this, it is outlined in the rail vehicle accessibility legislation, that all rail rolling stock has to provide a number of features that make it easier to use such as handholds, passenger information displays, priority seats and provision for wheelchairs. This is to be delivered by 31st December 2019.

Cycling.

The majority of cycle infrastructure in Portsmouth consists of advisory cycle lanes (over 16km) and shared used paths (5km). High quality infrastructure is needed to improve safety for those choosing to cycle. We are currently undertaking a review and audit of the cycle network.

Resources such as our Active Travel and Quieter Routes maps help people choose routes to cycle in the city. Bikeability training is delivered in years 5

and 6 in schools, and families in the city have recently received bespoke cycle training.

Cycling events in Portsmouth include our Pedal Portsmouth Glow Ride, which attracts over 1000 people a year for a night time ride along the seafront. PCC also runs joint engagements with Hampshire Constabulary to promote road safety messaging on high casualty routes.

Cycle theft remains a key barrier to cycling in Portsmouth, with British Transport Police figures showing the city's stations to be particularly high risk.

Walking

There are 8km of public rights of way routes across the city. There are 103 recorded routes, all of which are public footways and are maintained under the PFI contract.

Portsmouth is part of the English Coastal Path – this is part of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, this looks to formalise coastal walking routes around England. Portsmouth has two stretches:

- Gosport to Portsmouth
- Portsmouth to South Hayling
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Both routes are currently with the Planning Inspectorate for approval, and once these have been approved they will be audited to understand what improvements are required to make them accessible. This could include wayfinding, resurfacing, widening or new paths.

Pedestrian Crossings.

At pedestrian crossing, in the past the 'green men' have been installed on far sided indicators, however the DfT have now recommended that the standard is near side indicators. This is so pedestrians are looking at approaching traffic and can see when traffic has stopped, and therefore safe to cross. We are gradually upgrading infrastructure across the city.

Audible Signals 'beeping' – there are quite a few of these across the city where a junction is not too close to another crossing, or there is a signal pedestrian phase. This is to ensure that there isn't a conflicting phase from another signal which people might hear and think it is safe to cross.

Tactile cones – Are used instead/addition to the above. This is where a person can place their hand underneath the push button and the cone rotates when the green man shows, indicating it is safe to cross.

Private Hire Vehicles and Hackney Carriages:

There are 234 hackney carriage vehicle licences and 962 Private Hire Vehicle licences within Portsmouth City boundary (total of 1,196). 118 (9.9%) of this fleet consists of wheelchair accessible vehicles including:

- 86 (7.2%) Hackney Carriages
- 32 (2.7%) Private Hire vehicles

As set out in the Equality & Diversity strategy Portsmouth City Council are continuing to work with registered taxis and PHVs to:

- Run awareness campaigns regarding the unlawful act of refusing guide and assistant dogs in taxis
- Review and commission disability awareness training for taxis drivers

Route 4U

Portsmouth is the first city in the UK to introduce the free Route4U app. It provides route planning and turn-by-turn navigation for walkers and wheelchair users that can be customised to each person's own abilities.

The app indicates:

- Pavement obstacles
- Surface quality
- Kerb heights
- Widths
- Inclines
- Travel distances

This app updates the information in 'real time', so any road works on the highway can be added and therefore the routes will be adapted accordingly for the user.

Highway accessibility and road works:

This is the responsibility of Colas and the PFI team. Schedule 19 of the Highways Maintenance contract gives Ensign/Colas the authority to act as the Highway and Traffic Authority in relation to all roadworks and their Network Management team will monitor accessibility at all roadworks sites and give instruction/issue PCN's if accessibility is not complaint with legislation.

When it is necessary to close or narrow a road temporarily for the purpose of planned or emergency works the accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists is governed by legislation – New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 and Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 – Chapter 8.

This legislation states that pedestrians or cyclists can be diverted during works:

- Onto an equal or better routes
- The diversion must include safe accessible crossing points suitable for all users and can use existing pedestrian and zebra crossings or use temporary ramps and barriers to construct a pedestrian route in the carriageway if there are no engineered crossing points available.

It was agreed that the following witnesses would be added to the scoping document:

- Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation
- Parent Group
- Portsmouth Pensioners.

During the discussion that followed, members noted that:

- Temporary pavement clutter can be a hazard for pedestrians particularly users of mobility scooters. Examples include café signs, banners and household litter bins.
- Parking on pavements often means that pedestrians have to walk in the road to get around the vehicles.
- Parking on double yellow lines can mean that lines of sight for crossing roads are obscured. Complaints are passed between the police and the council with neither taking responsibility.
- Pavements should be resurfaced every 15 years. There are some examples where this has not been carried out.
- Some bus drivers discriminate against wheelchair users due to capacity issues.
- Fratton railway station is not accessible for wheelchair users after 8pm as the main entrance is closed and the only access is by the stairs.
- Some bus shelters are too close to the kerb which makes it difficult for wheelchair users and people with prams and pushchairs to get past.
- Some motorists drive too quickly over pedestrian crossings.
- The pedestrian phase at some crossings could be reviewed. Pedestrians do not have time to cross Anglesey Road.
- The cycle path near the ferry port has a dangerous corner.
- The layout of new buses could incorporate flip up seats along the length of the bus.
- Tree roots cause issue and damage to pavements.
- A bus route to Port Solent should be considered. This would also serve the new country park.

It may be that a list of specific areas for review be added as an appendix to the report.

The importance of rd a broad range of views and survey and hold a series of focus groups during the afternoon in Community Centres in the North, Centre and South of the city.

Actions

- The Accessibility and Equality Officer be invited to the next meeting.
- A survey be developed to understand accessibility issues across the city
- Focus groups be arranged to discuss the issues with the public.