

### **Purbeck Transport Strategy (rev 7)**

#### **Introduction**

The Purbeck Transport Action Group has agreed that there is an urgent need for a Transport Strategy in Purbeck. The area comes under particular pressure in the summer, especially around Studland, Swanage, Corfe and Lulworth/Durdle Door and has a high accident rate. There is a need for coordinated action to alleviate the problems of congestion, with its consequences for public safety and the environment. There is also a need to improve connectivity in the area and with limited bus services, there is an important role for rail travel, both on the Swanage Railway and on the Bournemouth-Weymouth line.

Such a strategy could be supported by plans for: traffic management, covering traffic flows and parking, including park and ride; cycling/walking, drawing on the recently announced government initiative ‘Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking’; integrated public transport, coordinating and expanding bus and rail services and the Sandbanks Ferry.

PTAG comprises representatives from Parish and Town Councils, as well as all transport modes (including the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership, bus companies and cycling groups) and has offered to assist in drafting such a strategy for consideration by Dorset Council.

Since transport is a major contributor to climate change, this strategy and accompanying plans could be used to inform the transport aspects of the DC Climate Emergency Plan.

Some Parish Councils have already carried out studies and formulated plans for their areas. It would be beneficial to coordinate these efforts, ensuring that all views are considered and widespread support is encouraged.

#### **Aims and Objectives**

A Purbeck Transport Strategy could have as its aim addressing climate change and ecological emergencies through the optimisation of transport in the area. Specific objectives are tackling traffic congestion and parking problems; protecting and enhancing the environment; improving public safety, health and well-being, with particular attention to school students and the elderly; helping local businesses, including tourism, to prosper; ensuring integration of different transport modes and connectivity in rural areas.

#### **Traffic Management Plan**

Principal routes and areas of congestion will be identified, with input invited from local bodies, such as Parish and Town Councils about possible measures to alleviate problems. These could include traffic flow control and parking solutions, such as transport interchanges (park and ride) away from the main destinations, with an emphasis on encouraging alternatives to private cars. The plan should look at the area as a whole, since changes in one area will have knock-on effects in other parts.

Trigger points may be needed to activate plans that alleviate problems - similar to Operation Heatwave project in BCP, as well a signing review to make sure that the current signing is fit for purpose - including advance signing from outside the Purbeck area.

### **Cycling/Walking Plan**

Existing and proposed cycle-paths and walking routes should be viewed in the context of connectivity throughout the area including transport hubs, so that deficiencies and 'missing links' can be identified and solutions considered. Safe and convenient routes, with good signage are essential to encourage walking and cycling instead of car use, throughout the area, benefiting health, safety and the environment.

### **Integrated Public Transport Plan**

Bus routes and train services should be assessed, taking account of the ferry connection and school services. An increased role for the railways should be considered and the effect of the fluctuating needs of visitors to the area should be borne in mind, both from the point of view of meeting demands of tourism and supporting local needs. In particular, rural transport 'deserts' need to be identified to address community needs and alleviate isolation, both by extending conventional bus services and by more actively supporting community buses.

### **Coordination**

Modes of transport cannot be considered in isolation as they interact, both positively and negatively. So congestion may be alleviated by improving public transport, or encouraging cycling and walking. Transport interchanges such as the Purbeck Park have the potential to reduce car use and congestion in this way, but the infrastructure and links must be put in place and information and incentives (such as free parking) must be provided. The alternatives must be safe and convenient if they are to be widely used. Rural transport hubs should be considered, with facilities for renting bikes, including e-bikes, Electric vehicle charging points and car-sharing schemes.

### **Desired outcomes**

Some measures of achievement could be set, for example: reduced impact of seasonal traffic (x%); increased use of sustainable transport modes (from y% to z%); connection of an identified group of communities to main public transport corridors.

Reduced transport deprivation: connecting older people and younger people to main settlements of health, education and employment.

Reduced pollution levels – this will require a monitoring system in place at the start of the plan.

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## Notes:

### 1. Consultation

The initial process of consulting at local level has been carried out, via the Association of Parish and Town Councils. A template has been sent to each of these councils, inviting their inputs. Responses have been received from many of those contacted.

### 2. Implementation

This strategy could be partially implemented in the Purbeck area and that is the limit of PTAG's remit, but it would be more effective if it formed part of a Dorset-wide plan, in particular for a zero carbon future. Some elements could be carried out as standalone schemes at local level, but any highway improvements, or changes to cycle routes as part of the national network would need to be considered at County level, or wider.

### 3. Funding

As implied above, the highways budget is a matter for Dorset Council. The limited remits of Town and Parish Councils would only cover local routes and some aspects of parking.

However, part of the car park income from across the area, could legitimately be used for community solutions. Purbeck District Council used to have this income, but now it is collected by DC and it is unknown what percentage of it returns to the local community. Transport Plans in other areas ensure that new developments contribute towards funding transport solutions and the same should apply here. For example, new development, should support additional journeys on bus services in the area affected, as well as improved walking and cycling routes.

### 4. Timing

Certain improvements such as local cycling/walking routes could be carried out quickly, if land purchase and funding could be arranged, but road alterations and car parking facilities would need to be incorporated in DC plans. On the other hand, changes to bus and train timetables to improve coordination should be achievable in the short term, in consultation with the operating companies.

### 5. Outcomes

The notional percentages mentioned above need to be discussed and agreed at an early stage to ensure that the benefits can be quantified.