

# **Report of the Island Transport Infrastructure Task Force**

**July 2017**

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## Foreword

In September 2016, I was invited by the Isle of Wight Council to Chair a newly formed Transport Infrastructure Task Force (TITF) to consider the infrastructure challenges to economic growth for the Island. It is clear that the Council has set itself an ambitious vision for the Island and is engaged in a positive regeneration programme to aid economic growth on the Island, and critical to its success will be investment in infrastructure.

The TITF has been delighted with the number of organisations that wanted to talk to us and over the past 8 months we have met over 40 organisations to talk about the challenges and opportunities that transport has for Islanders.

As is to be expected a lot of issues were raised, but the overriding issue was in relation to the service that the cross-Solent operators provide for the Island. The Island is in an unusual position in the UK in that all the operators who provide the cross-Solent services are in the private sector and have no public service obligation and no service contract with the local authority or governing body. With a population of nearly 140,000 The Island is by far the largest Island in the UK not connected by a road bridge which currently has no direct influence on the provision of such a critical lifeline services. In many ways the Island gets a good service, but for some the fares are high and in some important respects it does not provide the Island with the service it needs. The TITF has made a critical recommendation to address this aspect and very much hopes that there can be a constructive dialogue between the Island and the operators to address the issues.

We are encouraged that the Island Line franchise has been let with also a clear requirement to engage with The Council over its future.

We discovered that a number of the Island's transport services are good and with focussed investment could provide real additional benefit for the Island.

The issue of traffic congestion around Newport is a big challenge, but we are hopeful the planned investment will help in the short term. However, in the longer term some major investment is likely to be needed.

I would like to thank my fellow Task Force members who gave up so much time and effort to this report on a voluntary basis. We all learnt things about the Island we did not know. The whole process has been very interesting and we are optimistic about the future.

We would like to review early next year how the recommendations we are making are being progressed. We are very committed to helping in whatever way we can to help improve the Islands transport to the benefit of both users and the providers.

Christopher Garnett  
July 2017

## 1 Executive Summary

In November 2014, the Isle of Wight Council (The Council) endorsed the need for a consideration to be given to the infrastructure challenges faced by the Island. Following this, in September 2016, an independent Transport Infrastructure Task Force (TITF) was established and met for the first time.

Since then the TITF has held a series of hearings with a wide range of agencies and interested parties; the TITF is extremely grateful to all who attended and gave evidence at the hearings.

Throughout the hearings there was a strong sense from those that participated that there were clear challenges and opportunities for the Island. These are summarised as follows:

- Cross-Solent Links
- Island Gateways
- Congestion
- Sustainable transport
- Technology

The TITF consider that the following are the principal recommendations that were identified as infrastructure challenges to growth (they are set out in no particular order):

### **Cross-Solent links (including the potential for a fixed link)**

Many of those attending the hearings raised the issue of cross-Solent transport as a potential barrier to growth, particularly the cost of travel. In the interests of the community as a material stakeholder in cross-Solent operations therefore, the TITF recommend to the Council that:

- It convenes and leads a cross-Solent operators' partnership board, to provide meaningful engagement with the cross-Solent operators. The objective of the board would be to work together for mutual benefit of the cross-Solent operators and the economic development of the Island. Amongst other matters the board should consider the impact of new investment on the flexibility of new services; the potential for provision of increased services in evenings and shoulders; and travel offers for those in education or training;
- The Council and partners lobby central government (e.g. NHS England) to get financial assistance for those who have to travel to visit family in hospital;
- An independent study should be undertaken to evaluate the cost benefit analysis and feasibility of a fixed link across the Solent (road or rail).

More detailed discussion and the full recommendations can be found in section 3.1 of this report.

### **Island Gateways**

Island gateways create valuable first impressions of the Island for visitors, and many of those attending the hearings expressed concern about the quality of the current gateways. In addition, they provide for the opportunity to improve connectivity and integrated transport options for those travelling both within and to/from the Island. The TITF recommend to the Council that:

- The terminals at Ryde Esplanade, Cowes and East Cowes are improved.

## Reducing congestion

Key issues emerging from the hearings are that whilst the contract with Island Roads is enabling the Island to upgrade the quality of its roads, congestion remains an issue, particularly on the Newport – Cowes and Newport – Ryde routes. Whilst the TITF has been made aware of plans to address some of the worst areas keeping traffic free flowing is critical to the growth of the local economy. There are concerns with the surface specification for rural road surfaces. Therefore, the TITF recommend to the Council that:

- The funding for Newport junction improvements is welcomed, but should include signalling improvements to ensure improved traffic flows.
- A longer-term strategy for congestion in and around Newport is needed.
- The Council and Island Roads should review the specification for surfacing on minor (rural) roads and in addition ensure that surfacing is taken to the edge of the road where appropriate.

More detailed discussion and the full recommendations can be found in section 3.3 of this report.

## Sustainable transport

A number of parties attending hearings considered that there was a need for further investment in a multi modal approach to transport on the Island, including opportunities for walking and cycling, and access to means of travel other than the car. Attendees were concerned about the lack of maintenance on footpaths and bridleways.

It was reported that Southern Vectis generally provides a good service and the Council needs to ensure services are continued, and that opportunities to enhance community services are fully explored. Given the tourism nature of the Island opportunities for improved ticket initiatives for the occasional user would be beneficial.

First MTR have recently been announced as the new franchise holder for Island Line. The future sustainability of Island Line was a key element of the franchise award from the Department for Transport (DfT), due to the ongoing financial cost of the service and infrastructure improvements needed.

Considerable investment in sustainable transport related projects has been undertaken in recent years and in the interests of enabling the developing a multi modal approach to transport the TITF recommend to the Council that:

- In order to identify and develop options for reducing the cost of Island Line over the longer term the Council will need to work closely with First MTR, DfT Rail and Network Rail;
- To bring about the modernisation of the Island Line, including the introduction of a service operating to a 30-minute frequency and investment in the future sustainability of Island Line, the Council will need to fully engage with the new franchise owners;
- To inform investment in improvements to and new routes for sustainable transport, including ensuring routes are properly planned end to end the Council should develop a local

cycling and walking investment strategy, to include the completion of the Newport – East Cowes route;

- Assess the feasibility of corridor improvements for bus services;
- Review the funding for maintenance of footpaths and bridleways.

More detailed discussion and the full recommendations can be found in sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 of this report.

## **Greater use of technology**

The Island is home to a number of world class digital businesses and this puts the Island in a position to take full advantage of the expertise that is locally based to drive economic growth. The Island has the potential to offer more environmentally friendly transport services, including through the provision of electric car and bicycle charging points. Improvements to digital services will remove current barriers to the introduction of integrated information and smart ticketing. Therefore the TITF recommends that:

- Building on the Island’s expertise in digital technology, the Council should work with the digital sector to explore how and where the delivery of improved digital services can be accelerated.
- To improve accessibility across transport modes, and provide the ability to introduce integrated travel information for bus, train and cross-Solent operators, the Council should work with mobile technology companies to improve network coverage across the Island. Additionally, the transport providers should ensure their services are Wi-Fi enabled for passengers.
- The Council work with transport operators to encourage them to introduce smart ticketing opportunities (for example, Solent Go, Smart ticketing cards) and in particular multi operator use smart payment opportunities.
- National Rail information at Waterloo should include information on the Island and gateways.
- The Council should investigate future investment opportunities for alternative transport modes e.g. hydrogen fuel and other low-carbon fuels; innovation in sustainable transport and/or autonomous vehicles.

More detailed discussion and the full recommendations can be found in section 3.2 of this report.

## 2 Introduction

In November 2014, the Council endorsed the need for a consideration to be given to the infrastructure challenges faced by the Island. Following this, in early 2015, representatives from the Council, with the Island's MP, met with the Minister for Transport to discuss a proposal to establish an independently chaired Transport Infrastructure Task Force (TITF) for the Island.

