

Town Planning Committee

Thursday, 30th May, 2013

SPECIAL MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor L. Patterson (Chairman);
the High Sheriff (Councillor B. Kingston);
Aldermen R. Patterson and Rodgers; and
Councillors Austin, Garrett, Hanna, Hussey, Lavery,
McCabe, Mullan and Spence.

Also attended: Councillors Jones and Keenan.

In attendance: Mrs. P. Scarborough, Democratic Services Section.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Curran and McNamee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Roads Service - Programme of Works: Spring 2013

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 7th February, it had agreed to hold a special meeting to receive a presentation from representatives of the Roads Service in respect of its Annual Spring Progress Report. It was reported that Mr. R. Spiers, Deputy Divisional Roads Manager, Mr. B. O'Neill and Mr. G. McKibbin, Section Engineers, together with Mr. C. de Burca, Director of Transport Projects, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Councillor L. Patterson).

Mr. Spiers highlighted the work which had been completed during the previous year and he outlined the principal aspects of the Roads Service's Programme of Works for the forthcoming year. He indicated that the winter of 2012/2013 had been particularly severe and prolonged and that, during the period, there had been ninety-seven call outs to provide salting treatment to the roads network within the Eastern Division. The total winter service expenditure by the Division had been £1.480m. Mr. Spiers acknowledged formally the assistance which the Roads Service had received from the Council with regard to snow clearance and the maintenance of the accessibility of the roads network. He informed the Committee that the Roads Service was currently planning to align itself to the future shape of the new council boundaries.

Mr. de Burca reported that the bus lane at Wellington Place/Donagall Square North/Donagall Square East, which was due to be completed by midnight on 30th May, was the final stage of the current phase of the Belfast on the Move scheme.

Mr. Spiers provided an update on the programme of works in relation to the York Street Interchange Scheme, the A2 Sydenham Bypass Improvement Scheme, the A55 Knock Road Widening Scheme, together with an update on bus measures, the maintenance of structures, including culverts and bridges, pedestrian measures, network traffic and street lighting and carriageway resurfacing.

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

- the possibility of providing barriers for the protection of pedestrians along the narrow section of footpath on the Ormeau Road in the vicinity of Annadale Avenue;
- the problems which residents had been experiencing with the ongoing difficulties with regards to parking in the River Terrace, Lower Ormeau and the Holylands, Rugby Road areas;
- the current traffic arrangements around the City Hall and the difficulties which had been experienced by drivers exiting the building;
- the perceived inadequacy of communication between the Department of Regional Development and the Council in relation to changes in Roads Service provision and network issues;
- a range of concerns were expressed in relation to the Belfast on the Move Scheme, viz., the use by buses of ordinary traffic lanes; the double-parking by buses; the purpose of the conversion of normal traffic lanes into bus-only lanes, for example, in relation to the Donegall Square East exit onto Adelaide Street; and the expenditure associated with the project;
- the possibility of converting the section of the Franklin Street/Hamilton Street junction where it exits onto Cromac Street into a two-lane arrangement in order to ease the traffic congestion in that area;
- the implementation of stricter enforcement against the improper use of yellow box junctions in order to ease city centre traffic congestion;
- the anticipated timescale for the completion of the Dee Street Bridge pedestrian steps onto the Sydenham By Pass;
- the difficulties which had been experienced by drivers in relation to exiting from the Oldpark Road/Ardoyne Avenue and the Oldpark Road from Rosapena Street due to the location of existing parking bays and double-parking by drivers in those vicinities and the resulting reduction in adequate sightlines;

- the traffic calming measures situated along the London Road/My Lady's Road area would require to be examined, with a view to reducing their height to limit possible damage to vehicles;
- the reinstatement of the double yellow lines in the vicinity of the Malone Road/Malone Avenue junction;
- the representatives from the Roads Service were reminded of the request, at the last meeting, to investigate the traffic lights' sequencing at the Eglantine Avenue junction with the Lisburn Road;
- the possibility of meeting with residents from the Fairhill area off Donegall Park Avenue in relation to the ongoing parking difficulties within that vicinity;
- to examine the arrangements currently in place for pedestrian crossings in West Belfast, particularly with regard to their suitability for use by those people with a visual impairment;
- to consider the introduction of traffic calming measures in the Brooke Park area;
- to examine the street lighting provision in the vicinity of Finaghy Road North;
- the parking issues and subsequent problems with bin collections in the Brenda Park area;
- to ascertain the reasons for the delay in the commencement of the resurfacing work which had been scheduled for the Ladybrook Park area with a view to having this carried out to coincide with other remedial and regeneration works within the area; and
- to examine the traffic lights' sequencing at the junction of College Avenue and College Square East.

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. Furthermore, Mr. Spiers extended an invitation to those Members of the Council who so wished to attend a visit to the Traffic Management Centre, on a date to be agreed in conjunction with the Chairman.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Roads Service and the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman