

Developing Local Transport Plan Partnership working in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset

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(1) Scene Setting – Where is Dorset, how is it currently structured and what are the common themes within the county.

- Dorset lies within the South West of England and is beyond the main strategic National Transport Corridors (as defined by DaSTs.)
- It therefore suffers from a degree of peripherality even within the South West;
- It has very poor transport links to the west and north and no likelihood of significant improvements in the immediate future;
- The current boundaries of Dorset were established in the Local Government Reorganisation of 1974;
- In 1997 the Boroughs of Bournemouth and Poole were taken out of Dorset and became two separate Unitary Authorities;
- Whilst this was sensible for political reasons, it was a disaster for strategic transport planning and made the preparation of Local Transport Plans particularly difficult;
- The remainder of Dorset is now a two tier authority with 6 District/Borough councils;
- Partnership working is essential to achieve good strategic transport planning and maximise the available investment opportunities.
- A common theme throughout the Dorset sub region is that there is an outstanding natural environment, including: a World Heritage Coastline; very large areas of national and international heathland designations; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and significant historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the area;
- Whilst these are significant assets they also impose physical constraints to developing the economy and improving transport links;
- Tourism is another common factor across the sub-region. There is potential for the development of higher value tourism building on conference facilities centred on Bournemouth; the designation of Jurassic Coast World Heritage site also provides further potential for tourism growth;

(2) Challenges facing an effective partnership.

- Principally the biggest challenge is the local government structure as already described.
- Whilst there are a number of common themes across the area as indicated above there is also great diversity within the area covered by the joint plan;
- Dorset is a coastal county with major coastal towns of significant and varying importance; Bournemouth, Poole, Weymouth, Swanage and Lyme Regis;
- In between – the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site – a significant national and international attraction; The Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site is England's first natural World Heritage Site. It covers 95 miles of truly stunning coastline from East Devon to Swanage, with rocks recording 185 million years of the Earth's history;
- Away from the coast is a substantial area of high quality country side, including the market towns of Wimborne, Blandford, Dorchester, Bridport and Sherborne.
- Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers over 1100 square kilometres and is the fifth largest in England and Wales. It covers about 42% of the county
- In contrast South East Dorset is now the largest conurbation on the South Coast and is a key economic driver for the South West Region:-

- With a population of 475,000, it is the second largest urban area in the South West;
- South East Dorset has a diverse economy. Overall, the highest proportion of employment is in retail, hotels and catering, banking and finance, public administration, education, and healthcare;
- There are generally adequate road and rail links to London and the South East, although road links to the rest of the South West are poor.
- It is a place that attracts people to live, learn, work, relax and retire. Its significant growth over many years is principally due to the migration of both people and companies, substantially from London and the South East.
- Many people specifically move to the area to retire which leads to particular pressures on Health and Care Services and specialist transport services.
- Dorset will of course host the sailing events for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics games.
- The sub region therefore covers a very diverse area covering both rural and urban, coastal and inland market towns; agriculture and industry. With this comes a wide range of diverse transport issues. These include:-
 - Increasing traffic congestion in the main transport corridors of SE Dorset and between Dorchester and Weymouth;
 - The influx of tourist in the summer compounding congestion levels;
 - The poor standard of the main east-west trunk road through the county and poor links to the north and west;
 - Whilst bus passenger numbers are increasing on the main corridors there are reductions elsewhere as the commercial operators, faced with increasing financial pressures contract their networks;
 - This leaves some rural areas and even smaller towns poorly served leading to accessibility difficulties. This is compounded by post office closures and changes in the way some services are provided;
 - Pressure to impose transport solutions that would adversely impact on Dorset's unique environmental assets.

(3) Recent History of partnership working

- 1974 to 1997 the whole of Dorset was a two tier authority with 8 District/Borough authorities; four of whom had agency arrangements for highways and transport;
- 1993 to 1997 Bournemouth and Poole Package Bid. This was part of the Transport, Policies and Programmes (TPP) process;
- 1997 Local Government Reorganisation – Bournemouth & Poole became separate Unitary Authorities. Rest of Dorset was Two Tier; Bournemouth and Poole Package Bid became part of a in a separate TPP;
- 2001 The first Local Transport Plan – Two LTPs prepared for for the area:
 - (1) Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch
 - (2) Rest of Dorset/Rural Dorset
- 2006 The second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) – Again Two LTPs for the area:
 - (1) South East Dorset – Urban focused – based on Travel to Work area;
 - (2) Rest of Dorset (excluding SE Dorset) - Rural focus;
- LTP2 Joint Working arrangements
 - Joint Planning and Transport Committee across three authorities – but little involvement in LTP2;
 - Wider Transport Advisory group for Consultation on LTP matters;
 - Joint Officer working only at LTP Manager level;
 - and Road Safety Partnership;
 - Final decisions on LTP2 made by each authorities Cabinet;