In the summer of 2016 the Council asked Christopher Garnett to chair an independent review of the Island's transport infrastructure and the issues that needed to be addressed to improve the Island's economy. The independent TITF was established and met for the first time in September 2016; the list of members is shown in **Appendix 1**.

The vision of the TITF was to consider a multi modal transport system for the Isle of Wight that is safe, secure, accessible and affordable; and which promotes economic development and underpins the social and environmental wellbeing of the Island community.

The objectives and scope of works of the TITF are set out in full in **Appendix 2**, but in summary were to:

- be mindful of the economic logic of infrastructure challenges and requirements;
- assist the Council in preparing an integrated Island wide transport infrastructure and services development plan ensuring that transport services to/from and on the Island are safe, secure, accessible and affordable;
- prepare a capital investment strategy to enable the implementation of the infrastructure development plan (over the medium term 5-10 years) and associated sustainable revenue forecasts to support its delivery.

The TITF met monthly and a sub-group has met 37 different organisations, which either provide transport services for the Island or have views on the services provided.

During the hearings it became clear that the scope of the work that the TITF could undertake would need to be reduced, and it became more focussed on consideration of transport related issues that would support economic growth on the Island.

Therefore the TITF has not identified potential funding streams, nor has it considered how to ensure that changes to the infrastructure have a positive impact on the visual environment and maximise opportunities to reduce the Island's overall carbon footprint as this is something that should be built into the design and delivery of infrastructure and services.

### 2.1 The Island

With a population of 140,000, the Island is unique within the UK in having all its' mainland links provided by private sector companies with no public service obligation and/or no community-based service level agreement.

The Island is linked to the mainland by six cross Solent routes, three of which carry both vehicles and foot passengers and three operate only for foot passengers.

In 2016, circa 2.4m visitors used ferry services to access the Island, generating an estimated £296m contribution to the local economy<sup>1</sup>. 5.5% of Island residents in employment rely on ferries for daily commuting to the mainland, this approximately includes 730 commuters to Portsmouth, 570 to London, and 520 to Southampton<sup>2</sup> Conversely, an estimated 3.7% of Island jobs are filled by mainland residents who commute to the Island.

The Isle of Wight is well known for the quality of its environment, with its landscapes and coastlines enjoying a high level of special designation and protection. Whilst this helps to give the Island its unique character, it also presents us with the challenge of protecting, conserving and enhancing the environment, whilst at the same time facilitating regeneration and development.

The Island Plan Core Strategy plans for 8,320 new dwellings by 2027. This equates to 520 dwellings per year over the plan period. The majority of this new development is planned to occur within and around the main urban areas, along with planned economic growth on employment sites.

In addition, the core strategy has identified that infrastructure improvements to facilitate the planned level of housing and employment will need to be in place by 2020 at the following locations:

- St Mary's roundabout
- Coppins Bridge
- Hunnyhill / Hunnycross and Riverway junction
- Medina Way via Coppins Bridge to the Asda Roundabout

The Island also has a range of employment sites with various property options, totalling over 26 hectares of development with the potential to generate nearly 7,000 jobs, including:

- St Cross Business Park: 13.4 hectares, Gurit and Vestas as anchor tenants, speculative office space and flexible office space in the Innovation Centre (3,000 jobs);
- Venture Quays: 2.6 hectare site, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) owned waterfront mixed development site (600 jobs);
- Osborne Technology Park: a 4 hectare site, (HCA) owned serviced site adjacent to GKN Aerospace (1650 jobs);
- Kingston Marine Park: 6.4 hectares, (HCA) owned serviced employment site with some water access (1,500 jobs).

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism South East (2016) *Isle of Wight Visitor Monitor*

<sup>2</sup> Census 2011: Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work



The Island requires growth and investment to address the long-term sustainability of public services and the future economic prosperity of the Island. The following targets have been established in relation to key economic indicators for the Island:

Headline Indicators	Baseline 2015	Target for 2018	Target for 2020
JSA claimants (no. and rate)	2,072 2.6%	Reduce by 199 to 2.35% to halve performance gap with the UK	Reduce by 398 claimants to 2.1% in line with the UK
Resident Employment rate%	76%	Increase to 77%	Increase to 78% in line with LEP targeted increase
Number of jobs	60,000	Create an additional 650 jobs	Create an additional 1,250 jobs in line with the LEP targeted
Business Birth Rate	3.5 (per 1,000 population)	Raise the BBR to 3.6%	Raise in BBR to 3.8 in line with the LEP targeted increase
Business Survival (% after 3 years)	60.0%	Improve to achieve rate of 62%	Improve to achieve rate of 65%
GVA Growth	0.8%	Achieve growth rate of 2.7%	Achieve GVA growth rate of 2.8% in line with LEP targeted increase
Productivity (GVA per job)	£34,000	Min increase £2,764 (7.7%)	Min increase £5,896 (16%) in line with LEP targeted increase
Qualifications (% population level 4 and above)	28.8%	Increase number by 1,740 to achieve 32%	Increase number by 3,300 to achieve rate of 34% in line with LEP
GCSE attainment (5+ GCSE A* - C Including English)	45.3%	Increase number achieving 5 GCSEs to 48%	Try to achieve parity with national average.
Entry to Higher Education	43.7%	Increase by 10 to 45.1% to halve the gap with LEP	Increase number entering HE by 19 students to achieve
New homes completed	520 per year	1040 by 2018	2,080 by 2020

These economic indicators show that the Island’s economy is fragile, with weaker performance in relation to the South East regional and national averages. It is constrained by its location which

contributes to a high degree of self-containment in its job and labour market, which remains heavily reliant on tourism.

In its Regeneration Programme<sup>3</sup> the Council recognises that one of the barriers to economic growth are issues with transport infrastructure, linked with reduced economic activity resulting from the ageing demographic and a working-age population reliant on low-skilled, seasonal employment.

However, notwithstanding these challenges, the Isle of Wight has great potential, with a strong, modern manufacturing base which has the opportunity to have a catalytic impact through the provision of targeted investments to overcome these distinct barriers to growth. This will help bring forward a rebalancing of the economy and reduce its reliance on seasonal activity linked to tourism and agricultural sectors in favour of investing in manufacturing, which is largely capital intensive and has deep and locally-based supply chains, and therefore concentrated multipliers.

Have we removed too much of the negative issues such as low wages and low GDP. The Council, through its Medium Term Financial Strategy<sup>4</sup> (MTFP), has taken the decision to use its land and assets as an opportunity to drive growth to ensure the long-term sustainability of council services and the economic prosperity of the Island, identifying 11 key regeneration projects in three opportunity areas.

The Island has a history of innovation, research and engineering excellence, which spans over 50 years from the flying boat and hovercraft to rocket and satellite programmes through to today, where the Island is home to a range of world class advanced manufacturers in composites and technology and digital related business.

The Island's strengths include:

- Aerospace: GKN Aerospace, the Islands largest manufacturing employer produces advanced composite structures for the aerospace industry and is recognised as a world leader in composite material manufacturing;
- Renewable energy: Vestas, one of the world's leading wind turbine manufacturers, has their research and development facility on the Island. The Council, in partnership with the private sector are working towards creating a test bed facility for tidal energy just to the south of the Island;
- Composite materials: Gurit has a significant presence on the Island, providing materials and technology into the aerospace, renewable energy, marine and automotive industries.
- Marine: The Isle of Wight has a long tradition of boat building and a range of companies based in and around Cowes, the international home of yachting. Companies produce vessels from racing yachts through to specialised work boats for the offshore renewable energy market;
- Defence electronics: BAE Systems has a presence outside Cowes, producing advanced radar systems for defence and commercial markets.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.iwight.com/Meetings/committees/Executive/15-12-16/PAPER%20C%20-%20APPENDIX%20A.pdf](http://www.iwight.com/Meetings/committees/Executive/15-12-16/PAPER%20C%20-%20APPENDIX%20A.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.iwight.com/Meetings/committees/Executive/13-10-16/Paper%20B.pdf](http://www.iwight.com/Meetings/committees/Executive/13-10-16/Paper%20B.pdf)

Infrastructure can impact upon access to employment and education. The 2011 census shows that with regard to mode of travel to work the island is significantly ahead in working from home and walking, but car use is in line with the national average.

