

Devizes Air Quality and Transport Strategy Group Meeting

Monday 9th May 2022, St James Centre, Devizes

Notes:

Present: Cllr Tamara Reay (Chair), Andrew Jack, Martin Aldam, Gary Tomsett, Jason Salter (Wiltshire Council); Philippa Morgan (Trust for Devizes); Richard Ormerod (Sustainable Devizes); Martin Read, Catherine Reed (Cycle Friendly Devizes); Cllr Ted East (Devizes TC)

Item	Notes	Action
1. Apologies	Jasper Selwyn (Devizes Passengers' Group); Cllr Eric Clark (Bishops Cannings PC)	
2. Notes of last meeting 17 th February 2022	Any comments on the notes were picked up during the meeting at the appropriate section	
3. Air Quality Data	<p>GT showed a graph of nitrogen dioxide levels at different locations in Devizes over time. These showed all locations dipped well below the threshold of 40µg/m³ during 2020. This is down to pandemic lockdowns and reduced travel and has been recognised as an odd year for data. The 2021 data shows slight increases at Shane's Castle, Wadworth's and The Nursery but further decreases at St James' Place and Southgate. This can be attributed to lockdowns early in 2021 and a slow re-opening through the year but still with high levels of working from home, etc. GT confirmed this data has been corrected. He described issues with the national adjustment and was less happy to use this, so has used a local one but can still be confident in this data. PM commented she feels that traffic volumes have increased in the last few weeks as the weather improves and people go out more. Other members of the group agreed.</p> <p>GT showed a second chart giving sources of NO₂. This showed 12% comes from a regional background and there is very little that can be done about that. A further 14% is local background but 74% is a road contribution.</p> <p>A third chart showed the sources of this road contribution of NO_x on the A361 in Devizes. The greatest vehicle type by far is diesel cars at 50%, followed by HGVs at 25%. GT explained this data comes from DfT and traffic flows with the proportion of different vehicles on the road, to work out the car types. The data is from 2019. MR asked if there is any change in the proportions of vehicle types in this time and GT thought there might be an increase in hybrid. TE asked about the quality of the data and GT said it would have been analysed to at least a 90% confidence interval, so it is accurate.</p> <p>GT also talked about his work on Wiltshire's AQ action plan, which will include umbrella plans for county-wide activity and also local plans, e.g. in Devizes to look at the area around Wadworth's Brewery.</p> <p>GT said how this group has already looked at the new threshold levels of AQ and at the new WHO levels coming in, which are very low. There was discussion about natural sources of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} such as sea salt particles and pollen and how some seaside</p>	

	<p>or very rural locations might not be able to be compliant to the new, low thresholds because of this.</p> <p>GT described that the contract for the current Wiltshire air quality website was coming to an end and the site will change from its current style and function. GT wants to replace it with more practical tools and advice for e.g. travellers and commuters.</p> <p>GT mentioned he had been awarded CIL funding to replace the air monitoring equipment at Sidmouth St, Devizes. This will focus more on PM_{2.5} as the location is already compliant for PM₁₀. He described how PM_{2.5} is being seen as a harsh pollutant. There is a new role for local authorities in monitoring PM_{2.5}.</p> <p>RO asked about PM_{2.5} vs. PM₁₀ and what will still be monitored. GT described the method for monitoring these.</p> <p>RO mentioned the new road sweeper that DTC has bought and research suggesting that regular sweeps can affect AQ. He would like to trial data collection to assess this and thought it would be helpful to coordinate use of the new sweeper with the new monitoring devices within Devizes. GT thought this would be possible but he would have to loan a measuring device to DTC to enable this to happen and this would need a fee of approx. £1,000.</p>	
<p>4. Finance</p>	<p>MA showed the figures remaining in the three different budgets:</p> <p>£443,464 Discretionary Sustainable Transport £534,969 Public Transport £ 64,870 Highways (Shane's Castle)</p> <p>£1,039,887 Total</p> <p>Recent allocations from this funding include:</p> <p>£13,000 to Devizes Gateway, Feb '22 £30,000 to Devizes LCWIP, Feb '22 £1,081.61 to Devizes TC for cycle parking on marketplace, Feb '22 £5,435 to Bishops Cannings PC for bus shelter on Horton Rd, May '22</p> <p>PM asked what this money can be spent on. MA said the Public Transport money can be spent on improvements to local bus services and the Discretionary Sustainable Transport can be used on a wide variety of projects and is not specific. This is where the funding for the LCWIP comes from.</p> <p>PM also asked about the canal towpath. MA said that a lot of work has already been done along there. The Canal & Rivers Trust (CRT) has developed a plan for improvements at Caen Hill and Lock 44.</p> <p>TE felt that work at Shane's Castle was in limbo and asked what could happen? MA said that only signalisation of that junction would have an effect on AQ. The £65k in the budget is to facilitate this work and not towards carrying it out – significant new funding would need to be found for that. The money could be used towards a traffic count to investigate right turns at the top of Dunkirk Hill, which has been a request for CATG in the past.</p> <p>RO didn't want the work at Shane's Castle forgotten about but TR thought that bigger areas such as the Wharf and Assize Court were important and she mentioned a consultants' report on that area.</p> <p>MA pointed out that any work at Shane's Castle would be about</p>	

