

Cabinet – 20 June 2023

Questions from Councillors

1. Question for Cllr J Orrell

The new parking charges have hit coastal towns harder than prosperous market towns. This is unfair. The coastal towns have a 6 week busy period in the summer but also contain the wards with the highest deprivation. Residents will struggle with paying in advance for season tickets. Has there been an equalities impact assessment? Can the short stay £78 permit be broken down to monthly tickets? Why do tourists visiting Abbeys, Minsters or Castles get cheaper parking than hard working families on the beach? Would a unified fee structure across the whole of Dorset demonstrate economic justice and fairness?

2. Question for Cllr P Kimber

Cycling and walking targets 'to be missed'

A National Audit Office report has found that the Government is likely to miss targets to increase walking and cycling, in a bid to reduce emissions and reach net zero by 2050, despite investing heavily in the sector. LGA transport spokesperson Cllr Linda Taylor said councils have been at the forefront of active travel schemes but added “they can only continue to do this with long-term certainty for vital local projects that help to cut congestion and make our air cleaner” and called on government to urgently restore much-needed £200 million funding to councils’ budgets for these projects. Cllr Taylor said: “This will allow councils to plan a pipeline of active travel infrastructure investments, engage more effectively with local communities and invest in necessary skills and capacity for their own staff.”

I would like to request are we in Dorset behind in our Cycling and walking targets, as suggested by the national Audit office, and are we planning effectively with local communities.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

The Government’s targets for walking and cycling are laid out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2. In the period up to 2025 they relate to

- Percentage increases of short journeys in towns and cities by walking and cycling
- Overall increases in walking and cycling trips and
- Percentage increase in children walking to school.

Beyond 2025, further objectives reflect commitments originally set out in [Gear change](#), the [Transport decarbonisation plan](#) and the [Net zero strategy](#) to:

- increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities and
- deliver a world-class cycling and walking network in England by 2040

The Government's objectives are focused on achieving modal shift in urban areas, and it should be remembered that almost half of Dorset Council's population live in rural locations. While Dorset Council works towards the Government's targets, it should be noted that these are national targets, and the authority does not have the means to measure precisely against these identical objectives.

Dorset Council's transport objectives are set out in the Third Local Transport Plan, currently under review. This did not specify detailed targets for growth in walking or cycling, but instead, alongside the objectives, set goals and performance indicators.

These performance indicators align somewhat with the Government's objectives above and include:

- Single occupant car trips
- Pupils travelling to school by car and
- Growth in cycling trips

The baseline and percentage change against the baseline for these indicators was set out in the Review of the Third Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011-2026), discussed at the most recent Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee: [Review of the Third Bournemouth Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#). Overall, figures for all three performance indicators showed positive change since the baseline 2008-2010 average although it should be noted that the most recent years data (2021) will have been impacted by Covid related disruption to travel patterns.

Planning with local communities involves a range of activities, from engagement around specific schemes, to the production of long-term plans for walking and cycling infrastructure. Dorset Council is currently in the process of producing plans for the urban parts of the county and will be conducting a public consultation on the identified network and priority routes in the near future.

Dorset Council remains committed to making it safer and easier for Dorset's residents, businesses and visitors to make more sustainable travel choices, with walking, cycling and other active travel at the heart of transport decision-making.