

Devizes Air Quality and Transport Strategy Group Meeting

Thursday 18th November 2021, Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes

Notes:

Present: Cllr Tamara Reay (Chair), Andrew Jack, Martin Aldam, Gary Tomsett, Jason Salter (Wiltshire Council); Philippa Morgan (Trust for Devizes); Martin Read (Cycle Friendly Devizes); Jasper Selwyn (Devizes Passengers' Group); Richard Ormerod (Sustainable Devizes); Cllr Eric Clark (Bishops Cannings PC); Cllr Ted East (Devizes TC)

Item	Notes	Action
	Because of other commitments, TR, GT, MA and JSa joined the meeting remotely via Teams	
1. Apologies	There were no apologies	
2. Notes of last meeting 30 th September 2021	<p>RO asked about opportunities for Devizes TC getting a street cleaning machine that would help improve air quality. He described an opportunity to run a mini study if a street within the AQMA was to be thoroughly cleaned with this machine. He asked if that would make a difference?</p> <p>GT asked if the aim of this would be to reduce particulates and if so, it would be reliant on the specification of the machine at filtering PM_{2.5}. He pointed out the AQMA is classified due to nitrogen dioxide and street cleaning would not have an effect on that.</p> <p>RO said that the machine DTC had seen could filter both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. GT pointed out we will have to monitor PM more closely, so RO asked if this is possible. GT replied that the monitor at Sidmouth St can currently monitor PM₁₀ and that Osiris monitors could be used for PM_{2.5}. TR asked if this could be considered. RO assumed there would be research before and after a sweeping programme was carried out. GT felt this would need full university involvement to carry out a research study to determine effect. RO has contacts at UWE and will take this forward.</p>	RO
3. Air Quality Data	<p>GT presented data on air quality within the town. Due to the nature of the meeting, no one was able to see these, so GT will circulate the charts later.</p> <p>He described that during August the Crescent had low level of pollutant; at The Nursery the figure is 34mg/m³; at Shanes' Castle 36mg/m³; at Wadworth's corner 36 mg/m³; at Windsor Dr 31mg/m³; at St Joseph's Place 33 mg/m³. These are all below the recommended threshold of 40mg/m³ He said how these diffusion tubes are likely to overestimate these figures and they will need to be checked by Defra before being confirmed.</p> <p>GT felt that pollution levels for 2021 will be higher than for 2020. Whether they breach the objective is in balance and might tip over. RO described an article saying how air with a level just below the threshold of 40mg/m³ cannot be described as being okay or healthy, so work needs to continue to reduce pollution as low as possible. GT said how the Environment Act is now in place. Those levels are not necessarily safe but they are established in</p>	GT

	<p>law. There are still around 500 AQMAs around the country set at 40mg/m³ so it is unlikely there will be a change in this monitoring regime. GT said that a major contributor to pollution in Wiltshire is private diesel cars.</p> <p>GT is currently working on an Air Quality Action Place for Wiltshire. TR asked if this is likely to be ready in time for the next meeting and GT felt this unlikely.</p> <p>GT mentioned the fire taking place that day at the recycling facility owned by Grist's on the A342 at Stert. There is an Osiris monitor in Etchilhampton to monitor the smoke plume. A briefing for Wiltshire Councillors is due out that afternoon. AJ will circulate it once available.</p>	<p>AJ</p>
<p>4. Finance</p>	<p>MA has already circulated details of the 3 amounts of s106 funding available to this group. They are ringfenced to help deliver the transport strategy (£474k); improvements to passenger transport (£563k); improvements at Shane's Castle junction (£64k).</p> <p>TR asked what happens if the money is not spent? MA replied that it is returned to the developers but this rarely happens as the money is usually spent. He did say how the funding for Shane's Castle does have an unusually specific purpose, so this may be more problematic.</p> <p>RO pointed out Sustainable Devizes would be disappointed as it feels there are some big gains to be made at Shane's Castle. MA replied that work there could make improvements to air quality but not to traffic flow. Also, levels there are currently below the threshold, so any investment there would need to be carefully thought through. The scheme, when developed in 2014 cost approx. £660k so significant further funding would need to be found. RO thought that if any reductions can be made, even if already below 40mg/m³ then they need to be tried for.</p> <p>TR asked what the decision point is to bring this about? MA said that this scheme is in the Air Quality Action Plan.</p> <p>RO wanted to see alternative projects that the £64k could be spent on. MA pointed out this has to be at Shane's Castle.</p> <p>TE asked what could be done there with just the £64k that's available? TR said that for this to be considered, it would need to be in the AQ Action Plan.</p> <p>Someone asked what is the route to agree interventions at Shane's Castle? GT would be appropriate and MA would need to re-evaluate in light of transport horizons and new carbon-neutral aspirations, EV usage, etc. TR asked who would do that and MA replied it would be for Transport and Traffic Services and also the Local Plan review to look at housing allocations for the addition s106 funding that would bring.</p> <p>TR asked about the dates for returning this s106 money. MA said there are no concerns about returning any.</p>	
<p>5. Buses</p>	<p>JSa tried showing slides but again the layout of the room prevented this. He will circulate after. He described how service use is up but overall demand is down at around 75% of pre-Covid use. There is also an acute shortage of drivers nationwide, although the No. 49 and town bus are not that affected. This needs to be managed effectively as demand comes back up. He described how it is hard to improve or increase services in this environment.</p> <p>The team is currently producing bus plans for over 3-5 years and</p>	<p>JSa</p>