(4) Emerging arrangements for LTP3

- 2011 >> LTP3 – One Multi Area Agreement (MAA) and one Local Transport Plan for the whole area;
- now agreed jointly by the three Chief Executives of the three authorities;
- LTP3 – Drivers for Joint Working
 - Principally the Multi Area Agreement;- Ensures consistency of Objectives;
 - **The vision of the MAA is to develop a strongly performing economy, characterised by a greater concentration of higher skilled, higher paid, jobs than now and to do this while respecting and protecting the area’s unique environmental assets;**
 - Possible cost savings in LTP production and delivery;
 - Simplifies Consultation arrangements;
 - East Dorset District originally split between 2 LTP areas which caused confusion and uncertainty;
 - One LTP strongly supported by DfT and GOSW.
- LTP3 – Governance Arrangements
 - Regular Meetings of 3 Portfolio Holders;
 - MAA Board;
 - Sub Regional Directors meeting;
 - Nomination of lead authority = Borough of Poole;
 - Joint Transport Officer Working Group;
 - Joint LTP Project Group – meets at least once a week;
 - Supported by partnering consultants – who also undertake Peer Review and SEA.
- LTP3 – Work Apportionment
 - Modal/Topic Strategies identified along with other work streams;
 - Contacts established for each authority but with lead authority/workstream leader;
 - Only selected strategies can be resourced prior to April 2011;
 - Managed through simple Workstream Management Tool – reviewed regularly by Project Group;
 - Disputes resolved through firstly DJTOG, then Head of Service (Poole) – but ultimately Director’s or Leader’s meetings.
- LTP3 – Resource Apportionment
 - As far as possible work is apportioned evenly across the authorities;
 - Where possibly work is allocated to pockets of strength or expertise within each authority;
 - Use of partnering consultants in certain areas to resolve differences;
 - Requires a good deal of “give and take” and commitment throughout the authorities to the cause of joint working;
 - Eased by the fact that the 3 LTP managers have each been in post for each authority for over 10 years.
- LTP3 – Involvement of District Councils
 - Within Dorset there are 6 District/Borough Councils who are statutory consultees;
 - Long History of liaison at County/District level;
 - Annual Consultation liaison meetings at member level:- Used for LTP consultation;
 - Strong Transport Planning input to Local Plans/LDF process from County Staff;
 - Integration of LTP3/LDF consultation processes where this is possible.
- LTP3 – Possible problems with Partnership working
 - 3 LTP Managers currently spend a high proportion of their time talking to each other rather than progressing the plan.
 - Each authority has, to differing degrees, become inward looking, rather than having the strategic overview required for a Joint Plan;

- Disagreements at officer/member level – possible delays in producing plan elements.
- Future differing political commitment/allegiances;
- All recorded and managed through Risk Register.
- LTP3 – Project Control - Summary
 - Clear Governance Arrangements;
 - Project Plan developed and will be kept under control through regular formal meetings;
 - Risk Register will record and monitor the risks and identify mitigation measures;
 - Use of Limehouse Publishing Package to ease document control.

(5) Joint Evidence Gathering

- In SE Dorset a major transport study is underway that will inform the Joint LTP3;
- This includes development of Multi Modal Traffic Model (SEMMTS);
- This will provide basis for developing business cases for major scheme bids to improve the A31 Trunk Road, give improved access to the airport and develop improved bus corridors within the conurbation;
- Originally the focus of SEMMTS was to inform a SE Dorset focused LTP;
- However it is anticipated that given current RSS proposals for growth, SE Dorset will be the focus for development and infrastructure investment in the next 15/20 years. The timescales are consistent with LTP3;
- Wide range of funding partners including:- HA;DfT;GOSW;SWC;SWRDA
- In the rest of Dorset a number of studies have been completed or are in hand that will inform both the LDF s of each District Council area and the LTP;
- Separate consultation will also take place, which will include a dedicated web site, focus groups, workshops and exhibitions;
- Where possible joint LTP/LDF consultation events are currently taking place;
- LTP3 – Joint Consultation - Consultation will come together mid way through preparation period,
- September 2009 will see publication of joint high level strategy document;
- Consultation on one plan through Autumn 2010.

(6) Finally - Our objectives for a Joint LTP3

- To publish a final joint Dorset LTP3 by 31 March 2011 in line with DfT guidance;
- It is our current intention not to separate out different geographic part of the area in our strategy, but to focus on a common set of outcomes;
- These outcomes might include:-
- To achieve positive feedback from Government which adds credibility to future bids to DfT;
- To carry out necessary consultation to inform the strategy;
- To align the LTP3 with RSS / LDFs/ MAA / LAAs / Community Strategies;
- To produce associated statutory documents e.g Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment etc;
- To fully incorporate the findings of the South East Dorset Multi-modal Study;
- To produce a document that is accessible, concise and user friendly to the general public.