

West Dorset Partnership
30 October 2017

Notes of the West Dorset Partnership meeting held on 30 October 2017 at South Walks House, Dorchester.

Present:

Organisation	Name
Chairman	Paul Overall
Beaminster & Villages LAP	Rosemary Beeny
Bridport Local Area Partnership	Maureen Jackson and Katy Graham
Dorchester Community Forum	Emma Scott
LymeForward	Wendy Davies and Adrian Ragbourne
Magna Housing Association	Sharon Ball
Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils	Cllr Alan Thacker
West Dorset District Council/Dorset Councils Partnership	Matt Prosser (Chief Executive DCP), Cllr Ian Gardner (WDDC), Cllr A Alford (WDDC), Jane Nicklen (Community Planning & Development Manager), Susan Ward-Rice (Community Development Team Leader), Hugh Delong (Community Led Development Officer), Linda Quinton (Democratic Services Officer) .

Apologies:

Organisation	Name
Dorset Councils Partnership	Hilary Jordan & Stephen Hill
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service	Jason Rogers
Dorset Community Action	Alex Picot
Magna Housing	David Aldwinckle and Christine Bolland
Natural England	John Stobart
Age UK	Lisal Holmes
Dorset Police	Ian Roe
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Maria Clarke

Also Attending :

Brian Wilson	Rural England & Rural Services Network
Amanda Evans, Gordon Sneddon, Elizabeth Shaw	Dorset County Council
Phillip Sankey	WATAG
Julian English, Fiona Kent-Ledger and Erica Pretty	POPP representatives

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all parties present to the meeting , the theme for which was Rural Transport. Each attendee introduced themselves.

2 LGR Update – Dorset Council’s Partnership

Matt Prosser, Chief Executive of the DCP spoke on the latest position with regard to the local government review in Dorset. A “ minded to” decision from the Secretary of State was still awaited, following a meeting between the Leaders and Chief Executives of the different Councils and Rt Hon Sajid Javid at the DCLG in September.

In the meantime, the Dorset Authorities were collectively working towards the possibility of a new authority being created by April 2019, however, the later the decision, the tighter the timetable to achieve this.

A joint committee comprising representatives of the County Council, East, West and North Dorset councils, Weymouth and Portland and Purbeck District council had met twice to date and was chaired by Cllr Rebecca Knox of the County Council.

In response to questions, Mr Prosser advised that no details at this stage had been forthcoming with regard to community planning and parish councils’ input. Any information would be pushed out as and when it became available. A significant factor of the reorganisation was who would provide which services.

The Chairman thanked Mr Prosser for joining the meeting.

3 Rural Transport – A rural perspective

Members received a detailed presentation from Brian Wilson of the Rural Services Network.

Rural England had undertaken an exploration into the following issues with regard to rural communities:

- Buses and community transport
- Welfare services
- Access to cash
- Further education
- The retail sector
- Mental health services
- Older people’s services
- Public health services
- Community assets

The study also examined the travel needs of individuals in rural areas and car ownership in relation to income brackets.

Members heard that nationally, between 2014 – 2016, 346 bus services had been withdrawn and 522 reduced or altered. Dorset was one of the most affected counties in this regard. Mr Wilson highlighted alternative methods of transport for rural areas including community transport, vehicle sharing and negotiation with commercial operators. Members heard of initiatives that were used in rural areas in Lincolnshire and Suffolk, situated in between larger settlements. Neighbourhood schemes also existed, to assist vulnerable people in communities with their transport needs for

shopping and medical appointments, etc, however this was heavily reliant on volunteers. There was a significant number of such schemes throughout the country and varying models of delivery.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wilson for his informative presentation.

4. Dorset Travel: Rural Transport Provision.

Gordon Sneddon and Amanda Evans from the County Council gave a detailed presentation on rural transport provision in the County.

A public and school transport review had been undertaken last year following a reduction in subsidy of £1m for public transport and £850,000 in school transport. These savings had to be achieved within the current financial year 2017/18. Remaining subsidy would be used for the core route network and transport for a number of middle and secondary schools was available for public use. Community Transport schemes could feed into the core network. Within the presentation were slides showing the proposed wider area transport network for Dorset inter urban and mainstream home to school.

