

Minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting of the **ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS** held in the Boardroom, Hawthorn Villa, 79 Main Road, Onchan, on Monday 29th January 2018 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. A. Allen (Chairman)
Mr D. Crellin (Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services)
Mr M. Macfarlane (Vice-Chair and Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes)
Mr C. Quirk
Mr R. Turton (from 7.25 p.m)

Apologies: Miss K. Williams, Mr. J. Cherry

In Attendance: Mr T.R. Craig (Deputy Clerk)

C18/01/03/01 [amended by ODC 05/03/18]

Street Lighting

The following matter was considered in committee.

Members considered the previously circulated documents consisting of a report prepared by Mr Roy Allen in respect of [amended by ODC 05/03/18] street lighting columns.

Mr Allen presented his report to the Commissioners and outlined his background together with his experience and his qualifications equivalent to NVQ level VI. He explained that his interest in the subject as a private citizen started with the collapse across his drive of a street lighting column owned by Onchan District Commissioners in 2012. He recognised at that point there were likely to be significant issues with corrosion in a number of columns in Onchan.

Mr Allen gave the example of a lighting column collapse in Westminster causing severe injuries to a pedestrian and resulting in prosecution of the local council under the Health and Safety Act. He further highlighted that 3 columns in Onchan were brought down by wind during the October storm in 2017, one of these being a tall column on King Edward Road.

Mr Allen highlighted various recognised design faults in the construction of older steel columns, in particular the lack of internal hot-dip galvanising, the poorly constructed joint between the main length of column and the base unit, and the manner in which the lighting arm was attached to the main column. All of these contributed together with the salt and wind in our exposed coastal environment to internal corrosion of steel columns over a period of 20 years.

Mr Allen gave examples taken from a report commissioned by the Commissioners in 2012 from STI Limited, indicating that the report showed high corrosion levels at that time to certain columns which are still in situ and which he felt should be removed as a matter of urgency.

Mr Allen went on to cite BS 7671 which in his opinion was not being complied with by the Commissioners and indicated that the Institute of Lighting Engineers guidance reference TR 22 should be obtained as an important source of reference for officers dealing with these issues. Mr Allen further expressed his view that Onchan District Commissioners could be seen as negligent under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

With reference to the recommendations in his report, Mr Allen highlighted: –

1. 23 columns in need of removal
2. the need for an improved reporting process from the public
3. the need for a unique numbering system to identify individual columns
4. the importance of not painting galvanised columns so corrosion can be readily identified
5. the need for a comprehensive testing regime to be in place as a matter of urgency
6. the need for testing work to be carried out by a suitably qualified and equipped person
7. the majority of columns are over their service life

Members thanked Mr Allen for his report and noted its contents. There was extensive discussion regarding the involvement of the current contractor and his qualifications, and the Deputy Clerk was asked to confirm that the contractor was registered with the Isle of Man government.

Mr Allen suggested during discussion that an employee of Onchan District Commissioners go round with him so he can indicate the columns over which he holds concerns stop he further stated that if the Commissioners showed that they were approaching this matter in a logical way, they can say they were doing their best in the event of any further failure occurring. Mr Allen also stated that he was sure Onchan District Commissioners were not the only local authority on the Island where corroded lighting columns are an issue.

During discussion, it was identified that it may be an appropriate project which can be given to a STEP student during the summer months to undertake a comprehensive update of records held by Onchan District Commissioners in respect of street lighting and in particular the location, type and height of each individual unit.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk progress is a matter of urgency the discussions being held by the District Surveyor with the Manx Utilities Authority in respect of their acquisition of testing equipment for steel columns. It was also agreed that the authority purchase a copy of TR 22 from the Institute of Lighting Engineers and further that a unique numbering system be introduced as soon as possible.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.