	preventing idling and stop / start traffic, which would help AQ in the area but would have no effect on capacity.	
5. Cycling & Walking	<p>MR described that there had been a good inception meeting with Atkins. He and others were able to chip in with lots of information. He now wanted to know about progress about the consultation and what information has gone to stakeholders?</p> <p>MA agreed it is hard work and that Atkins have not been helpful. He said that they have not produced the plan but have created the network. He thought the consultation events on 11th June (at the Sustainability day) will not be met but recommended using this date to promote the LCWIP and the upcoming consultation on it. MA confirmed the list of stakeholders has been confirmed. MA had asked Atkins for an update report to be produced in time for this meeting but it was not ready. He also needed to be clear from Atkins they will produce the material needed for this consultation.</p> <p>MR was worried that if these do not take place on the same date, the consultations will not work and it will be a missed trick. MR wanted to use the 11th June towards the LCWIP. MA felt the stakeholders will need 4-6 weeks' notice of the event. He agreed it would be a great opportunity to coincide but didn't think it could be achieved. MR didn't want people to miss out on being consulted. MA confirmed all stakeholders will have been written to by the 11th and there will be a date for the LCWIP consultation by then – he thought Atkins may even have the date by the end of the week. TR asked who is managing the contract with Atkins. MA said that he had raised this with his line management and escalated these issues.</p> <p>CR wanted the area defined by the LCWIP to include the surrounding parishes as well as the town. TR agreed with this and said how the CATG group has changed to Local Highways & Footpaths Improvement Groups (LHFIGs) with an increased budget and this can now include work to rights of way. MR asked about materials towards the LCWIP that could be used on the 11th June and if Atkins can produce those? MA said he has no resource for those but he can look at this. TR thought there should be something available.</p> <p>CR mentioned that the new cycle parking for the marketplace has been delivered but not installed. AJ was asked to contact the Clerk and find a date.</p> <p>MA has also asked Sustrans to put on cycling promotion activities alongside the event on 11th June. He mentioned 70 places for adult cycle training available. He will put CR in touch with other Wilts Council staff to help promote this.</p> <p>MA talked about the plans from CRT for access work at Lock 44 at Caen Hill. This is to improve access to the site from Dundas Court. CRT is putting in £33k to the scheme but think this could be more. Further funding could come from this group but will have to wait for the LCWIP to be in place.</p>	AJ MA
7. Buses	JS updated on Wiltshire Council's bus service improvement plans having gone to government for potential funding but Wiltshire had missed out. JS felt this was a strong case and is waiting for feedback. The process of creating the bid has resulted in	

	<p>enhanced partnership with operators and that is still there. Other benefits include a passengers' charter and common fares for all users. This would have been the last of the government's funding through Covid. Because passenger numbers are still not near pre-pandemic levels, government funding has been extended for another 6months. Government does not want services to fold so will keep supporting them and is in discussion with operators and other partners.</p> <p>JS said how April's figures are showing an increase in passenger numbers but the network is still at about 75% of pre-pandemic levels. JS predicted that passenger number for September / October will become the new post-pandemic benchmark figures. There will need to be a look at where these people / numbers have gone in terms of their commuting / working habits.</p> <p>There has been a dip in the number of drivers and this has crept into Wiltshire Council's ability to provide school transport.</p> <p>JS mentioned a new Rural Mobility Fund worth £1.2m for Wiltshire which will provide demand responsive transport in the Pewsey Vale. A project manager has been appointed for the new service, who has a great deal of experience. It is hoped the new service will be in place by autumn, then to role out to the rest of the county. The service will cover Pewsey, west toward Devizes and north to include Marlborough and the parishes along the A4. The idea is to build a service people want.</p> <p>RO asked about buses from Devizes that connect with key rail services to London from Pewsey station and if they will resume? JS was keen to bring back services people want.</p> <p>TR asked for an update on the town service. She had met with Phil Grocock and others. She wanted to know about the service to the new health centre at Marshall Rd and the gap in services in the middle of the day and the ability of the service to get into the middle of the Lay Wood estate. There is a need to redeploy the town service to meet these demands.</p> <p>JS agreed some services are so underused, he has to ask if they are worth continuing to subsidise. He will contact Phil Grocock to get information about that conversation.</p> <p>RO asked about rationalising routes to make better use of driver time and if this can be improved by using more direct routes. JS agreed and commented that whilst policy used to be to try to support the most vulnerable this is not always possible anymore. Ro felt shorter routes and shorter journey times could be more successful.</p>	<p>JS</p>
<p>8. Rail</p>	<p>TR said how the outline strategic business case is with DfT and that feedback to her has been positive. DfT was waiting until after local elections on 5th May before giving any news, so hopefully there will be more information soon.</p>	
<p>9. EV Charging Strategy</p>	<p>TR mentioned the briefing on the new EV charging strategy that had gone to town and parish councils. She asked AJ to circulate this.</p> <p>The strategy includes proposals to replace all of Wiltshire Council's current EV chargers with current technology.</p> <p>TR also said how the town's sustainability working group is currently looking at opportunities for new EV chargers elsewhere within town and that Simon Fisher and Graham Martin are doing</p>	<p>AJ</p>

	the work behind that. AJ was asked to invite them both to the next meeting to give an update on this work.	AJ
10. Car Clubs	<p>AJ described the briefing produced about Co Cars and how they are coming to Mere to operate a car sharing club with one electric car, with the installation of one new EV Charging point. South West Wilts Area Board is providing funding towards both the car and the charge point.</p> <p>TR asked who carries the risk of this operation and what will become of the area board's funding if the new car club does not take off. AJ will find out.</p> <p>There was discussion about next steps forward. It was agreed to approach Co Cars about bringing a car club to Devizes</p>	<p>AJ</p> <p>AJ</p>
11. AOB	TE asked about e-scooters and whether they would be coming to Devizes. There was discussion about the pros and cons of them within towns.	
Next meetings	18 th August at 2.00pm	