In 2016, the Isle of Wight welcomed approximately 2.4m visitors; contributing over £263m to the local economy and generating an estimated 10m transport trips. Tourism related volume and value are vital to the Islands economy; currently 28.8% of all employment on the Island is in the tourism sector, a total of over 17000 jobs, over 42% of which are seasonal.

In July 2016, the UK's first county-wide Business Improvement District (BID) was created on the Island, known as the WIGHT BID<sup>5</sup>. New income streams raised by tourism businesses aim to increase the volume of new visitors who come to the Island, encourage them to stay longer and spend more in Island communities. The WIGHT BID forecasts £371,000 per annum in levy contributions and between £75,000 and £100,000 per year in voluntary contributions. The achievement of the WIGHT BID is a significant boost for the Island. Over its five-year term, the BID outcome forecasts include in excess of 370,000 additional visitors and £60m in direct additional visitor spend. Whilst the increase in visitor volumes achieved through the WIGHT BID will have significant benefits for the Islands visitor economy, one the key challenges will be managing the increased trip generation arising from 370,000 additional visits over the next five years.

There are a number of short and medium term projects on the mainland that the Island needs to be aware of when planning for the future. For example, the Southampton Clean Air Strategy will see the implementation of a charging regime for the most polluting commercial vehicles in Southampton from 2019/20 alongside other measures to promote cleaner air, including a Clean Air Partnership. As part of DEFRA's Air Quality Plan 2017 Consultation, there are a number of other areas in the Solent including Portsmouth and southern Hampshire that could see the introduction of further Clean Air Zones which will have a direct impact on freight traffic and visitors to the Island. The Island's freight operators will certainly need to plan for Clean Air Zones on the mainland and to establish the impacts on their businesses.

Further examples include Highways England's investment in Smart Motorways for the M27 and southern section of the M3, improvements to the A34/M3 interchange at Winchester, the development of the Solent Metro rapid transit concept, further Bus Rapid Transit routes in South East Hampshire and Portsmouth, significant commercial and residential development at Marchwood and Fawley Power Station, and the need for expansion of Southampton Port in the future to accommodate increased freight movements. These issues will all potentially impact on people's journeys to and from the Isle of Wight and therefore need to be taken into account when developing the Island's transport strategies.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://isleofwightbid.com/>

### 3 Hearings

This section of the report summarises the issues discussed and raised at the hearings.

A full list of hearing dates and attendees is set out in **Appendix 3**.

#### 3.1 Cross Solent Transport

##### 3.1.1 Hearing Discussion

The three cross-Solent ferry operators attended hearing sessions. Wightlink stated that when the Saint Class ships, St Cecilia and St Faith, were introduced their capacity was 142, but now with bigger cars these ferries could only hold 100 cars. The new ferry scheduled for launch in summer 2018 has the capacity to carry 178 cars, in comparison to 150 (with mezzanine used) for the St Clare. This results in increasing peak time capacity by 10% (approx. 34 cars) in a two hour period.

The introduction of the double deck link spans at Fishbourne and Portsmouth for the two large ferries would reduce turn round time to about 15 minutes, as both decks can be loaded simultaneously.

Wightlink reported that punctuality was being affected by increased harbour movements at Portsmouth and that this problem may increase when the new aircraft carriers are introduced. QHM Portsmouth, who control the harbour, would not allow any unsafe movement.

Traffic movements in Portsmouth were difficult at times, but the increase in car capacity at Portsmouth would help, particularly when there were delays.

As yet, Wightlink had made no decision on service frequency of the new ferry service, but that there had been discussion with users over evening sailings and in particular 2100 and/or 2200 services. Wightlink had received feedback that services on the hour were preferable to half hour services.

Wightlink did confirm that capacity had been reduced on the Lymington to Yarmouth route, but that the service now connected with the trains and the Yarmouth users group were satisfied with the service.

Foot passengers per annum total approximately 8.16m and the most popular route is the catamaran service between Ryde Pier Head and Portsmouth, with 30% of these passengers using onward rail travel. Wightlink was concerned about the lack of information on connections for the Isle of Wight at Waterloo station. Wightlink confirmed that the rail service at Ryde Pier Head was important to their operation and hoped that improvements would be made to this service.

Wightlink noted that the temporary closure of Wootton Bridge had adversely affected their business. Freight relationships were very important and Wightlink had noticed an increase in the number of commercial vans using the services.

With regard to offers and sponsorship, Wightlink explained the offer they provided for patients travelling to the mainland for treatment and also outlined the amount of sponsorship that they provide to events on the Island.

Red Funnel operates three car ferries on the Southampton to East Cowes route, which provide for approx. 870k vehicle movements per annum (about 1.2 million cars and 2.2 million passengers per annum). The Southampton to West Cowes Red Jet service carries about 1.2 million passengers, using up to 3 craft. A new Red Jet was recently introduced, which was built in East Cowes. Currently Red Jet services cannot carry bicycles, but all services to Cowes are met by a bus service that runs through to Newport. Improvements are required to the ticketing system. In Southampton a bus service operates from the terminal to Southampton Central station and approx. one third of Red Jet passengers use onward rail connections.

As with Wightlink, Red Funnel is also concerned about the lack of information for onward trips to the Island that was provided at Waterloo.

Red Funnel is concerned with the restricted access and parking provision in Cowes for both passengers and staff.

Currently Red Funnel has no plans to increase their car ferry capacity, although two ships have been recently refurbished with plans to upgrade the third in 2018. Night sailings have increased through the introduction of a 0400 service to meet demands from freight operators.

Red Funnel reported that it would be difficult to increase the size of their car ferries because of restrictions in Cowes Harbour and if more capacity were needed it would be necessary to have a fourth ferry and a second linkspan would have to be introduced in both terminals. This issue could be resolved in Southampton with a move to the new terminal, but remains an issue in East Cowes. If planning issues are resolved in East Cowes there would be capacity for a further link span. The current terminal arrangement at East Cowes leads to major congestion in busy period with slow loading times, congestion in surrounding roads and poor punctuality. Red Funnel did recognise that there were issues in relation to the properties in Dover Road.

Red Funnel provides a loyalty scheme and discounts for Island residents and additionally discounts are provided for patients going to hospital appointments on the mainland, jobseekers and students. In total discounts provided were the equivalent of 10% of their turnover. Sponsorship is also provided to many events and charities on the Island.

Hovertravel has recently introduced two new hovercraft on the service connected Ryde and Southsea. These craft were built by a sister company Griffon Hoverwork based in Hamble. Both companies are part of the Bland Group, the ultimate owners of Hovertravel.

The configuration of the new craft provides 80 seats and allow for more luggage space.

Hovertravel will now operate on only two craft as based on experience the third craft would only have a utilisation of 4.5%. It is straightforward for Hovertravel to increase service frequency in peak periods to a 15-minute frequency.

Hovertravel acknowledged that car parking capacity was limited at Portsmouth. At Ryde, Hovertravel has offered to have a car park machine in their terminal as there were occasions when the machine was not working and Hovertravel passengers incurred parking fines.

Hovertravel was concerned about the lack of information available via National Rail Enquiries about their service. In addition, a lot of stations in the UK did not give through tickets through Journey Planner for stations on the Island Line.

Hovertravel was also concerned that services didn't appear on the departure boards at Waterloo rail station. Given that outside the peak periods, the Wightlink Catamaran service only operated hourly where as Hovertravel were operating half hourly, the services with their bus connection should be shown. This is not just an issue with National Rail but it has taken two years to get the Hoverbus shown in the National Express system.

Hovertravel said that 85% to 90% of their crossings were day trips and that 70% of their passengers were tourists.

The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce noted that there was no public obligation placed upon the ferry services operating across the Solent, comparing this to European ferry journeys to Islands, which are often subsidised.

