

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Monday 17 November 2014 at 5.30pm in the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Stuart Potter (in the Chair)
Phil Smith
Lynn Stagg

19. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)

No apologies were received.

20. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

No interests were declared.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

22. Review of Road Safety Around Schools (AI 4)

In response to questions, Michael Robinson, Parking Manager clarified the following points:

- There are currently 32 ½ full time equivalent Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and recruitment is underway for three more.
- Parents dropping off and collecting infant school pupils are more likely to parking on zig-zag lines.
- Every morning and afternoon, 60-70% of CEOs patrol outside a school. All schools are prioritised according to risk and resources are focussed without neglecting low risk schools.
- There are more car parks in the south of the city.
- The number of parking vehicles has reduced from five to two because of cuts.
- Five CEOs now use bicycles to get around the city quickly.
- The principle of enforcement is that people do not know when CEOs will be patrolling.
- Drivers in Portsmouth tend to know the location of schools.
- Installation of high grip surfaces outside schools on high speed roads has been considered. This makes the brakes more effective. These are used at the approach of zebra crossings too.
- The legislation regarding parking signs is very strict. Care must be taken not to put signs up outside schools as these could render all the restrictions null and void. Some schools put cones out on the zig zag lines but the council cannot condone that action.

Councillor Neill Young, Cabinet Member for Children & Education gave his views:

- He had visited 15 schools in his cabinet role and they all take road safety seriously with different initiatives in place.
- A different approach to educating pupils and parents depending on the phase is required. Infant school pupils tend to be dropped off and collected by car. Junior school pupils walk part or all the way to school. Secondary parents rarely walk their children to school.
- Parents of primary school pupils tend to park outside the school.
- Primary pupils are very much influenced by their parents' attitude and behaviour so it is important that they do not learn that inconsiderate or illegal parking is acceptable.
- In response to concern from parents regarding the high volume of pupils entering and leaving pupils at the same time, the start and finish times of the Mayfield Infant and Secondary schools were staggered.
- Walking Buses seem to be very effective but rely on parents taking the initiative.
- People living near schools have a role to play to understand schools' challenges and vice versa.
- During an enforcement campaign, parking improves but this tends to only last the duration of the campaign.

Simon Graham, headteacher at St Edmund's Catholic School asked the panel to note his views:

- The zig zags outside his school were recently extended and as a result road safety has improved.
- The student council is outside at the start and end of the school day waving 'no stopping' posters that they designed to encourage people who have stopped or parked inconsiderately or illegally to move on. This had been very successful.
- If the school were to turn away pupil cyclists who do not have lights or reflective jackets, some would not return because they cannot afford to buy it.
- The school can only provide information and guidance to parents.
- The school always takes action when it receives reports of pupils misbehaving outside of school.
- He had written to the council to request that the road be made into a one way system. Road safety has improved since the one way system was put in place outside St Paul's Primary School. Traffic speed has not increased.
- Many schools in Hampshire have electronic signs which flash up the speed of vehicles approaching schools at key times. Not all schools in Portsmouth have school signs outside them.

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

- There had been three bicycle freak accidents this year. Two of these were in the morning.
- An education package for children is required.
- He is confident that the school is doing everything it can to ensure the safety of its pupils and will make it work.

- It is important that schools share ideas and best practice.

Amber Kerens-Bathmaker, Road Safety & Active Travel Manager asked the panel to note the following points:

- In order to extend them a Traffic Regulation Order must be published.
- There are minimum lengths for each section of zig-zag lines, so it might not be easy to simply extend them a short distance.
- Some lines were recently shortened because they did not comply with legislation.
- An extension might lead to more people parking on them.
- It is very difficult to set walking buses.
- There has recently been a Walk on Wednesdays campaign which generated a bit of interest.

In response to questions, she clarified the following points:

- Infant school parents are more ready to engage regarding road safety.
- Details of walking buses are always offered to parents of new pupils but these tend to be labour-intensive and parents often leave when their children leave that school. There are currently two walking buses in operation.
- Most schools include information about road safety in their newsletters.
- Schools do not always want road safety officers to attend parent evenings.
- Junior Road Safety Officer schemes work well.
- The council's road safety team comprises two officers: one full-time and one job share. The rest of the traffic team assist them. The School Travel Advisor post was funded by the Local Sustainable Traffic Fund until the end of March.
- Nurseries are not provided with much road safety information.
- Some schools do not engage with the road safety team. This maybe because they are dealing with the issue themselves.
- It is Road Safety Week this week with the message: be safe, be seen. Free reflective rucksack covers were given out. There are also other similar campaigns throughout the year.
- The community cycle hubs in somerstown provides maintenance free of charge.
- The council used to sell bicycle lights at cost price but there is no longer any need because they are cheap and widely available.
- There are school signs outside every school.
- Some schools experience issues depending on the weather and the time of year.

Councillor Stagg explained that

- Electronic signs that flash up vehicle speeds tend to be ignored after two weeks so are moved around the city regularly.
- More schools should take responsibility for the safety of their pupils.
- Parents collecting and dropping off pupils at Copnor School often park in the cul de sac where she lives and block driveways. The headteacher at the junior school put up notices asking drivers to respect residents but this is still a problem. Some parents can be abusive when asked to move.

Councillor Potter noted that it might be useful to involve a retailer to sponsor bicycle safety equipment.

Jan Thomas, Senior Community Warden explained that

- Community wardens speak to drivers who park on zig zag lines and give them park and stride maps which show areas nearby where they could park. Their details are sent to the road safety team who send them a warning letter.
- Priority lists and local knowledge are used to decide which schools to visit.
- Written statements are given to the road safety team with details of drivers who park on the zig zag lines.
- They carry out joint operations with the road safety team with details of drivers who park on the zig zags
- They assist with the walking buses. There is currently only one running.
- Most schools are very quick to act if pupils are misbehaving outside school.

Actions

The panel requested that the following information be provided at a future meeting:

- A copy of the posters used by School Council pupils.
- Data showing the areas where CEOs have targeted over the last three months.

23. Dates of Future Meetings. (AI 5)

15 December 2014.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm.

Councillor Stuart Potter
Chair.