

Town Planning Committee

Monday, 29th October, 2012

SPECIAL MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor L. Patterson (Chairman);
Aldermen R. Patterson and Rodgers; and
Councillors Austin, M. E. Campbell, Curran, Garrett,
Kingston, McCarthy and Mullan.

Also attended: Councillors Haire, Hendron and Jones.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive; and
Mrs. P. Scarborough, Democratic Services Section.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Aldermen R. Patterson and Smyth and Councillors Curran and McNamee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Roads Service, Programme of Works - Autumn 2012

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th January, it had agreed to hold a special meeting to receive a presentation from representatives of the Roads Service in respect of its Annual Autumn Progress Report. It was reported that Mr. B. Ellison, Deputy Divisional Roads Manager, together with Mr. B. O'Neill, Section Engineer, and Mr. G. McKibbin, Section Engineer, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Councillor L. Patterson).

Mr. Ellison outlined the principal aspects of the Roads Service's Programme of Works for 2012 and indicated that the proposal to upgrade the Westlink/York Street junction was being considered as part of the new Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, the timescale for the construction of which would be dependent upon the successful completion of the necessary statutory procedures, an economic appraisal and the provision of funding through the normal budgetary processes. He summarised a range of issues regarding ongoing bridge inspection work; the continuing work which was being undertaken in relation to the Belfast on the Move Scheme and the intention to proceed with the reduction of car lanes in Wellington Place; street lighting upgrading; network maintenance activity; drainage schemes; and winter service provision.

During discussion, Members drew the attention of the officers from the Roads Service to several matters, a number of which are set out hereunder:

- various concerns in relation to the Belfast on the Move Scheme, in particular the need for careful consideration regarding future roadworks and the resultant impact thereof on the reduction of traffic lanes; the merging of bus lanes into normal traffic lanes; the intention to proceed with the planned reduction of Wellington Place to a single lane for cars; the accuracy of the figures quoted by the Roads Service with regard to the number of vehicles using May Street as through traffic travelling to other areas of the City; the excessive number of traffic lights within the City centre; the use of car lanes by buses; the sequencing of traffic lights at the Howard Street/Bedford Street junction; difficulties experienced by drivers exiting the rear of the City Hall; the Oxford Street bus lane being used as a drop off point for access to the Courts; the question of the necessity of the lay-by at the Victoria Street entrance to the Police Service of Northern Ireland station; the timing of the introduction of the Scheme; and the need for adequate consultation with the Council in advance of the preparation of plans in relation to future major road developments;
- the possibility of the introduction of pedestrian crossings at the Woodvale Road shops and the resultant impact on parking within the area, together with the need to look at the uneven condition of the footpaths along the Shankill Road;
- a request to look at the possibility of the greater use of Cooper Way by through traffic;
- a query regarding the introduction of traffic calming measures in the Ainsworth area;
- the renewal of the existing street lighting contract and the delays in the repair of faulty lighting as a result thereof;
- concern in relation to the proposed introduction of controlled parking zones along the Eglantine Avenue/Malone Avenue area and the resultant impact upon local businesses within that vicinity;
- a request to investigate the requirement for and the use of the bus lanes along the Malone Road and the Lisburn Road and the possibility of greater collaboration with Translink to consider incentives to encourage more people to use buses;
- a request to re-examine the necessity for the traffic calming measures in the Malone Road area and to consider further the introduction of such measures in the Olympia residential area;

- the need to investigate the traffic lights' sequencing at the Eglantine Avenue junction with the Lisburn Road, and the placement of the recently installed pedestrian lights close to the Ravenhill Avenue and Ravenhill Road junction, which would be more effective if relocated to the actual junction;
- the timing for the commencement of the A55 Knock Road widening scheme and the major affect which the delay was having on the local residents with regard to uncertainty about the possibility of further vesting of gardens and the impact on house sales within that area;
- a request to make certain that the River Terrace area was included within the software available to traffic wardens to ensure that those parking illegally within that area were able to be prosecuted;
- a request for the provision of grit boxes in the following locations: Deramore Drive/Deramore Park/Deramore Park South, and Ladybrook/Riverdale and the Upper Falls area generally;
- a request to examine the condition of the roads and footpaths at Deramore Park to address the issue of patchy surfaces and moss and weed control;
- the need to re-consider road improvement schemes at Rugby Road and surrounding streets with regard to the removal of the existing granite kerbstones;
- the need to review the current traffic survey information which was being utilised by the Roads Service in response to planning application consultations;
- a request to the Roads Service to work collaboratively with other agencies in relation to the public realm works in the Andersonstown Road area;
- a request for the introduction of traffic calming measures in the Black's Road area to include appropriate signage, pinch points and speed ramps to attempt to reduce the speed of the traffic using the area;
- to examine the road surface at Ladybrook Park, which was a main arterial route and involved a large volume of buses travelling thereon, and to include the Appleton Park/Finaghy Road North areas within the highways inspections;
- the issue of the introduction of residents' parking schemes;
- to examine the condition of the road surfaces in the Cricklewood Park and Hillhead areas of Stranmillis; and

- a request to consider further measures which could be introduced to prevent motorists parking on the footpaths on Balfour Avenue, and to look at the continuation of the existing pavement thereon, to include the portion of grassed area, and to provide appropriate weed control methods within that location.

The officials from the Roads Service answered the queries raised by the Members in respect of the above-mentioned issues and undertook to advise the Council of its response in relation to those matters which required further examination. The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Roads Service and the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

The Chief Executive outlined a range of issues which required to be considered between the various agencies, including the Divisional Roads Office, the Department for Social Development and Translink, in order to prepare for the forthcoming transfer of functions arising from the Review of Public Administration and the Council's enhanced role in relation to community planning, neighbourhood renewal, local area working and place-shaping. He highlighted the strategic importance of Roads to the wider city regeneration and development agenda in terms of accessibility. He informed the Committee of the intention to liaise with those agencies in relation to a more integrated approach to the prioritisation of projects and the need for greater political input into local decision-making processes. He outlined also the need for the development of a collective database of evidence within the City and the requirement to look at more effective ways for the City to work. The Chief Executive advised that contact would be made with the Roads Service and other agencies regarding those issues and that a report in this regard would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Chairman