	<p>now waiting for government money for Wiltshire in order to start spending on these changes.</p> <p>Through enhanced partnership there is a big opportunity with these amounts of money. This includes £1.2m for the demand responsive service in Pewsey Vale, a direct service between Devizes and Marlborough and new technology to improve booking. This is due in late summer '22.</p> <p>JSa mentioned £671K from government to be spent on plans for the east of the county including Laywood, Devizes to Chippenham and Devizes to Salisbury. These new services are likely to need new drivers which at the moment are not there.</p> <p>Regarding Laywood, there are ongoing discussions with Faresaver – might be able to introduce a service into Laywood but at the expense of this service elsewhere. A new shuttle service might be possible but these are expensive to run and will need a whole redesign of the town bus service. If JSe comes up with a new timetable, JSa is happy to look at working together to develop it. EC said that Bishops Cannings PC would also like to be involved in this. TR would also like to see Marshall Rd included. JSa admitted Wiltshire Council was slow at getting services into new developments and described a new service called Tandem. Tandem will broker a taxi-share scheme on demand, similar to dial-a-ride. The journey might be shared or on your own but passengers will never pay more than the equivalent bus fare. JSe asked about the Devizes to Salisbury route and the availability of drivers. JSa said that the operator is aware but cannot deliver. RO asked about a member of the public living in Rowde who had contacted him about the high price of bus travel into Devizes. RO suspected this person is being charged to whole fare to Chippenham and asked if this is allowable? JSa said that as a commercial route, this could be happening and agreed it is difficult to prevent. The government is trying to make fares more reasonable. JSa said that there will be a new young persons' fare across Wiltshire in 2022.</p> <p>EC asked about a new bus shelter for Horton Rd at Laywood. He described a new development from Berkeley which emphasises use of public transport. This then highlights the need for a better bus stop and shelter here. EC described how the current stop has just a small footprint, so the PC is looking to increase this to be able to give a larger shelter. They are having to look at the current location as ownership of nearby land becomes difficult. They have written to David Wilson Homes to buy more land. The PC is happy both to project manage the installation of the new shelter and take responsibility for the maintenance of it.</p> <p>MA stated that Wiltshire Council no longer maintains bus shelters and encourages local councils to take on their own shelters. Wiltshire Council would need it in writing from BCPC taking this responsibility. EC said that would not be a problem and that the PC would be looking at funding from this group towards the new shelter.</p>	<p>JSe / JSa</p>
<p>6. Walking and Cycling</p>	<p>MA has put together a brief to Atkins for a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Devizes. The plan will look at priority routes (origins and destinations) and develop infrastructure for those. The LCWIP can be used for bidding for further money from government and there is approx. £6m to do this. TR and MA</p>	