Businesses attending the hearings raised the issue of scheduling of services and the impact that this can have on investors and executives travelling to and from the Island, especially during the evening and during the winter months. This was raised as a particular issue by BAE.

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) reported that they had undertaken a survey of their membership at the end of 2016 and there were about 27 responses from their members. Of these responses, 63% said that they had problems getting things delivered to the Island in both terms of price extras and time. Only 37% were satisfied with the ferry service, 63% dissatisfied. There was a general view that Wi-Fi should be provided on all ferries. 93% did not think the ferries provided value for money.

The Federation of Small Businesses considered that there was a need for discounts for small businesses, who could not negotiate bulk discounts with the ferries.

The reduction of services on Yarmouth Lymington was only raised by a few attendees.

There was a general concern with regard to there being too many cancelled sailings and a lack of information being provided to those travelling and that there was a shortage of sailings in the evenings.

Visit Isle of Wight (VioW) was of the view that ferry prices are not a major issue for visitors to the Island, the cost was often included within the price for holiday breaks in many instances. However smaller accommodation providers (which have limited scale to negotiate discounts for their clients) found that the price of ferry travel had a negative impact on propensity to visit.

From discussions with all operators and interest groups it is clear to the TITF that there remains a real lack of information and transparency about ferry operations, despite the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) Report which asked all operators to publish additional information. There are a number of pricing 'deals' for local residents, but the TITF would question whether information is genuinely easily available and understood by residents.

The TTIF noted the investment that the ferries have made in the past and the current investment being made by the new owners of Wightlink in the terminals at Portsmouth and Fishbourne. The TTIF also welcomed the building of a new ferry for the Portsmouth Fishbourne service, due to be introduced in the summer of 2018. However, concerns were expressed that larger ferries would potentially result in a reduction in services.

The TTIF also noted the social/charitable work that the ferries undertake, which is understood to be in the order of £1m per annum.

The ferry companies do offer discounts to Island residents and other regular vehicle ferry users. However, whilst the two schemes are different both require an upfront investment in buying tickets, which is only of benefit to wealthier passengers.

One of the discount schemes that all the operators provide is for patients visiting the mainland for treatment and also includes a carer/helper. However, there is no discount for patients families visiting their relations in hospital on the mainland, but is this a discount the ferries should provide? A number of attendees raised concerns regarding the potential cost of hospital visits that are likely to arise from any changes in the way that healthcare is delivered on the Island. In addition, the Chamber noted that cost of travel for apprentices was an issue and this was also raised by the IW College. The IW NHS Trust reported that about 34,000 patients per annum are travelling to the mainland.

There were many representations about the capacity that the ferries offer in the shoulder periods especially in the evenings in comparison with previous years. The capacity issue applied to both operators but particularly on Portsmouth Fishbourne.

The reduction in capacity on the Lymington Yarmouth service was also an item that was discussed at length. The TTIF understands that the Yarmouth ferry users committee are now fairly satisfied with the service now that it regularly meets the train to Brockenhurst.

Freight operators were in the main satisfied with the service they received. However there was criticism of lack of capacity in peak periods and also during the nights and evenings. It was clear that once freight operator had enough volume to could negotiate very competitive rates with the operators.

The supermarkets made it clear that the cost of moving their products to the Island did not lead to higher prices in their stores on the Island in comparison to the mainland.

The TTIF also noted that when the planning issues around Red Funnel's terminal at East Cowes are resolved there would be the possibility of introducing a further linkspan, which would enable the service to be enhanced.

The issue of demand from the tourism industry may however also link to the supply and quality of bedstock. VloW was of the view that the Island has now effectively reached capacity in August, with approximately 100,000 visitors per week during that month. Capacity at this time of year is driven by the availability of ferry services rather than the availability of accommodation stock, however the TTF understands that the last survey on bedstock was undertaken some years ago and would therefore support a new survey to clarify this pint. Increasing volume in August can only be achieved through foot passengers, cruise ship visits or private sailings and this is where VloW will concentrate its

marketing efforts. For the remainder of the year VloW is of the view that there is still the opportunity to increase capacity in the shoulders.

Attendees generally raised concern that recent changes to service scheduling have reduced capacity in the market.

The Quality Transport Partnership (QTP) suggested that the Red Jet service could be improved by being able to take bikes on the service. In addition, parking provision for cycles at both Cowes and Southampton is needed. Note: Through its successful Sustainable Travel Transition Year funding the Council has recently advertised a prospectus for funding cycle hubs and Red Funnel have delivered a fully covered cycle hub, which provides safe and dry cycle parking at Cowes.

The TITF is aware that there are a number of user groups that meet, but during our hearing sessions it became very clear that there was no body that met to debate cross-Solent activities at a strategic level.

### **Potential for new service**

Wight Gateway attended a hearing, explaining the business case behind their proposal which seeks to provide a frequent new service from Portsmouth to a new facility to the west of Ryde specifically marketed at tourism, leisure visitors, commuters and business travel, without the requirement for a public subsidy. The TITF noted the detail of the proposal and recognised that this would provide welcome competition to the existing operators, and may lead to a period of general service changes arising from market adjustment.

### **Fixed Link**

The case for an Isle of Wight Fixed Link has not been fully investigated and would require the cost to be calculated and assessed against the current and future activity and development prospects of the Island. The project proposal provided by PRO-LINK was noted by the TITF. Whilst a fixed link would address issues about connectivity and scheduling experienced with the ferry services, there are as yet a number of unknown issues in relation to the potential impact of a bridge or tunnel on the Island. Modelling work on impact at varying price bands would illustrate the likely impact in terms of volume of use of a fixed route and could also provide commentary on likely economic impact. Further investigation into the likely sources of funding is also required.

## **3.1.2 Additional Supporting Evidence**

Given the scale and scope of views regarding cross Solent transit, a supplementary independent assessment of ferry operator activity was undertaken on behalf of the TITF. This included an analysis of additional operational information provided by the ferry operators and information from publicly available company accounts. The assessment is available in the separate study accompanying this report.

The key findings of the assessment include:



- The volume of passenger journeys generated in 2016 (8.9m) is the same as the volume generated in 2001. This is in the context of a 4.7% increase in resident population between 2001 and 2015.
- Tourist visitors to the Island are estimated to account for roughly half of all ferry passenger journeys, and sampling of visitors using ferries provides regular and robust market intelligence. Unfortunately, there is a lack of data on cross-Solent trips made by residents and other passengers who are not 'visitors' to the Island, so the journey purposes of the other half of the ferry companies' customers are unknown.
- Total volumes of cars carried has remained relatively consistent since 2000, at circa 1.7m units in each year. The total volume of cars carried in 2016 was 2.5% higher than the volume carried in 2000.
- Between 2000 and 2015, the volume of sailings on the Portsmouth- Fishbourne route reduced by 23.8%. In 2015 the same route achieved a utilisation for vehicles of 95% or more on 29% of its sailings.
- Total volumes of commercial traffic have reduced by 2% between 2004 and 2015, and 14% between 2011 and 2015.
- In comparison to other routes, the East Cowes – Southampton – East Cowes route has experienced significant growth since 2000. Between 2004 and 2015, volumes of cars carried on this route increased by 31.9%, and commercial traffic by 34.5%.
- Through analysis of filed company accounts (Red Funnel and Wightlink only) it is apparent that both operators are part of complex group structures, presumably established to minimise tax liabilities and maximise profits.
- The most recent filed accounts show earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) as £17.6m for Red Funnel and £20.7m for Wightlink, against turnover of profits of £48.4m and £62m respectively. Red Funnel operated with a sales margin of 42.8% and Wightlink 35.5%.