Amanda Evans presented an overview of Community Transport schemes operating in Dorset and the benefits that were achieved for people in isolated areas with no means of transport. Options included:

- Dial-a-Bus
- Volunteer community car schemes
- Car share (carsharedorset.com)
- Taxi share
- Car Clubs (Co-Cars)

There were currently 64 established schemes and 31 trial schemes in operation, with more than 720 volunteer drivers. The Community Transport Team at DCC had created a tool kit to assist in setting up a transport scheme and included:

- Gathering evidence and identifying need
- Setting up and operating a scheme
- Funding
- Marketing and publicity
- Useful contacts list.

Grants were available for capital, revenue and match funding and seed funding was also available from POPP (Partnerships for older people programme). Further information was available on the Dorset For you website and it was anticipated that the use of social media and the internet would encourage community engagement. There was a drive to involve the younger generation.

The Partnership discussed the Community Transport Scheme with contributions from the POPP representatives and the following points were made:

- There is an assumption that the DCC core routes are secure;
- Commercial operators have withdrawn services in the past

- POPP representatives are trying to work collaboratively with providers
- POPP acts as a channel for peoples' frustrations
- Some TAGs (Transport Action Groups) are failing
- DCC are in dialogue with the operators
- The Seed funding of up to £2,000 can be for items such as a phone or a laptop
- Schemes are run by the community for the community
- Needs are checked when bids are received
- Finding volunteers is a significant problem
- The impact of the public service licence is awaited and could impact
- Peak days need to be identified (Maiden Newton reduced from 5 to 2 days per week)
- Should not assume everyone has access to the internet
- Apps may not work where phone reception is particularly poor
- Public checks for volunteers are essential
- Bus timetables are not readily available any more
- Supermarkets could/used to provide shopper transport (S106 money from Blandford Lidl had been used for a bus service)
- TAGs could negotiate with DCC to tailor routes
- A 2012 survey identified big gaps in medical transport
- TAGs are reliant on Parish Council reps with transport experience
- The CCG are launching a consultation on how to access medical appointments – LAPs think this should be more co-ordinated
- Transport officers work across borders into neighbouring counties
- Parish councils had set up CTGs in Thorncombe, Bere Regis, Sixpenny Handley, Stratton and all parishes between Blandford & Salisbury
- Younger involvement and volunteers was seen as a barrier
- School use of commercial buses was restricting public use during those routes and times. DCC was looking to find a balance in this respect.
- The viability of towns was reliant on village transport .

The Chairman thanked Gordon Sneddon and Amanda Evans for their informative presentations.

5. Notes of the last meeting.

The notes of the previous meeting on 20 February 2017 were agreed.

Matters arising :

- The Housing Enabling Team Leader would be asked to return to the next Partnership meeting for an update on affordable housing provision in the District.
- The Draft Local Plan would be going out to consultation next year. Last year's housing figures were just below the threshold and the Council was close to delivering a 5 year housing land supply.
- Draft minutes to be circulated and published (in draft form) as soon as as possible after the meeting.

- Minutes of the Annual General Meeting to be amended to reflect designations and for re-publishing and signing at the next AGM.
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6. WDP Annual Report

J Nicklen would re-circulate the annual report to all Partnership members for agreement and to publish on the Dorset For You website.

7. LAP matters and partner updates – reports previously circulated.

Bridport – in negotiations with DCC to address rough sleepers and the use of a building. Do not neglect town and parish meetings in the LGR discussions.

Dorchester – better networking was being established, whatever the LGR decision.

Lyme Regis – nothing to add – a full report had been circulated.

Beaminster – Dementia Friendly was meeting monthly and had appointed a new chairman and an AGM was held in September after 18 months of operation.

8. Date and theme of next meeting.

Monday 22 January 2018, 10am at South Walks House.

The changes in housing policy and legislation to be the theme.

LGR update to be provided.

The meeting closed at 12.20pm.

Chairman

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