	<p>are looking to this group to fund the production of the LCWIP. TR said this will cost £20-30k but is scalable. It will be time intensive to look at pedestrian and cycling routes, etc. TR described how Sustainable Devizes and Cycle Friendly Devizes has been very involved in the work up to this point to put together the brief. The infrastructure element is about making it easier and more attractive to cycle.</p> <p>MR offered to be part of the process and feed in further. He also raised the Devizes Gateway Station and any new Neighbourhood Plan and how that would affect the situation or LCWIP.</p> <p>MA agreed that Cycle Friendly Devizes' involvement has been very useful at key stages. Atkins will not have this level of local knowledge they can bring.</p> <p>There was a comment about integrating Devizes Gateway into the study for active travel routes there.</p> <p>TE asked for walking to be included and further emphasised in the LCWIP. He felt cycling gets a lot of attention at the expense of walking when many people do not or cannot cycle. MR pointed out the Salisbury LCWIP is evenly balanced and includes other forms of travel.</p> <p>When asked to recommend to Devizes Area Board to spend up to £30,000 of the group's budget, everyone was in agreement. TR asked MA to write a short paper for the area board outlining this.</p> <p>AJ described a request from Devizes TC towards new cycle parking to be installed at the market place. The request is for 2 stands that would each hold up to 4 cycles. These racks will be able to move as a way to gauge how popular cycle parking at the market place is and where cyclists prefer to park their bikes.</p> <p>Devizes TC is requesting £1,081.61 from this group to purchase the new racks. The group approved the recommendation to the area board.</p>	<p>MA</p>
<p>7. Rail</p>	<p>TR describes how the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Devizes Gateway has now been submitted to government. She said it makes a strong case why the Devizes area should be re-connected to the rail network. The document has gone to DfT and Danny Kruger MP has written to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>TR said how the £34k committed by Devizes TC is very welcome and shows a strong local commitment to the project.</p> <p>A 2-page update from Rob Murphy had been circulated to the group before the meeting.</p> <p>JSe pointed out there is not much about public transport and how to get to the station within the SOC. JSa replied that a new post within the Passenger Transport Unit will help with that. RO felt that this underplayed access and that active travel and buses will be critical to making the station work and this update has glossed over that. This element needs to be planned out well at an early stage otherwise the whole bid could fail.</p> <p>PM felt the document contained a few surprises, such as an 80-bed hotel and a countryside park beside the Castle. She asked if these were in the public domain?</p> <p>MA pointed out this document is a short, 2-page, summary of the full SOC. He offered to circulate the full SOC.</p>	<p>MA</p>
<p>8. EV Charging Strategy</p>	<p>TR asked if the group had seen the policy document from Wiltshire Council on a new EV charging policy for the county? Most had not.</p> <p>AJ will circulate this with the notes.</p>	<p>AJ</p>

	<p>The document describes funding available to restore current chargers (including the 2 in Station Rd car park) and a package of funding for town and parish councils to bid for to support residents who don't have off street parking. TR asked for Devizes TC to consider their aspirations for EV charging within the town. TE offered to write a note to Devizes TC outlining this. EC will do the same for BCPC. Simon Fisher may have ideas for new locations for chargers within the town.</p> <p>There was discussion around employers within the town (the new health centre on Marshall Rd was given as example) that will allow the public access to chargers within staff car parks. Pros and cons of this were discussed.</p>	
9. Car Clubs	There was no progress on this topic to report.	
10. AOB	<p>MA described the Close Pass exercise at Devizes Fire Station on the 17th. Volunteer cyclists rode along Southbroom road and Police observed motorists as they overtook the cyclists. 17 drivers were stopped by Police to remind them about keeping a safe distance of 1.5m when overtaking.</p> <p>PM asked about the Metrocounts currently across Devizes. AJ replied this is part of the CATG project from Devizes TC collecting data for an assessment for new 20mph limits on streets within with town centre. This assessment giving the suitability of the lower speed will be available some time in the new year.</p>	
Next meetings	Date tbc. This is likely to be early February and ahead of the next area board meeting.	