### 3.1.3 Recommendations

1. In recognition of the community as a key stakeholder in cross Solent transport it is recommended that the Council convenes and leads a cross-Solent operators' partnership board, to provide meaningful engagement with the cross-Solent operators. The objective of the board would be to work together for mutual benefit of the cross-Solent operators and the economic development of the Island. Amongst other matters the board should consider the impact of new investment on the flexibility of new services, the potential for provision of increased services in evenings and shoulders, and travel offers for those in education or training.
2. Membership should include the cross Solent-operators, the Council, Solent Transport and businesses the partnership board should seek to develop and deliver a ferries strategy that is for the benefit of the economic development of the Island.
3. The Council and partners should lobby central government (National Health) to get financial assistance for those who have to travel to visit family in hospital.
4. An independent study should be undertaken to evaluate the feasibility and cost benefit of a fixed link across the Solent (road or rail).

## 3.2 Technology

The Council awarded the contract to supply superfast broadband to BT in September 2013 and as at 2017 the volumes of premises on the Island with access to Fibre Broadband (including the previous commercial roll out and other communications provision) is at 99%.

In comparison, mobile coverage is variable, with many areas suffering signal problems.

The transport sector is at the beginning of a period of significant disruption, with new technologies, products and services fundamentally shifting customer expectations and opportunities. The market for Intelligent Mobility is rapidly developing as customers, transport authorities, businesses and governments understand the huge potential for unlocking major opportunities and improving a wide range of outcomes by taking a user-centric approach to looking at mobility opportunities for customers as part of a wider, integrated system. In the last 10 years technology has been introduced which has either directly delivered, or enabled, significant disruption across a number of sectors. The arrival of the smartphone has potentially been the most significant as it has enabled users to be permanently connected to a growing range of services and huge quantities of up-to-date information.

This is hugely important to the transport sector – as new technology is increasingly adopted by customers, it enables new services to be developed that are bringing real benefits; customers can now check live bus times or buy train tickets on phones as well as plan journeys and keep an eye out for any issues on the transport network, such as congestion, as it arises.

### 3.2.1 Hearing Discussion

Combined ticketing opportunities were raised by the Quality Transport Partnership (QTP). It is also an issue that VloW is keen to see developed as smart technology in integrated with transport information and booking; this is considered essential to maintain and grow the tourism offer. Smart ticketing was supported by the IWBRUG.

The TITF note that Southern Vectis provide Wi-Fi and USB charging on selected buses, as well as the availability of a Key Card. Southern Vectis also plan to use more live vehicle information, although mobile service has caused issues with these types of applications.

Isle Access was supportive of investment in next stop announcements on buses.

The general consensus from those discussing this issue at the hearings was that there was the potential for real improvement in this area with the use of more innovative approaches to providing information to passengers and providing passengers with smarter options for purchasing tickets.

Technological changes in different sources of fuel for vehicles and transport modes are an area that the Island could develop further. Electric vehicles are a good example, where large amounts of short distance journeys are the norm for travel arrangements. There have also been significant developments in the field of autonomous vehicles which the Island could take advantage of.

VloW consider that more can be done to promote and support car hire (electric and petrol) on the Island, especially as it is the cheapest way (for couples) to arrive on the Island by foot.

### **3.2.2 Recommendations:**

5. Building on the Island's expertise in the digital sector, The Council should explore how and where the delivery of improved digital services can be accelerated.
6. To improve accessibility across transport modes, and provide the ability to introduce integrated travel information for bus, train and cross-Solent operators, The Council should work with mobile technology companies to improve network coverage across the Island. Additionally, the transport providers should ensure their services are Wi-Fi enabled for passengers.
7. The Council should work with transport operators to encourage the introduction of smart ticketing (for example, Solent Go<sup>6</sup>) and in particular multi operator use smart payment opportunities.
8. National Rail information at Waterloo should include information on the Island and gateways.
9. The Council should investigate future investment opportunities for alternative transport modes (e.g. hydrogen fuel and other low-carbon fuels; innovation in sustainable transport and/or autonomous vehicles). The Council may wish to consider a potential joint venture with a car company to test electric vehicles.
10. Technology can be used to support the implementation of The Councils parking strategy, both in terms of smart apps to pay for parking and opportunities to advertise parking space availability within towns.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://solentgo.co.uk/>

### 3.3 Highways and Interchanges

The Island has a road network comprising of 122 km of principal roads, 270 km of other classified roads and 400 km of unclassified roads. Whilst journey time reliability is a contributor to economic growth, congestion can occur as a result of road works, special events and through the volume of traffic at peak times. Tourism related traffic places an additional pressure the network.

The Council has secured Highways Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding of approximately £364m which is a 25-year project that started in 2013. Over the 25-year period most of the Island's 803km public road network will be rebuilt or resurfaced, together with improvements to pavements, kerbs and cycleways. Also, included in the project are bridges, retaining walls and other structures on the road network and the Islands' 12,068 street lights and columns. The majority of the work will be undertaken in the first seven years of the PFI project. Thereafter the project will maintain the reconstructed network.

Newport, which is the hub of the Islands road network, is identified in the Local Transport Plan as one of the Islands congestion hot spots; 80% of private car journeys entering Newport are single occupancy. Connectivity options between Newport and Cowes include the A3080, the main road corridor which carried 5.1m car movements in 2014 and a dedicated traffic free cycling and walking route, which hosts 110,000 cycle trips. Bus passenger journeys along the A3080 corridor are between 1m and 1.5m per year.

The Council has recently secured grant funding of £9.6m to implement Newport junction improvements identified in the Island Plan Core Strategy. Work is ongoing to programme these works and complete the necessary assessment and design work with a view to delivery over the next four years.

Major infrastructure investments, particularly road widening to provide for additional lanes are constrained in urban areas by the historic development patterns and third party landownership issues.

The Newport town centre traffic signals operate using SCOOT<sup>7</sup> (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique) for managing and controlling traffic signals in urban areas. It is an adaptive system that responds automatically to fluctuations in traffic flow through the use of on-street detectors embedded in the road. The SCOOT setup has not been fully reviewed in some time (Coppins Bridge 2009) and there could be significant capacity gains in a thorough assessment and review. Bus priority at signals is a facility which is in use on the Island and Southern Vectis buses are equipped to take advantage of such technology.

Since 2000, The Councils Environmental Health team has been monitoring air quality across the Island for levels of: Benzene; 1,3-Butadiene; Carbon monoxide; Lead; Nitrogen dioxide; Particulate Matter (PM10); and Sulphur dioxide. Currently the Island does not have any designated air quality management areas (AQMAs) however pollutant levels are continually monitored at several key transport locations including close to ferry terminals, Lake Hill and central Newport – all of which are affected by seasonal tourism traffic.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.scoot-utc.com/](http://www.scoot-utc.com/)

### 3.3.1 Hearing Discussion

Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) expressed concern that there should not be a "one size fits all" approach to a parking strategy for the Island and that the strategy should be tailored to fit to local issues in local areas.

IWALC was concerned that there was no clear process or understanding of how locally identified schemes and projects that impact upon the highway network could be developed and progressed. It was acknowledged that IWALC could play a role in helping local communities take schemes forward should a process be put in place. The need for appropriate guidance for local communities was discussed.

The need to consider smart signalling was raised by various operators and interest groups. In particular issues in relation to bus punctuality, St Mary's roundabout, and at Westridge and Fishbourne Lane were identified as potential hot spots. The Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group (IWBRUG) was particularly concerned about local issues at Beachfield Road, Sandown and Lake junctions as well as more general traffic delays at Coppins Bridge, Newport. Southern Vectis reaffirmed the views of the IWBRUG in that there were traffic queue issues for buses at Beachfield Road and Westridge Cross.

Various interested groups and operators raised the issue of congestion in and around Newport and Southern Vectis in particular was concerned that delays of between 20-30 minutes were experienced regularly at peak times. Congestion, traffic management and utility works can impact upon bus punctuality.

Southern Vectis reported that regular pinch point delays are experienced at: inbound to Newport - Medina Way/Forest Road/Parkhurst Road junction. Southern Vectis suggest that a signalised bus gate only at this location on the inbound section to Newport after St Mary's junction would provide significant timings and reliability improvements. In addition, outbound from Newport - Medina Way/Forest Road/Parkhurst Road should consider the incorporation of ability for buses to turn right.

At Coppins Bridge buses suffer delays from two directions. Any scheme to introduce improvements needs to look at how the whole gyratory functions and how flows can be improved at peak times. This should include reviewing the signalling technology utilised.

In relation to the eastern corridor of Newport bus lanes and bus priority schemes were discussed; there are complexities with delivery of bus lanes, particularly on the Island, where there is limited potential to introduce third lanes into the highway network.

The need for a Medina River Crossing was discussed with various attendees, along with the comparative traffic delays on the Isle of Wight compared to other mainland areas.

Whilst information on roadworks and liaison with Island Roads is generally good for transport operators, statutory utility works on-site at short notice can cause operational issues. Southern Vectis consider that a permit scheme, similar to that which operates in both Brighton and Hove<sup>8</sup> and Southampton, where parties wishing to work on the highway apply and pay for a permit is a potential

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<sup>8</sup> [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/parking-and-travel/roads-and-highways/traffic-management-permit-scheme](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/parking-and-travel/roads-and-highways/traffic-management-permit-scheme)

solution. The scheme applies to any person or organisation who wishes to carry out road works on the highway, including works by utility companies and developers. Southern Vectis evidenced that for every £1 the scheme costs, the estimated return to the public is £5 of added value through reduced pollution, gained travel time, saved operating costs, reduction in accidents and lower fuel costs. In addition, there is less noise, lower emissions and more reliable journey times. Evidence from Southampton suggests that this has reduced the length of short term roadworks by about one third.

### **PFI Maintenance Contract**

The IW Bridleways group were concerned about the maintenance of rural roads, particularly the edges of roads, where road surfaces were being replaced to contractual requirements, but edges were sometimes not level with the road surface, causing safety concerns. This point was also raised by other equestrian interest groups.

Representatives from supermarkets reported that there was a lack of engagement with Island Roads in relation to road closures, and that this did impact upon their routes for delivery on Island.

### **Ryde Interchange**

A number of hearing attendees suggested that the Ryde transport interchanges require renewal as well as creating a better interchange between bus, train, ferry and hovercraft as foot passenger journeys through this location are often disjointed and do not create the best impression of the Island. All those attending who discussed this matter noted that Network Rail and DfT will need to be involved in any discussions to improve the interchange facilities.

The IWBRUG recognise that there is scope for improvement in cross Solent connections through better Interchanges; in particular, the Ryde Interchange, due to badly integrated ticketing and information services and outdated facilities. Pedestrian connectivity and wayfinding is also poor and the bus station is inadequate due to lack of space for buses to circulate efficiently. This issue was also raised by Keep Island Line in Franchise (KILF) as part of the need for wider improvements to Island Line and Ryde Town Council.

The QTP was concerned at the current access arrangements for all users of the railway bridge at Ryde Esplanade. The IWBRUG considered that any future scheme for improved interchange facilities at Ryde should address the link to Hovertravel.

Southern Vectis noted that access into the interchange terminal in Ryde was generally good, but not modern. Effectively Hovertravel is cut off from the interchange by a footbridge and easier access arrangements were essential. The interchange is a key gateway.

## **3.3.2 Recommendations**

11. The funding for Newport junction improvements is welcomed, but should include signalling improvements to ensure improved traffic flows.
12. A longer-term strategy for congestion in and around Newport is needed. This could include investigation of the feasibility of a Medina Crossing.

13. That Council and Island Roads review the specification for surfacing on minor (rural) roads and in addition ensure that surfacing is taken to the edge of the road.
14. Transport interchanges at Ryde Esplanade, Cowes and East Cowes are improved.

### 3.4 Bus Services

Southern Vectis is the principal commercial bus operator on the Isle of Wight generating over 7m passenger journeys per annum.

Internal connections by public transport rely significantly on bus services. Southern Vectis has had a monopoly on commercial bus services on the Island in recent times, with the most regular services running between the major towns. There are three bus stations on the Island, located at Newport, Ryde and Yarmouth respectively and a park and ride site at Cowes.

Southern Vectis receives two payments from Isle of Wight Council. The first is to run buses and coaches for home-to-school transport, and was awarded following an open competitive tendering process. The operation is separate to the local bus network. The second payment is reimbursement for the fare foregone of England National Concessionary Travel Scheme card holders (older and disabled people), as the card holders themselves receive free travel. The reimbursement mechanism is designed by the DfT to ensure that the bus operator is 'no better or no worse off' as a result of participating in the Scheme.

Southern Vectis receives no subsidy for Island local bus services - the network is entirely commercially operated. The company has recently invested in the fleet, with the result that no regular bus is over nine years old; and of the fleet of 64 vehicles, 11 are less than one year old.

The service on the Island is one of the most comprehensive bus services in the country, with many areas still served late into the evening and on Sundays. The Island is one of the few parts of the UK to see Christmas Day services.

Population density is one of the main factors determining bus service level and viability. The Island's population density is similar to that of Hampshire, yet the level of service on the Island, is much higher. Services are designed to meet every passenger ferry arrival and departure, along with the last car ferry at Fishbourne.

The most recent Bus Passenger Survey, undertaken independently by Transport Focus, showed Southern Vectis customer satisfaction to be 91%.

There are a number of local community buses on localised routes, provided in partnership between the local community and Southern Vectis.

#### 3.4.1 Hearing Discussion

The QTP considered that Southern Vectis run a good operation on the Island which is both reliable and regular. It is recognised as one of the highest performing rural service providers. The QTP considered that fares were high for individual journeys, but that there were opportunities to make use of Key Cards, which enable reduced fares for more regular passengers.

The QTP was particularly supportive of introducing more bus lanes, recognising the role that they play in improving services and were keen to stress that all existing bus lanes should be retained. The IWBRUG suggested that bus priority schemes should be investigated for South Street, Newport, Lake Hill/Beachfield Rd, Lake, Sandown Road - junction with Newport Road, Hunnyhill/Cowes, Fairlee Rd



into Newport and Blackwater Road/St George's approach into Newport. The IWBRUG was also concerned about the need for better bus connections at Shanklin Rail Station.

Both Southern Vectis and the IWBRUG were concerned about the impact of on street along a number of bus corridors, in particular in and around Bembridge and Seaview.

Some local communities had promoted and developed local solutions for passenger transport. Good examples include the FYT bus and the youth transport arrangement which Shalfleet had developed with Southern Vectis. This involved subsidising bus route 7 on a Monday and Tuesday so that young people from the parish could access youth activities in the West Wight.

QTP suggested further work could be investigated to cost the potential to replace evening buses with a taxi bus system.

Southern Vectis provided information on the significant investment that they have made over recent years, but also recognise that this investment is unlikely continue at the same rate.

The IW College was concerned about the bus service to Whippingham for the new college building. The point came through quite strongly that because of both the cost and difficulty of transport, a number of young people are not going onto further education or apprenticeships schemes.

### **3.4.2 Recommendations**

15. Southern Vectis provides a good service and the Council should ensure services are continued and that opportunities to enhance community services are fully explored.
16. Investigate opportunities for improved ticketing initiatives for the occasional bus users.
17. The Council with Southern Vectis and the Isle of Wight College should investigate what improvements can be made to student access to transport. This could be linked to projects being delivered through existing sustainable transport programmes.
18. Next stop announcements and Wi-Fi on buses (see section 3.2) should be rolled out across all scheduled services.
19. Assess the feasibility of corridor improvements for bus services, including investigating the introduction of bus lanes where achievable.
20. Whilst the investment strategy of Southern Vectis should be recognised and noted, it is a rate of investment that is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term and needs to be monitored.

## 3.5 Island Line

The Island has a 13.7 km railway network, linking the ferry at Ryde Pier Head, through Ryde Esplanade and St Johns stations to Brading, Sandown, Lake and Shanklin. Services are provided using former 1938 London Underground rolling stock. The Island also has a steam operated heritage railway which connects with Island Line at Smallbrook Junction, which is not road connected and runs to Wootton.

