

Public Transport in SWT Task and Finish Group

08.02.21

Attendees: Cllr L Whetlor (Chair), Cllr J Hassall, Cllr D Mansell, Cllr A Trollope-Bellew, Cllr B Weston, Cllr K Wheatley

Others: M Prouse, N Bryant, B Chetwode (Travel Watch Southwest)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No Apologies were received.

No Declarations of Interest were made in relation to any item on the Agenda.

2. Notes of previous Task and Finish Group – 05/01/2020

These were noted.

3. Update from Group Members

- Councillor Keith Wheatley provided an update on the meeting he had held along with Cllr Perry with Richard Huish College around their transport issues.
- Cllr Weston reminded Councillors of the testimony given by Citizens Somerset and especially the 28 Bus and examples of children being missed and left behind.
- Councillor Trollope-Bellew noted there had been issues with the buses not going through Stogumber or Lydeard St. Lawrence.
- Councillor Hassall stated that a Double Decker to Bishops Lydeard was feasible and would help with capacity.

4. Round table discussion/Follow-up on strands identified

- Nick Bryant (Assistant Director Strategic Place Planning for SWT) was in attendance to discuss the Workplace Parking Levy. It had been used to fund the metro system in Nottingham. Questions of how easy to do in a 2 tier area?
- TDBC had done previous good work in this area in Green Travel Planning.
- Suggested if wish to progress this matter needed to be done through the Internal Operations Directorate.
- Councillors raised matters around air quality, contributions being used towards the Park and Ride and the powers of a Unitary Council.
- Councillors were clear this would be a cost for the employer and not for the employee.
- The scheme could disincentives commuting journeys and raise funds.
- A question was raised as to whether the Climate Strategy said anything about Public Transport and this was confirmed.
- Discussion on bypassing the Kingston Road gyratory. Kilkenny/Obridge Yard – give consideration to public transport.
- Policy Making perspective – these ideas captured for a future authority.

- Caveat – report of this group would probably be a direction of travel for a Unitary to pick up and run with.
- Bryony Chetwode (Travel watch Southwest CIC) introduced herself. They had input into regional government, national and local policy. Public Transport enables human interaction and expedition.
- Critical friend of bus and rail operators and acting as a facilitator. Help to reduce carbon and seek funds from central government.
- Explainer to SWT Departments – transport touches everything.
- Government Bus Strategy about to come out.
- Mentioned Lincolnshire work – first and last mile. Reliability and connection.
- Issues around reliability – bus operators would suggest is caused by cars.
- Park and Ride was a fantastic opportunity for the Council to build on e.g. facilities, encouraging take up.
- Benefits of having out of town stores – node (point or pathway at which traffic intersects) – electric buses to them?
- Consultation – most user groups recommend 9 months. Talk through implications.
- Discussion on closure of East Street – single and 2 person occupiers living nearby in poor health. Businesses such as audiologists and eyesight for people in need.
- ‘Public Transport is Active Travel’
- Leisure – people have a new flexibility. Opportunity to re-plan directions people are taking.
- Cllrs felt that quality of vehicles was considered key – rather than reliability or affordability.
- Tourist Levy – what more would that give us?
- Franchising Situation – money given by central government.
- First Group will be given bonuses around being carbon able, commuting by bus, green share portfolios.
- Social Good – public health aspect of public transport
- 9 months consultation was considered too ambitious
- Focus Groups – TravelWatch SW can link the Task and Finish group with bus user groups if so wished.
- First and Last Mile – Covid Parish Councils – Villages – 3 or 4 electric buses.
- First Bus Leeds – looking at getting more bums on seats – funding linked.
- CIL Cranbrook – Stagecoach – planning – transport and new homes.

5. Next Steps/Work Plan

- The Survey Questions had been revised by Councillor Mansell and were agreed for finalisation.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was identified for the 15th March 2021.
The meeting closed at 6pm.