

LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

NOTES OF A MEETING WITH DORSET COUNCIL – 3 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Emma Scott, Adrian Stuart, Gina Wakely (DTC), Chris Peck, Wayne Sayers (DC)

1. The national initiative for the production of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) was explained. Nationally £2.0Bn of funding would be made available during the life of this Parliament for projects emerging from local LCWIPs.
2. Dorset Council has initially prioritised the east of the county, recognising the potential for improved links between the BCP conurbation and larger centres of population including Ferndown and Wimborne, which in turn will now be included in a bid to the Transforming Cities Fund. This work is now largely completed. At the same time a call for schemes across the county generated over 1,000 ideas.
3. Following completion of the eastern plan, it was intended that the focus would turn to the Dorchester-Weymouth-Portland corridor in early 2020, but Covid 19 events overtook this. The Covid 19 lockdown has had two impacts
 - Inevitably it slowed down work on the development of the LCWIP for this area
 - Instead DC were required to respond to a Government led initiative to respond to opportunities to use highway space to promote increased cycling and walking opportunities, using the Emergency Action Travel Fund (EATF)
4. The EATF received £250M of the funding initially set aside for the LCWIPs, with funding being allocated based on historic public transport usage, which favours city rather than rural areas. Dorset Council received £125,000 under tranche 1 of the funding, which was primarily used to introduce pavement widening schemes and TROs. While a scheme was discussed for Trinity St in Dorchester this was ultimately not implemented.
5. An indicative allocation of £462,000 to Dorset has been suggested for tranche 2 of the EATF, although Dorset Council have submitted projects totalling £700,000. The emphasis is on schemes that can be completed quickly, which inevitably meant that schemes emerging from the LCWIP for the eastern part of the county were more developed.
6. Notwithstanding this two schemes for Dorchester are under consideration, based on previous experience of where walking and cycling improvements could be introduced
 - A designated pathway along Fairfield Road to link Weymouth Avenue and Maumbury Road, achieved by removing parking spaces on one side of Fairfield Road
 - Taking advantage of planned resurfacing works, the introduction of a cycleway heading east on Bridport Road, roughly between Poundbury and Dorset County Hospital, again achieved in part by removing short term parking spaces

These embryonic ideas have been the subject of preliminary discussions with Dorset Councillors, but are contingent on there being both local support and EATF funding.

7. Discussion also covered whether it was appropriate to include the closure of Colliton St as another possible EATF scheme, with the Clerk reminding Dorset Council that any decision on this point needed to be part of research covering the much larger area around North Square and its relationship to High Street and Cornhill.
8. The focus of work is now returning to the LCWIP for Dorchester, Weymouth and Portland, including areas within a 5km radius, which allows consideration of the routes into Dorchester from nearby villages. A research phase will be followed by engagement, including with this Committee, leading to a draft plan and hopefully a funding request to Government during the life of this Parliament.
9. It remains unclear at present how the plan will take account of the temporary or permanent impacts of lockdown on the town's economy; nor is it any clearer when the town will see the previously promised Traffic and Parking Plan and how the two plans will relate to each other.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk