

Transport & Infrastructure summary



Issues

Transport

- Getting into the Forest by road is a key issue.
- HGV access needs to improve to attract new business investment.
- Parking in the towns and capacity is a problem, along with affordability for town centre businesses and their employees
- Forest is very poor in terms of integrated public transport – the whole Forest needs to be better connected. Cinderford links to Gloucester are good by bus but poor elsewhere and so non-car users struggle to get around the Forest.
- Thinking about the Severn Summit and the Glos 2050 consultation - transport connections outside the Forest are equally important. Do not repeat mistakes of the past by looking inward instead of outwards.
- Meetings with GWR are taking place to get more trains stopping at Lydney Station, they are also looking at promotional offers (eg. buy one ticket get one free) to boost tourism. Lydney to Bristol is a real problem with lack of trains stopping at Severn Tunnel. Gloucester to Newport route also needs increased frequency at Lydney. Lydney station needs to be recognised as the transport gateway to the Forest. We also need a second station in the medium-term.
- Agree with need for increase in frequency of trains and more carriages to cope with local events eg. Cheltenham Festival.
- Road connectivity to M5 & M50 must be improved.
- Severn Toll removal – more people will be using the Forest. Road/rail/bus all important particularly for young people seeking to access jobs who may not have access to a car and face lengthy commuting times.
- Forest is the land between two rivers, we need another crossing and it needs to be at Lydney.
- We need radical modal change in the Forest to improve transport – need to look at new technology to assist. Looking into the future traditional car ownership may shift towards access to some form of personal mobility device where you book a slot to use.
- Gloucestershire County Council is researching the need/demand for electric car use, charging point networks at key locations.
- Technology may not be able to solve all the problems. There is a lot of housebuilding in the south of the forest – Chepstow will be a pinch point. Lots of companies need to move goods and need to get in/out of the Forest easily. Lots of investment in Stroud and at Berkeley – how do we access? Lydney could be the true gateway to the Forest. Dean Forest Railway could be part of the commuter route solution.

Infrastructure

- A1 (shops) infrastructure will attract further investment.
- Any new multiple shops/services need to tailor their offer to reflect historic town centres to help retain the Forest's distinctiveness – to stop all town centres looking the same.
- Vantage Point is a good business hub but other sites allocated for new employment uses is not being taken up eg. Hurst Farm site in Lydney.
- Town centres need to be surveyed to identify scope for new housing in vacant shops or to make better use of vacant upper floors. This will help to regenerate the town centres.
- Villages also need to accommodate more housing as well as the town centres.
- Internet speeds and mobile phone issues were all accepted as being poor.
- Can FEP take a role to better promote the Forest's commercial and industrial sites?

Actions/Evidence

- Invite transport operators to join the Sub-Group eg. Network Rail, GWR, Arriva Trains West, Stagecoach.
- Invite commercial agents to join the Sub-Group.
- Lobby Gloucestershire County Council for a fair share of the £470,000 available to promote electric vehicle use.
- Explore how FEP can influence planning policy and planning decision making – could FEP become a consultee?
- Explore community transport needs as an early piece of work for the Sub-Group?
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