

PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Cllrs Andy Canning (Chair), Andrew Starr (Vice-Chair), Roland Tarr and David Taylor

Present remotely: Cllrs Richard Crabb, Simon Gibson, Sherry Jespersen and Mike Parkes

Apologies: Cllrs

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Christopher Peck (Principal Transport Planner) and Helen Heanes (Principal Economic Development Officer)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

Jon Bird (Service Manager for Growth and Economic Regeneration) and Nick Webster (Head of Growth and Economic Regeneration)

22. Apologies

There were no apologies for this meeting

23. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th september 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Chair's Update

There were no updates from the Chair on this occasion.

26. Public Participation

Two questions were received and are attached with responses as Appendix 1

27. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

28. Active Travel Infrastructure Plan

The report presented by the Principal Transport Planner, detailed the Active Travel Infrastructure Plan outlined improvements needed for walking, cycling, and wheeling networks in Dorset, prioritising key areas to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency strategy and the Dorset Council travel plan. Public feedback from nearly 1,000 responses in late 2023 and early 2024 informed the network plans and the presentation covered the prioritisation approach in action using a couple of examples.

Following the discussion there was a comprehensive discussion that highlighted several key areas

- The importance of partnership working with teams such as planning, rights of way, town and parish councils and National Highways to ensure that the plan flexes and adapts to future needs and accesses the highest levels of funding available.
- Childrens school travel was discussed and the importance of encouraging active travel for those in proximity to schools.
- The importance of clear communication and engagement with communities to avoid the feeling of being done to was discussed and was seen as essential in the plan.
- The prioritisation of routes and areas was discussed and the weighting given to leisure activities, tourism, and the potential impact in terms of realising value for money.
- Discussion around funding sources for the initial developments and the importance of considering the cost of maintenance for the developments once completed.

Following this conversation the committee recognised the scale of the work that was needed across Dorset and a return to a future Overview Committee meeting was to be scheduled.

29. **Economic Growth Strategy**

The Economic Growth Strategy was presented by the Head of Growth and Regeneration and the Principal Economic Development Officer and outlined the early baselines of productivity and insights that the strategy sought to address as it developed and come back to a future Overview Committee following working groups around the identified key priorities ahead of public engagement.

Following the presentation there was a discussion that covered off several key areas

- The importance of embracing local distinctiveness and growing local businesses alongside the bringing in of new external businesses to stimulate growth
- Infrastructure in terms of transport and communication links, alongside the provision of affordable housing with the Local plan and other linked strategies to enable the economic growth and overcome key barriers.
- The importance of the agriculture sector and the separation of low paid vs low skilled descriptors.

- The importance of education, training and the value add of having a university if we can retain the skills in the local area.
- The importance of creating an environment that supports lots of businesses to grow and thrive and there was a warning of placing too much emphasis on large employers in terms of resilience if they choose to relocate.

The committee recommended that the working groups didn't require proportional representation but the best knowledge and skills from members. The Economic Growth strategy returned to the January meeting following the working groups.

30. **Place and Resources Overview Committee Work Programme**

The committee discussed the forward plan in relation to the January meeting agenda and requested early sight and engagement around future items.

31. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

32. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

APPENDIX 1- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Questions Received

1. Question from Mike Brown:

As a Lytchett Minster & Upton (LM&U) resident, I welcome the Active Travel Implementation Plan (ATIP). However, it ignores strategic long distance routes as they are "predominately recreation routes", which is regrettable. Many people in Dorset are retired, walk and/or cycle for leisure - the response to your consultation suggested that most people "walk or cycle to stay active and get exercise". In addition, the Dorset economy depends on tourism - leisure pursuits in attractive surroundings being a key driver.

It is also regrettable that links out of DC area were discounted. I visit Poole, Wareham and the Purbecks regularly and note that most pressure on Sandford Rd, Bakers Arms and Upton Crossroads, including its four artery roads, comes from traffic originating within BCP, host to half the Dorset population and many tourists.

Many existing Active Travel routes are adjacent to busy roads and unlikely to create significant use or modal shift. A shared footway link is poor for both pedestrians and for cycling. Many cyclist groups pass through LM&U/Sandford in evenings/weekends, most avoiding the A351 shared footway, some blocking the carriageway.

Many leisure walkers/cyclists/commuters/dog walkers can be observed along the proposed Castleman Trailway extension between Upton and Hamworthy station – this is included in BCP's RoWIP.

