

Town Planning Committee

Monday, 28th October, 2013

SPECIAL MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hanna (Chairman); Alderman Rodgers; and Councillors Austin, Beattie, Carson, Curran, Garrett, Haire, McCarthy and A. Newton.

Also attended: Councillors Convery, Hussey, Jones, Magee and Spence.

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

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Campbell and Councillors Hendron, Mullan and Webb.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Roads Service - Programme of Works - Autumn 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 Autumn Progress Report. It was reported that Mr. R. Spiers, Deputy Divisional Roads Manager, Mr. B. O'Neill, Section Engineer, and Mr. C. Sykes, Network Maintenance Manager, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Sykes provided an update in relation to the Roads Service's plans and preparations for its winter service provision and gave an overview of the resources which would be available to ensure that the traffic on the road network continued to move safely and freely in conditions such as snow and ice. He outlined the communication channels which were available to the public and to Elected Members.

A Member pointed out the importance of ensuring that all road drains and gullies were inspected and cleared in order to ensure the free flow of heavy rainfall. A further Member requested that the Roads Service consider the introduction of a dedicated direct dial telephone number for use by Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly and Councillors.

Mr. Spiers outlined the principal aspects of the Roads Service's Programme of Works for the forthcoming year. He provided an overview on the works in relation to the York Street Interchange Scheme, the A2 Sydenham Bypass Improvement Scheme and the A55 Knock Road Widening Scheme, together with an update on collision remedial, traffic and pedestrian schemes, safer routes to school measures, carriageway and footpath resurfacing projects and adoptions. Mr. Spiers informed the Committee that

the Belfast on the Move Scheme had been completed and that a survey thereon would commence shortly, the result of which would be available in due course. He explained that the provision of bus lanes was part of an effective bus-way system.

Mr. Spiers concluded by reminding the Committee that the Roads Service would commence, in April, 2014, discussions in relation to its plans to align itself to the future shape of the new council boundaries to facilitate joint working arrangements. In that regard, he informed the Committee that Mr. R. Ellison, the Divisional Roads Manager, would retire from the Roads Service at the end of the month. The post of Divisional Roads Manager would be filled by Mr. K. Monaghan.

A number of Members paid tribute to Mr. Ellison for the contribution which he had made to the work of the Committee and for the exemplary manner in which he had fulfilled his duties. After discussion, the Committee agreed that a letter be forwarded to Mr. Ellison conveying its best wishes on his retirement.

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

- the parking issues and subsequent problems with bin collections in the Brenda Park/Finaghy Road North area, which had been raised at the previous meeting, and the possibility of the inclusion of this street in the forthcoming resurfacing and kerb-dropping programme in that vicinity;
- the process as a whole and the timescale for the adoption of roads and footpaths in the St. Mary's Gardens estate in the Beechmount area;
- the possibility of the replacement of those lights which had been removed from alleyways in the New Barnsley area during the recent street lighting upgrade;
- the improvement of the underpass at the entrance to Victoria Park to prevent flooding;
- to investigate the possibility of installing a yellow junction box at Cromac Street/Hamilton Street/East Bridge Street to prevent vehicles blocking the intersection;
- to consider the provision of double-yellow lines on the Crumlin Road adjacent to the entrance to the Mater Hospital to prevent vehicles parking in the area and thus allow for clearer sightlines;
- as previously advised in writing, to examine the collapsed and dangerous wall at the end of Bloomfield Drive which was permitting unauthorised access by pedestrians to the Connswater Shopping Centre complex;

- to investigate the current maintenance arrangements at the Comber Greenway, with a view to organising a grass cutting and clean-up of the area;
- to inspect the condition of the footpath at the Stewartstown Road which ran parallel with Hillhead Crescent at St. Genevieve's School;
- to examine the drains at Balfour Avenue/Cooke Street to ensure any blockages were removed;
- to look at the resultant impact of the provision of the double-yellow lines on the Ormeau Road at the entrance to the Gasworks site, particularly in relation to the difficulties which were caused by those parked cars which had relocated to the Shaftesbury Avenue vicinity;
- to inspect the condition of the Lagan Walkway in relation to general maintenance issues;
- the current position with regard to the adoption of the Wellington Square development;
- the possibility of meeting with residents from the Fairhill area off the Donegall Park Avenue in relation to the provision of a one-way traffic system, which had been raised at the last meeting;
- to consider the provision of signage in connection with the White City Community Centre;
- the current position in relation to the abandoned site at the Shore Road adjacent to Northwood, opposite Seaview;
- the potential for the provision of free car parking in Roads Service car parks, particularly in the period preceding Christmas; and
- the operational hours of the City Centre traffic wardens.

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. Mr. Spiers agreed to provide the Committee with an explanation of the policy arrangements in relation to the adoption process.

The Committee was again reminded of the arrangements for exiting the City Hall and for the need to pay due care and attention when so doing. In relation to the use by buses of ordinary traffic lanes, the Committee agreed to write to Translink with respect to the actions of the bus drivers in this regard.

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

Chairman