Island Line is unique amongst Britain's national railways, not only in its geographical separation from the rest of the network, but also in the way in which it is operated and maintained. Under the current contractual and management structure the infrastructure is from Network Rail (NR) on a 25 year lease till 2019 and operated as what is called a vertically integrated railway. Whilst the franchise holder is in the main responsible for the track itself all other structures are the responsibility of NR.

Island Line runs a two train per hour service on uneven intervals and only one of the two services connect with the ferry.

In March 2017, the government awarded the franchise for Island Line to FirstGroup and MTR (as part of the wider South Western Franchise). The franchise is effective from 23 August 2017.

### 3.5.1 Hearing Discussion

Many hearing attendees recognised that a critical factor to the success of Island Line will be its ability to attract additional patronage. This will necessitate a clear marketing strategy which sets out the benefits to both the local community and visitors to the Island. IWBRUG and KILF wished to see Island Line run a 30-minute schedule to meet onward connections across the Solent. This issue was also supported by a number of other hearing attendees.

There are some infrastructure challenges for Island Line, and KILF was concerned about tunnel at Ryde and the lack of an alternative solution to overcome the issues that are caused through flooding.

Isle Access was concerned about poor access at Ryde St John's Station.

At the time that the hearings were held the decision on the franchise award for Island Line had not been announced. All parties attending the hearing raised similar concerns over the longer-term viability of the line and in particular the need to fully assess the rail infrastructure along Ryde Pier, which was considered to be a vital part of the line.

It was noted that the DfT had set out a clear requirement for the franchise bidders to include consideration of the longer-term viability of the line beyond the franchise period.

### 3.5.2 Recommendations

21. In order to identify and develop options for reducing the cost of Island Line over the longer term the Council should work closely with First MTR, DfT Rail and Network Rail.

Collaboration will need to address the following:

- Resolution of the economic uncertainty of the Island Line;
- Provide for modernisation with new/up to date rolling stock;
- The future of the pier;

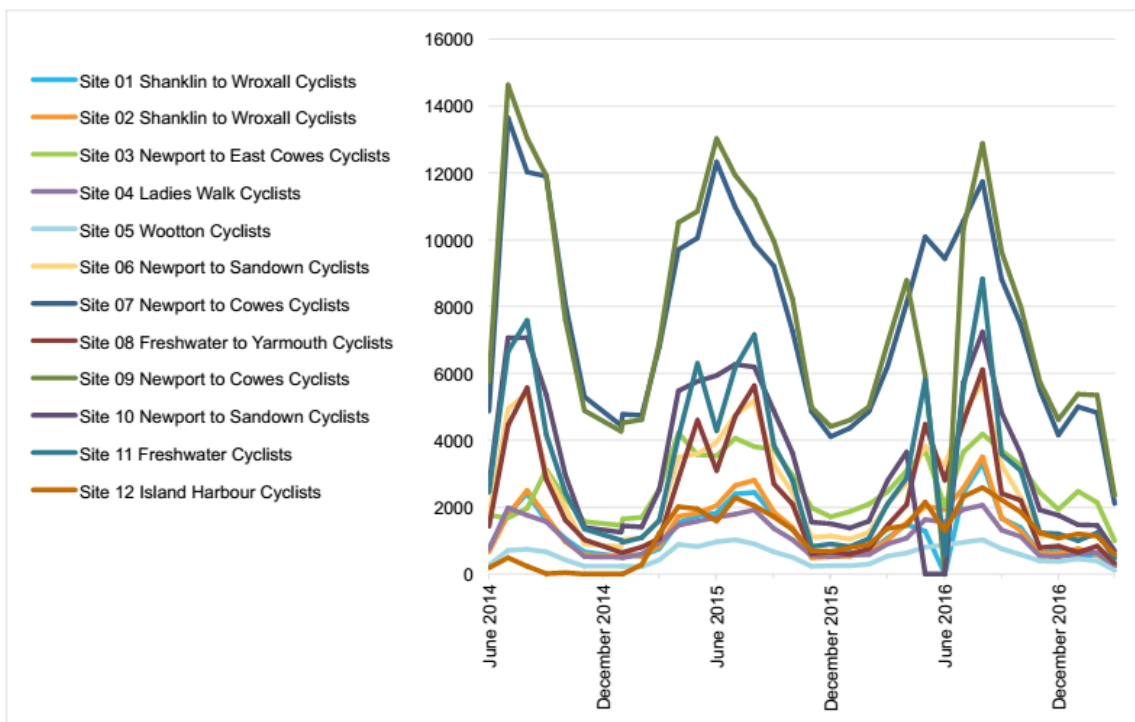
- Consider arrangements where the IOW steam railway could have access to Ryde St Johns Road;
  - Modernisation of all stations;
  - Provision of integrated travel information systems and smart ticketing options across different modes of travel;
  - How improvements at Ryde Interchange could provide for access for Hovertravel passengers from a new platform layout at the station.
22. To support the modernisation of the Island Line, including the introduction of a 30-minute service frequency and investment in the future sustainability of Island Line.
23. Ensure Island Line remains part of the franchised National Rail Network.

### 3.6 Cycling and Walking

The Island has over 820km of public rights of way linking towns and villages to the countryside and coast. Natural England has commenced work on the Isle of Wight section of the England Coast Path<sup>9</sup> – a new National Trail around all of England’s coast.

The Council has been working with a number of organisations to improve the cycle network on the Island, which include the completion of an off-road route between Sandown and Newport (part NCN23), enhancement of a route between Wootton and Newport (part NCN22), upgrading of the existing Cowes to Newport cycle track (NCN23) and improvements to the Newport to East Cowes route.

In June 2014, 12 permanent cycle counters were installed on traffic free routes. The monthly data shown below indicates that there are clear seasonal variations in cycle use but no obvious trends in usage across the years. The time series for this dataset is relatively short and data over a much longer time period would be required to draw robust conclusions. The counters with the highest usage figures are on the Newport to Cowes cycle route, which supports over 110k annual cycling journeys.



The Council has been successful in securing consecutive rounds of external DfT funding to promote active travel. Implementation of the current sustainable transport programme<sup>10</sup> is forecast to generate an additional 1.17m walking and 832k cycling trips by the end of 2020.

<sup>9</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast)

<sup>10</sup> [www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/1190-Access-Fund-Application-Form.pdf](http://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/1190-Access-Fund-Application-Form.pdf)

### 3.6.1 Hearing Discussion

Many attendees noted the potential of the Newport – Cowes cycle track in offering a sustainable alternative to car journeys along the parallel 'A' road. The opportunity to look at how more residents and visitors can be incentivised to use the route for cycling, such as opportunities to link to ticketing on the cross-Solent routes should be investigated with the ferry companies. Some attendees suggested that the Newport – Cowes corridor would benefit from a dedicated bus rapid transit solution, and that the potential for this should be explored further.

Completion of the Newport to East Cowes route was cited as a high priority by many attendees. The current route links Newport with Island Harbour and onward access to East Cowes is an issue; a link to the new Isle of Wight College facility at Whippingham would be beneficial. The TITF notes that the Council has allocated capital funding to this project and would encourage the Council to also discuss how this scheme could develop as part of its work with Natural England and the England Coast Path route which has recently commenced.

Isle of Wight College considered that more students would cycle if additional, higher quality cycle routes were available. This could be accompanied by a bicycle loan scheme to let more students purchase a bicycle.

IWALC expressed concern with public rights of way network maintenance and in particular the reduced investment being undertaken by the Council. VIOW consider that walking paths, trails and routes should be considered a vital part of the Island's transport infrastructure, requiring appropriate investment and maintenance. VIOW is of the view is that the Island should aim to have the best maintained footpaths in the UK.

Attendees also raised the need to refresh the proposal for a Newport – Freshwater shared route. A project that was first established as part of the West Wight Landscape Partnership project (HLF funded) and which stalled due to the need for further involvement of local landowners.. Attendees considered that a new route would provide not only added value for the visitor economy, but would also provide an opportunity to promote cycling generally and improve general health and wellbeing of Island residents.

The Island is also well placed to make best use of alternative and flexible transport modes, such as electric bikes and cars. VIOW recognised that there had been significant investment in shared cycling and walking routes over the past three years, and that these are contributing to an increase in the volume of visitors participating in walking and cycling experiences. More routes with facilities along the way are required and can be a major benefit to the rural economy on the Island.

### 3.6.2 Recommendations

24. To best inform investment in cycling and walking infrastructure, the Council should develop a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy<sup>11</sup>, to include the completion of the Newport – East Cowes route, linking to the new Isle of Wight College campus at Whippingham.
25. The Council should review the funding for maintenance of footpaths and bridleways.

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<sup>11</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy)

26. The Council should consider working with partners to review and refresh the West Wight Cycle Route, recognising that it is a longer-term project with regard to delivery timescales.
27. The TITF recognises that the grants received for sustainable transport related work is important to the Island and recommends that The Council continues to build on its successful work in this area and continues to seek new and innovative projects which can promote sustainable transport on the Island and to bid for appropriate funding as it is announced.

## Appendix 1 - Membership

The membership of the TITF as follows:

- Christopher Garnett: Chair
- Wendy Perera: Isle of Wight Council
- Jayne Tyler: Isle of Wight Council (Administrator)
- Nicky Hayward: Business
- Claire Locke: Business
- Maureen Pullen: Department for Transport
- Alec Dabell: Chief Executive, Vectis Ventures
- Patrick Seely: Managing Partner of Moorland Partners
- Geoff Underwood: Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce
- Stuart Baker: Solent LEP
- Andrew Wilson: Solent Transport
- Phillip Marshall: Solent Transport (July 2016 – December 2016)

Ad-hoc Membership:

- Peter Hayward: Independent Transport Consultant
- Chris Gregory: Independent Transport Consultant
- Dominic McGrath: Hampshire County Council

## Appendix 2: Terms of Reference

### Vision

*A multi modal transport system for the Isle of Wight that is safe, secure, accessible and affordable; and which promotes economic development and underpins the social and environmental wellbeing of the Island community.*

### Objectives:

To be mindful of the economic logic and aware of the consequences of economic considerations that need to be ensured, so that the Island's transport system is optimised, to promote sustainable economic growth and development.

To assist The Council in preparing an integrated Island wide transport infrastructure and services development plan ensuring that transport services to/from and on the Island are:

### Safe:

- The transport infrastructure and services provide safe and effective services, in accordance with minimum published standards and work to reduce the risk of crimes of all types.

### Secure:

- The continued provision of the services are guaranteed in the short term but with the ability to make suitable alternative arrangements in the case of service failure.
- The effective management of capacity in the transport system does not place the Island's infrastructure at risk of failure (e.g. congestion / overcrowding).

### Accessible:

- Services and facilities are integrated to be available at the times needed to support the effective operation of the Island.
- Services and facilities are located appropriately to provide sufficient capacity in the system and are sufficiently flexible to meet the demands of service users.
- Transport infrastructure and services connect people with employment and education opportunities, and connect businesses with markets and supply-chains.

### Affordable:

Services are priced appropriate to the target markets and in accordance with the need to manage and operate capacity across the transport system as a whole.

To prepare a capital investment strategy to enable the implementation of the infrastructure development plan (over the medium term 5-10 years) and associated sustainable revenue forecasts to support its delivery.



### Scope of the works

The development of the plan will include:

	Function	Achieved
1	An assessment of the current provision for cross Solent travel to include analysis of the challenges and opportunities in the market and proposals, if necessary to improve the resilience of the services.	✓
2	An analysis of the current plans and patterns for growth in cross Solent travel by transport mode, the likely impact of this growth on the current transport system and impact on the Island community.	✓
3	An assessment of the impact of Island Line on the Island’s economy and the opportunities for extending the service beyond its existing operation.	✓
4	Consideration of the role of the bus service in the transport system, the challenges and opportunities it faces and its capacity to adapt to a new transport model.	✓
5	An assessment of the current demands on the highways network including identification of pinch points and times when it is at over capacity. To consider the introduction of park and ride schemes to improve network capacity as required. To ensure capacity is considered during maintenance activity.	✓
6	Identification of the gaps and planned investments in transport infrastructure and services.	✓
7	Identification of funding streams and business models that could be used to support the delivery of the proposed transport network.	
8	Identification of the economic benefits that would be achieved through the proposed system.	✓
9	Ensure that changes to the infrastructure have a positive impact on the visual environment and maximise opportunities to reduce the Island’s overall carbon footprint.	

### Mode of Operation

The task force will be led by an independent chair that will be free to choose its members with the correct balance of skills and experience to ensure the achievement of these terms of reference. As a minimum, the task force shall comprise senior representatives from:

- Department for Transport

- Isle of Wight Council
- Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
- Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
- Business Stakeholders

The Council will provide organisational and administrative support to the task force as required.

Task Force Meeting Dates:

**2016**

- 20th July
- 02nd August
- 02nd September
- 07th October
- 4th November
- 9th December

**2017**

- 13th January
- 17th February
- 24th March
- 21st April
- 12th May
- 16th June

Agendas were sent out prior to the meeting and the meetings were formally minuted.

## Appendix 3: Hearings

The Transport Task Force held a number of meetings with stakeholders and interested parties and these meetings were minuted. Details of attendances are as follows:

22nd August 2016			
Group	Attendee	Attendee	Attendee
First Group	Mark Wilkins	Owen Hazell	
5th September 2016			
Hovertravel	Neil Chapman		
Southern Vectis	Matt Kitchin	Ed Wills	Andrew Wickham
	Paul Walker		
9th September 2016			
Steve Porter Group	Steve Porter		
Red Funnel	Kevin George	Murray Carter	
Wight Gateway LTD	Nick Wakefield	Danny Fisher	
16th September 2016			
Wightlink	Keith Greenfield	John Burrows	Clive Tilley
	Karen Woods		
KILF	David Pugh	Stewart George	Mark Brinton
	Ed George	Chris Quirk	
23rd September 2016			
PRO-LINK	Carl Feeney	Kevin Price	
IWC Principal Contract	Stewart Chandler		
IWBRUG	Andy Morris	Stewart George	John Yunnie
Electric Train Museum	Bob Baines	Phil Marsh	
Isle Access	Jan Brookes	Jim Morey	
14th October 2016			
QTP	David Rogers		
VloW	David Thornton	Simon Dabell	
21st October 2016			
IWALC	Mike Wheeler	Helena Hewston	
IOW Chamber of	Kevin Smith	Tom Stroud	
Local Access Forum	Jennine Gardiner	Mark Earp	
11th November 2016			
CycleWight	Tim Thorne	Tania Rebel	George Wilks
	Martin Gibson		
IOW Steam Railway	Peter Vail	Jim Loe	Peter Conway
Morrisons	Karl Wight		
HIOW Police	Supt. Sarah Jackson		
18th November 2016			
Shanklin Town Council	Richard Priest	Jon Gilbey	
Isle of Wight College	Debbie Lavin		
IW Bridleways Group	Tricia Merrifield		
Highways PFI Contract	Jonathan Murphy		
28th November 2016			
FSB	Tim Hunter-		
Waitrose	Daniel Olive		

Tesco	Martin Pedley		
Ryde Town Council	Ian Stevens		
2nd December 2016			
BAE Systems	Tim Blake		
Sandown Airport	Daniel Subhani		
Small Business owners	Tim Brayford	Carol Bailey	
GKN	Sarah McCarthy-Fry		
9th December 2016			
Red Funnel	Kevin George		
16th December 2016			
Wightlink	Keith Greenfield	Sean Millward	
Island Roads	Paul Herbert		
13th January 2017			
Southern Vectis	Richard Tyldsley	Paul Walker	
Hovertravel	Neil Chapman	(via conference call)	
20th January 2017			
CAMRA	Tim Marshall		
CCG/NHS	Helen Shields	Mark Price	
17th February 2017			
Senior Licencing	Kevin Winchcombe		