

28 JUNE 2021

BRIDPORT ACCESS & MOVEMENT STUDY

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the final report of the Access & Movement Study for approval, and to recommend further actions for its incorporation into relevant future projects/developments.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (BANP) sets out 'Access For All' policy ambitions for the centre of Bridport. The long-term aspiration is to make it easier to walk, cycle and use public transport in and around the neighbourhood plan area, with the aim of reducing reliance on the car. BANP sets out three linked projects, focused on developing proposals to improve and enhance the centre of Bridport:

- Exploring improvements to access & movement;
- Exploring enhancement of the public realm; and
- A detailed heritage interpretation scheme.

- 2.2 The first project undertaken in partnership with Dorset Council involved a thorough assessment of the available evidence of traffic and transport issues – the Access & Movement Study. The Town Council commissioned Streets Reimagined and Highgate Transportation as specialist consultants to inform the evidence gathering and develop options for improving access and movement around the centre of Bridport.
- 2.3 The consultants incorporated all available evidence into the study, and engaged widely with the community. An interactive website, supported by meetings with interest groups, helped ensure that local views and opinions about access were captured and shared as part of the study. For those without internet access, written submissions were accepted and incorporated.
- 2.4 The Town Centre Working Group, bringing together representatives of a wide range of interests in the town, met twice during Spring 2021 to act as a 'sounding board' for the Access & Movement Study.
- 2.5 The focus of the study was the centre of Bridport, but the consultants also considered the wider context of the town.

3.0 Project Phases

- 3.1 The following project phases have now been completed:
- **Stage 1 – Review January to February 2021** – During this phase, all relevant previous studies and community consultation exercises were reviewed.

- **Stage 2 – Research & Analysis March to April 2021** – This phase incorporated spatial and movement analysis. As part of this, the consultants undertook targeted outreach to a diverse range of local user groups, to build a picture of the different lived experiences of accessing and moving around the town centre. An online interactive map was open, to enable people to undertake their own analysis and contribute ideas, comments etc. 6,000 people engaged, with almost 300 ideas submitted.
- **Stage 3 – Developing Options April to June 2021** – Drawing on all the analysis and research, a number of illustrated options were developed and presented to the Town Centre Working Group for comment.

3.2 The original estimated cost of the Study was £10,000. With the aid of a £5,000 grant, the net cost to the Town Council to date is £4,000,

4.0 Project Outputs

4.1 The Access & Movement Study is now complete and the final report is presented to the Committee for consideration. Please use the following links to view the final report:

- [Research & Analysis](#)
- [Options Development](#)
- [Supporting Evidence](#)

4.2 The Study recommended additional analysis to assess the potential for high quality and direct walking and cycling links between Vearse Farm and Bridport town centre. The cost of this additional work is estimated at £2,000.

5.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

5.1 The final report provides the Town Council with a clear prognosis/narrative that has been 'tested' on local people, about the access and movement challenge facing Bridport:

- A growing town with an ageing population;
- A traffic system that is operating near to capacity at certain times of the day/year;
- Highly valued green/social spaces;
- Some good examples of walking and cycling routes, but lacking join up and connections to become a 'natural' choice for short journeys; and
- Issues with junctions and surfaces, links and crossings.

5.2 It is clear that taking no action to address access and movement around Bridport is not a good option. Supporting improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure is essential, if the town is to cope with a growing and ageing population.

5.3 The Access & Movement Study contains a range of options for action; from small tweaks to more radical ideas, to support the shift to active travel options for short journeys. Some projects have already been planned and costed; others will need further work. All options should be considered over the coming few years and actions undertaken measured against the coherent ambitions set out in the Access & Movement Study.

5.4 How Bridport develops in the future and the choices people make as to how best to move around the town will be shaped by the actions and decisions of a number of organisations; Highways England are responsible for the main A35 Trunk Road around Bridport, and Dorset Council Highways operate the majority of roads in the centre of Bridport. New developments, such as the 760 homes to be built at Vearse Farm, will have a significant impact on the volume and mode of transport used by the new residents. The Access & Movement Study provides the Town Council and others with the evidence and the ideas to

take positive action to help Bridport become a more sustainable travel town. The final report will be used as a tool to influence a range of policy and practical actions in the coming years:

- Dorset Council's review of the Local Transport Plan, due 2021.
- The review of the access & movement policies in the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan.
- Section 106 Agreements with developers.
- The spending of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that committee:

- (i) Notes the findings of the final report.
- (ii) Agrees that the evidence and options should be shared with Highway England, Dorset Council Highways, and developers of the Vearse Farm development.
- (iii) Agrees that the Access & Movement Study report be used as part of the Town Council submission to the Local Transport Plan review, review of the BANP and any transport/town centre policies/programmes developed with Dorset Council or other relevant agencies.
- (iv) Agrees to support the additional works to develop specific options for connecting the Vearse Farm Development to the centre of Bridport.

21 June 2021

Will Austin
Town Clerk