The Cordite Way, with proposed extension to link Hamworthy/Turlin Moor to Sandford/Wareham/Purbecks, is not just a leisure route but an opportunity to reduce congestion/pollution/noise on the busy A351 and LM&U roads - many

acknowledged as dangerous. A group of volunteers have cleared the accessible part of that new route, which is now usable. Discussions with visitors, some working at Holton Heath and living in Hamworthy, note this route is more pleasant than the A351 link from LM&U. Walkers use the route for bird spotting, dog walking and general enjoyment - i.e. for off-road leisure.

An off-road link from Bakers Arms to Organford Lane would link LM&U to various RoWs in the Holton Heath area and local TCF Scheme. Note: this and the above extensions are relevant to Poole Harbour (leisure) Trails and a Draft Local Transport Strategy for LM&U (currently under discussion with Highways).

The North Dorset Trailway provides not only an inter-community link but also opportunities for school/work/leisure journeys away from roads. The potential to link this into Somerset and to Sturminster Marshall/Corfe Mullen/BCP would provide significant modal shift opportunities, subject to funding.

The Western Gateway SNTB has been considering a Strategic Cycling Network with the aim of connecting communities. A strategic RoW network is also required in Dorset.

Will the Committee please recommend that the ATIP recognises the value of leisure routes, connections to neighbouring authorities, and as far as possible, links away from busy roads?

Response: Thank you for your question. This is for the Committee to make a recommendation.

The ATIP links include connections to neighbouring authorities. BCP already have adopted their equivalent plan (the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - LCWIP), to which the proposed network in the Upton area – and other parts of the Dorset Council area - links. The BCP LCWIP can be found here: [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan | Transforming Travel](#)

2. Question from Cllr Andy Hadley, BCP Council, Poole Town Ward, Cabinet Member for Climate Mitigation, Environment and Energy

I am the portfolio-holder at BCP Council for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment, which includes Transport. Outside of my Council role, I chair the Poole Harbour Trails group, concerned with improving walking and cycling links around the harbour, but in particular currently working on the Cordite Way at Holton Heath, with an ambition to provide a high-quality sustainable link between Sandford and Hamworthy.

In addition to priorities outlined in our own LCWIP and RoWIP documents, BCP Council have worked closely with Dorset Council on the Transforming Travel initiative, This seeks to ensure joined up journeys across our two authorities, especially recognising significant flows of people for work, leisure, school and utility journeys. Due to funding challenges, this work is incomplete, but the barriers that the River Stour, A350 and A31 create for Active Travel journeys are significant.

I am concerned that whilst the priorities outlined in 1.9 are important, the relevance of very significant numbers of vehicle trips associated with leisure use, and holidaymakers do not feature. One of the reasons that few longer journeys are undertaken in the UK is the hostility of vehicles on the road network, especially on small rural roads. As a Warmshowers host to touring cyclists, I had one very well-

travelled visitor highlight that the UK roads were the worst in his very wide experience. Many of our National Cycleway routes are not fit for family cycling. Under 2.4 the paper suggest that rural links are excluded as they are covered by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, but many of these links are also used for work, utility or school journeys, and I know the funds available for RoWIP are minimal.

The analysis mentions difficulties with using the online platform. In my personal experience the website failed several times, and was extremely laborious to enter more than one idea.

It is regrettable that the new urban extensions in Merley and Wimborne were not taken as a golden opportunity to provide significant quality Active Travel links between these communities. This continues to cement car dependency, and spiralling congestion in our area.

The employment areas of Ferndown Industrial Estate, the Airport estates, Nuffield, and Holton Heath are of joint importance, and I hope our authorities can continue to work together on links to these, but this didn't seem to feature well in the map at 7.1.

I welcome the southern extension of the North Dorset Trailway, and am very keen to see how we can link it further southwards into Broadstone.

We also have a joint project with the National Trust and the two Authorities around the River Stour including access.

Can the Committee please highlight a priority for joint working in the Infrastructure plan.

Response: Thank you for your question. Dorset Council and BCP Council has, as Cllr Hadley indicates, worked closely on the development of cross-boundary links, including the preparation of input to regional strategic documents and in the development of the Transforming Cities Fund network of schemes. Dorset Council has also received input and discussion with a range of other stakeholders in both the development of the plan, including town and parish councils and other groups, with further discussions ongoing. Joint working with relevant local stakeholders will be crucial as part of any scheme designs that might emerge from the plan.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.21 pm

Chairman

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