



# Notes of evidence

Name of meeting	<b>POLICY COMMISSION FOR BUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
Date and time	<b>WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2008 AT 6.00 PM</b>
Venue	<b>COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Commission	Cllrs Jonathan Fitzgerald-Bond (Commissioner), Henry Adams, William Burt, Charles Hancock, John Hobart, Peter Humber
Cabinet	None
Other Councillors	Cllr David Whittaker
Officers Present	Mr Jonathan Baker - Committee Services Miss Andrea Lisseter - Overview and Scrutiny Team Mr Warren Haynes – Environmental Health Manager
Stakeholders	Mr Marc Morgan-Huws – Southern Vectis
Apologies	None
1.	<b>Notes of Evidence</b>
	1.1 The notes of evidence from the previous meeting on the <a href="#">3 April 2008</a> were agreed.
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	2.1 There were no declarations given.
3.	<b>Multi Storey Car Parks</b>
	3.1 The Commission was advised that National Car Parks, Euro Car Parks and Airport Parking Corporation of America had been provided with the relevant local data in relation to the setting up of a Multi Storey Car Park on the Island and the Commission was awaiting their response.
	3.2 The delay in sending the information was not fully quantifiable but the Director and relevant Officer of the Directorate informed a Commission Member that the data had been sent in the first week of April 2008.
	3.3 It was noted that the Commission requested that all action be followed up by Highways in a timely manner.

- 3.4 The Commission was given a presentation by the Commercial and Operations Manager of Southern Vectis about the contribution that the Bus Company could give on the matter of Car Parking, and in particular park and ride, on the Island.
- 3.5 It was noted that an increase in car ownership along with ferry traffic growth, the increased public need to visit Newport as well as the increased population and the resulting housing needs had led to a picture of increased traffic for the Isle of Wight.
- 3.6 It was noted that the lack of space for new roads along with limited funding meant that there was no parking for the increased number of cars.
- 3.7 The increase in traffic along with more queues and pollution was turning Newport into a less attractive place to visit.
- 3.8 The Board were advised that the introduction of more car parking facilities would not be a solution in itself. It was suggested that this would use more amenity space and encourage more traffic.
- 3.9 It was stated that instead of a single solution being provided to solve the problem, a package of measures should be considered.
- 3.10 It was not the intention of Southern Vectis to advocate all people stop using cars but it was noted that a small percentage reduction in car use and targeted at specific critical times of the day would make enough of a difference.
- 3.11 The following measures were given to help reduce the problem with traffic:
- Better signage for through traffic
  - Newport Traffic Plan – Directional Flows
  - Parking Pricing
  - Long term v. Short Term Parking
  - The supply of Parking
  - Workplace Travel Plans
  - School Transport Plans and Provision
  - Park and Ride
- 3.12 It was therefore the challenge to adopt a package of measures, some more contentious than others, which would provide benefits that would be greater than any individual measure could deliver.
- 3.13 It was noted that the Park and Ride initiative that was operated successfully across the UK including the Island and should play an increasingly major part in any package of measures.
- 3.14 The benefits of the Park and Ride were:
- Location
  - Security – Personal and Property
  - Frequency of Buses

- Quality of Service
- Speed of Journey
- Price “V” Parking

3.15 The park and ride facilities should be on the busiest car corridors on the Island which included Ryde / East Cowes to Newport as well as Cowes and West Wight to Newport and should be provided with good security.

3.16 Costs of buses on dedicated Park and Ride sites would be £120,000 but this could be reduced to Nil if placed on the existing high frequency corridors where buses could be available between every 6 to 12 minutes.

3.17 Buses could be seen as a more attractive alternative if they reduce the traffic on the roads and were given more priority.

3.18 It was noted that the cost of parking in the Park and Ride should not be seen as prohibitive to make the scheme work.

3.19 Target Motorists would be:

- Newport Workers
- Shoppers
- Lone Drivers – Least efficient users of road space.
- Tourists and Visitors

3.20 Future plans would need to take into account a good management plan for Newport as well as green travel plans for workers and a good parking policy / Park and Ride within the correct locations and infrastructure.

3.21 The outcome would provide the following benefits:

- Less Peak Time Queues
- Less Cars in Newport
- Capital Receipts
- Development Opportunities
- Better Uses for Public Space
- More Attractive Town for Leisure / Retail / Business activity
- Strengthened Bus Network

3.22 The Commission were advised that buses were not seen as an outright alternative to cars but a means to move large numbers of people from one place to another.

3.23 The Commissioner stated that whilst the idea of Park and Ride was an important aspect of the Blue Paper that looked at the whole issue of parking on the Island, the key area that needed to be addressed were the port towns of Cowes and Ryde that suffered greatly as a result of commuter parking.

3.24 The Commercial and Operations Manager of Southern Vectis stated that it was the company’s intention to place a Park and Ride facility

in between Cowes and Newport to address the needs of parking in both Newport and Cowes.

- 3.25 The Commission was advised that an update on the Newport Traffic Plan would be provided at a future meeting of the Policy Commission following a meeting with the relevant Officer responsible.
- 3.26 It was noted that the current Park and Ride facility at Somerton was seen as a wrong location by Southern Vectis due to the split of bus services just before the site.
- 3.27 The Commission was advised that the plans for the bus fleet were to comply with the current legislation and convert by 2017 its fleet to low emission, easy access vehicles. The company was ahead of its target by some margin.
- 3.28 It was noted that the route between Ryde and Newport had an additional seven new Single Decker buses with the new higher quality specification. This increased usage by 25%.
- 3.29 It was also noted that a Park and Ride facility within the Ryde area could be either on the outskirts of the town around the Westridge / Smallbrook location for the more tourist point of view or between Ryde and Newport to server the majority of the working population.
- 3.30 The Commission noted the importance of the existing car parks and Park and Ride facilities that was used by the population of the Island and that any future plans must take their needs into account.
- 3.31 The Commission felt that existing car parks were used because car drivers felt that a family travelling to places such as Newport was still more financially viable than paying individual bus fares.
- 3.32 The Operations and Commercial Manager of Southern Vectis stated that a large percentage of bus users on Island who still had cars and would use the buses were over sixty, taking advantage of the free bus service. Growth from fare paying passengers amounted to approximately 16%, which was amongst the largest in the country.
- 3.33 It was noted that weekly tickets had been reduced in price and an increase in sales for these was recorded.
- 3.34 The Commissioner invited the Operations and Commercial Manager of Southern Vectis to continue to offer suggestions that would specifically improve Somerton Park and Ride and the facilities in Ryde.
- 3.35 It was noted that there would not be any need for more bus lanes in any package of measures.
- 3.36 It was also noted that a possible free service for the users of Park and Ride Busses serving the ferry ports would not be a viable option for Southern Vectis as it would mean that somebody would

ultimately pay for the service. However, it was felt that this could be an option that the ferry operators could consider in conjunction with Southern Vectis.

3.37 The Operations and Commercial Manager of Southern Vectis stated that there was always an opportunity for further competition for busses on the Island, but stated that all areas of the Island would need to be covered, including routes that were run on marginal costs.

3.38 The Commission thanked Southern Vectis for their contribution to the meeting and invited further input in the future to the issues of Parking.

The Meeting closed at 7.15pm

Chairman.....Date.....