



The countryside charity
Dorset

1st March 2024

SUBMISSION TO CONSULTATION ON LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 (LTP4)

Dorset CPRE would like to make the following points in response to the call for submissions to contribute to the drafting of LTP4.

Our submission is to highlight key areas that should be addressed in LTP4 to ensure that transport policy over the next fifteen years supports the economic and social wellbeing of all residents and so the prosperity of Dorset and BCP overall.

Summary

The five key areas we would suggest for prioritisation in LTP4 are:

- The importance of maintaining access to public transport for all communities, reversing the declining provision of bus services particularly in rural areas
- That long term impact on transport should be integrated into all other aspects of Council responsibilities e.g. planning and education
- The opportunity to support the provision of new, innovative approaches to car transport, including taxis and better use of private cars
- The promotion of active travel, including the maintenance of highways, cycle paths, pavements and footpaths
- Initiatives that reduce carbon emissions and promotion of low-carbon modes of transport

Our comments in detail

The comments have been structured against the headings set out by the Council. An overall observation we have is that a strategic approach to transport is needed. This must lead to funded implementation plans. Our elected representatives both locally and nationally should be supported in seeking national funding which is currently inadequate.

We look forward to receiving a copy of the Draft Plan to comment on in advance of this being considered by the Councils.

1. Improving transport across both rural and urban areas

The overriding message is that all residents should have access to public transport, not least recognising how many people do not have access to private cars. The national CPRE [Every Village, Every Hour campaign](#) provides compelling evidence of the importance of transport to sustainable thriving rural communities.

It is essential that transport planning is integrated with the planning of other areas. Transport plans must consider highways calibre and maintenance, employment patterns, housing, tourism and other generators of traffic. This includes sustainable long-term provision of public transport being part of all planning for housing and employment. For example, the transport plan associated with a new housing development must not only cover transport for the new housing but also look at the impact on the surrounding area.

Planning for transport should not only take place in the context of new developments. e.g. giving parish councils powers to vary speed limits.

Dorset and BCP transport plans need to dovetail with those of adjoining areas so that public transport is available to towns in neighbouring counties both for access to services in those towns and for onward transport links.

Mobility Hubs will be successful if they account access by private transport as well as public transport.

As also highlighted in later sections, taxi-sharing and car-sharing should be key parts of transport provision. Current regulations exclude the scope for developing car services suitable for villages.

Over the next fifteen years, there will be increasing potential from AI and autonomous vehicles.

2. Ensuring all ages and abilities can access services

Priority should be given to those who don't have use of private cars. We can learn from examples from other localities both nationally and internationally, including post buses; shared car and shared taxi schemes.

Dial-A-Ride schemes and Community Transport schemes should be supported, funded and promoted. Current inadequate funding threatens the continuation of these valuable schemes.

Existing volunteer driver schemes, e.g. to medical appointments, can be very valuable. They not only benefit the passenger but also enhance the wellbeing of the volunteer and community cohesion.

3. Making it easier for people to be more physically active

Poorly maintained road surfaces discourage cycling and so need to be addressed. Cycle hire schemes can be very valuable, including for tourists from car parks at the edge of areas attracting high tourist numbers.

Safe cycling routes too often disappear in high traffic urban areas.

Walking routes need to be identified, signposted and maintained.

It should, however, be noted that distances may preclude cycling as a way of accessing shops from outside a town and its immediate hinterland.

An example of integrated planning for active travel is Poundbury (though it does not connect well to Dorchester). Such an approach can be applied to existing residential areas, not just new developments.

4. More opportunities for affordable, available and accessible public transport

To divert people from car usage requires confidence in the long-term provision of public transport. This is not currently the case where bus services are all too easily lost where deemed commercially not viable.

The Concessionary Fare scheme needs revising so that bus operators can recover their full costs. The Councils, local organisations and our Members of Parliament should be calling on central government to conduct such a review.

Bus Service Improvement Plans must be funded.

Regulation needs changing to enable local residents to provide informal shared rides to their neighbours.

Schemes where you can purchase a 'passport' to cover travel and sightseeing admissions can be successfully promoted to visitors.

5. Helping people feel safer on our roads and on public transport

Properly lit and maintained bus shelters encourage greater use.

Maintenance of road services including pavements is needed to enable and encourage safe active travel. Poor maintenance means some routes are dangerous.

More attention should be given to contingency planning for recurrent adverse weather conditions to maintain accessibility in rural areas.

6. Reducing congestion and carbon emission

The use of e-powered cars and bikes can be encouraged by ensuring there is sufficient charging infrastructure. Taking more transport off the roads, e.g. to rail and to drones should be encouraged.

Supermarket delivery services reduce car usage, though this might contribute to reduced provision of local shops which can also reduce car journeys.

Scheme such as coach travel into Weymouth for the Olympics from remote car parks have been successful. This can be a model for 'long distance park+ride' to keep car traffic well away from crowded areas.

Greater use of shared car schemes would be environmentally better than large buses carrying very few passengers. Alongside buses, shared car schemes also help reduce pressure on car parking spaces.

Mobile services e.g. libraries or outreach doctors surgeries can help reduce car journeys.

7. Improving digital and real time information

Attention also needs to be given to ensuring those without digital access are not excluded. It is important to ensure greater digital access for all.

There must be provision for those who want to use cash to pay for bus, rail and parking.