

## Cabinet – 6 March 2019

### Public Statements and Questions

#### Agenda Item 4

#### **Questions from David Redgewell, South West Transport Network/Bus Users South West to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Bus Services and Rail Station Access**

##### Questions:

We welcome the setting up of the new Dorset Council. There is a need to provide bus services between Bridport - Beaminster and Crewkerne with the service 6 (Bridport – Beaminster, operating as one journey extended to/from Yeovil) currently operating only Mondays to Fridays. The 40 service, operated by Dorset County Council (DCC) should also operate as a through service.

1. What discussion is happening between First Group subsidiaries (First Wessex and Buses of Somerset) and the council regarding bus services as some people are missing bus connections with the current timetables i.e. caused by late running?
2. What progress is being made with the X51 service (Sundays and evenings) and services to Dorchester South, Bridport, Axminster, Yeovil and Bristol?
3. What proposals are there for disabled access at Dorchester West and Wareham where currently you have to use the level crossing? There is a need for a lift and disabled toilet.
4. Are Dorset County Council going to help fund their part of the Westbury - Weymouth Community Rail Partnership railway line?

##### Answers:

1. A new timetable has been registered with a start date of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April. This will operate between Bridport and Crewkerne. Most through journeys between Bridport and Crewkerne will be provided by either Buses of Somerset or First Wessex, removing the need to change at Beaminster. The last journey in either direction will involve a change at Beaminster but there will be a guaranteed connection in each direction. Tickets purchased on both services are interchangeable.
2. Service X51 is commercially run by the bus company and they decide on the timetable and provide a level of service that is viable. Dorset County Council does not provide subsidy for any evening or weekend routes. The Council would be willing to discuss any aspirations with the bus company but ultimately, the company will make a commercial decision as to the level of service they provide. Following clarification of the question, the same principal would apply to the connections at Weymouth between rail and service X53.

It is possible that the transport strategy and policies will be reviewed under the new Dorset Council.

3. Dorset County Council, as part of a local partnership, have been working with Network Rail to build an Equality Act compliant ramp from Williams Avenue to the northbound platform for some years. The proposal is currently subject to a planning application, see link below, and if successful it is hoped to construct the ramp in 2019. All is subject to funding and legal agreements.

[https://planning.dorset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=DCAPR\\_137607&activeTab=summary](https://planning.dorset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=DCAPR_137607&activeTab=summary)

Lifts at Wareham Station are being considered by Network Rail and South Western railway and a bid has been put to the Department for Transport for Access for All funding. It is my understanding that we should hear if the bid has been successful by late Spring. The query regarding disabled toilets should be directed to South Western Railway.

4. Dorset County Council is, and continues to be, a funding partner of the Heart of Wessex Community Rail Partnership. The new Dorset Council will have to decide whether or not it wishes to continue as a funding partner for a community rail partnership on this line.