

Wessex Cross Border Working Group

Thursday 7th February 2013
2.30pm, Andy Young Pavilion, Mere

Agenda

1. Apologies and Introductions

In attendance:

- i. Cllr Lester Dibben (Chair) (LD), Shaftesbury Town Council
- ii. Cllr Tony Deane (Vice-Chair) (AD), Wiltshire Council
- iii. Cllr Mick Hicks (MH), Shaftesbury Town Council
- iv. Cllr Peter Finney (PF), Dorset County Council
- v. Cllr Colin Winder (CW), South Somerset District Council
- vi. Cllr Val Potheary (VP), North Dorset District Council

- vii. Paul Willis (PW), Dorset County Council
- viii. Helen Reed (HR), NORDCAT
- ix. Steve Harris (SH), Wiltshire Council

Apologies received from:

- Katherine Bright, Interim Transport Policy Manager, Strategic Planning on behalf of Somerset County Council. They will aim to attend next meeting.
- Cllr David Walsh.

2. Minutes from meeting on 25th October 2012

ACTION - Item 4 to be chased up by PW re. cross working

LD reported no update received from Highways Agency, attempts to make meaningful contact will continue.

Heading needs to be amended to 'Wessex Cross Border Working Group –

ACTION LD to arrange this with Shaftesbury Town Council Clerk.

No other issues with minutes raised – LD signed off.

3. Update on A303 / A350 / A30

Still no representation by Highways.

PW advised about a project update within Dorset CC in October 2012. Talked about business survey carried out, which identified the economic case for trunk road improvements. These hinged on dualling A303/A358.

PF advised Highways Agency have pinch point funding for trunk roads. Dorset area has put in bid for pinch point areas. In future, most appropriate route for putting the case will be through Joint Transport Boards, which will be set up by LEPs. If LEPs band together, then potentially have access to more capital. LEP board not yet finalised in Dorset.

AD reported that in speaking to local MPs, John Glen and Andrew Murrison, they have not indicated willingness to pursue.

CW felt there was a need to emphasise economic development, rather than just safety.

PF re-stated that this makes LEPs so important in the process. Once transport boards are formulated they can prioritise the issues. LEPs need to work together to form a common aim for the good of whole area. **ACTION – PF to advise group once LEP has formed transport board.**

PW advised there is a time limit for boards to be formed.

ACTION – CW to provide update from Somerset/Devon.

4. Hot topic – tourism

AD reported that Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB have decided to re-name themselves, working party formed to do this. Pilot study of sustainable tourism in the Nadder Valley has received 12 month grant from Sowing Seeds; Deb Beeson has been employed and is working out of Tisbury. Through Area Board, funding has been provided into local business associations, and an intern is being recruited into AONB to help with pilot programme. AONB are hoping to roll this out into rest of area. Forest of Bowland and Blackdown Hills Business Association have done similar things.

PF reported that Dorset is part of Tour de Manche; 465,000 Euro project to set up cycle routes linking into France. Local businesses have linked in. Person responsible is Adam Bowes, Dorset County Council. Also have their own website, link through Dorset View. Goes through heritage coast and part of AONB. Cycle tourism worth more per person than normal tourism.

AD reported that the local agenda of AONB is to provide better experience at home, as more holiday here due to financial concerns.

VP advised cycling route is planned from Gillington to Motcombe, which can eventually link up with Shaftesbury.

HR reported that Sherborne are very active in cycling. Transport action group have a lot to do with this.

5. Hot topic – rural transport

PF reported rural transport a real problem, with further funding issues. Dorset CC brought on board Travel Watch South West. For a nominal fee they have engaged membership to do head counts on current usage, to inform future decisions. David Coates linking with NDDC. Travel Watch South West recognises rural network needs to be reformed to be more efficient and useful.

AD reported that Tisbus have received funding from WC, and are considered to be best value for money rural transport. Very much volunteer based, which is similar to other services such as libraries. As a community, represent young people who are struggling to travel around rural area. Minibuses are way forward. Looking to provide parking area at campus in Tisbury for minibuses, to then link youth buses with community buses to increase scope of service.

CW advised the whole rural bus service based on taking children to school; the rest of day they tend to run around empty. Minibus is ideal solution.

AD reported from a recent youth group meeting where young people were incensed about changes to car licenses affecting times of day they can drive, sharing lifts; new rules appear to marginalise rural young people.

HR advised that not enough young people get heard from rural areas and their voices can get lost.

VP advised that she is the chair of a transport group exploring future provision in North Dorset.

LD advised there will be a link in future between Shaftesbury and Tisbury through Yeovil College; raises the possibility for development in future.

AD reported a new initiative to make railway stations in Wiltshire transport hubs. Tisbury serves Shaftesbury. First meeting is next week.

HR reported NORDCAT already do a lot of work with Kingston Maurward College, both in and out of county. Also use these minibuses to transport elderly to hospital appointments in Dorchester etc. This provides an ideal opportunity to use vehicles. System does work, need to get information out to people. Need to change mentality of expecting public transport.

LD asked question about accessing Odstock hospital.

HR advised that the hospital produce guidance on how to get there. Difficulty is in people getting to a station. Link schemes are also a good way to help.

AD suggested that there was something to be said for having a cross-border communications room; somewhere that knows where vehicles are in the area. Transport hubs could respond to requests?

HR advised that it is difficult for minibuses to be used by general public because of restrictions in place. Have to have individuals registered, need to be booked on day before.

PF agreed that there is a need to liberalise system but keep checks and balances, need to lobby MPs to change legislation. Travel Dorset shows and keeps people updated which anyone can subscribe to.

VP advised that once travel group have finished mapping exercise, both Wiltshire and Somerset will see where links are. Many of the villages are very inward facing, which causes difficulty in having information shared. Everything on dorsetforyou website.

HR advised that the problem with community schemes is they often don't run to a set route.

PF suggested web based technology could provide regular update.

ACTION – PW to draft letter that highlights concerns with current legislation and its impact on rural transport schemes. Once agreed this will be sent to local MPs on behalf of the group. The letter should make clear that this is not about being in competition with private industry. HR to supplement the letter with examples from NORDCAT service.

6. Any other business, including any other updates from member Councils

Discussed issues with potholes.

7. Arrangements for the next meeting

Approximately 3 months, confirmation will go out in due course.