

MINUTES OF QUALITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Held on Thursday 26th June 2008 at Quay Arts Centre, Newport

PRESENT:

David Bottom – (Chairman)	Steve Sansom – PD Port Services
Alex Brown – Isle of Wight Council	Lisa Scovell – Isle of Wight Council
Morris Barton – Chamber of Commerce	Malcolm Smith – Isle of Wight Council
David Blake – Federation of Small Businesses	Helen Stichbury – Isle of Wight Council
Dawn Cooper – Isle of Wight Council	Rachael Thorne – Isle of Wight Council
Valerie Lawson - Cycle Wight	Don Vincent – IW Bus Users Group
Andy Morris – Isle of Wight Council	Hugh Walding – IW Friends of the Earth
Marc Morgan-Huws – Southern Vectis	Ron Wallis – IW Motorcycle Training Scheme
Simon Richardson – Hampshire Constabulary	Charlotte Westwood – Isle of Wight Council

1. APOLOGIES

Norman Arnold – Federation of Small Businesses	Ashley Curzon - Isle of Wight Council
Kevin Bolan – Isle of Wight PCT	Loretta Lale – Hovertravel Ltd
Patrica Collins - British Horse Society	Wendy Perera – Isle of Wight Council
Alan Cook – Isle of Wight Council	Steve Porter – Steve Porter Transport
	Chris Wells – Isle of Wight Council

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the 27th March 2008 were agreed following two grammatical amendments.

David Bottom (DB) informed the group that due to ill health he had been unable to progress item 3B. Ron Wallis (RW) explained that the nearest test centre would be Lee-on-Solent, which would not be operational until October; with the next closest, being Poole, Dorset. Of the 62 centres which the DSA felt were required to deal with the changes in testing procedures only 30 would be operational in time. Talks were taking place as to the possibility of using Smallbrook Stadium as a possible test location once a week.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(A) Report from the Freight Forum.

Morris Barton (MB) reported on the minutes from the Freight Forum held on Tuesday 20th May 2008. The Freight Action plan was progressing and Malcolm Smith had reported on the upcoming PFI. Ian Boyd, chairman, proposed four options for the future of the group and of those it was decided that it would remain in the present informal format with a representative from Highways Maintenance attending future meetings and agendas being more focus.

DB stated that he felt that the group was useful and constructive, and that he hoped to attend the next Freight Forum meeting on the 24th July 2008 which would be focussing on Park & Ride as a solution to congestion and traffic issues, specifically in and around Newport and that all QTP members were welcome to attend.

(B) Hospital Travel Arrangements – Outcome of Meeting.

Following on from item 3C in the previous minutes a meeting had been held between Southern Vectis, NHS Primary Care Trust, I.W Bus Users Group and the Isle of Wight Council to discuss bus access to the hospital. Don Vincent (DV) stated that the I.W Bus Users Group agreed that able bodied people found that bus travel to the hospital was adequate, however for those with mobility problems it was felt that either the Hospital Car Service or the Voluntary Car Service operated by the Rural Community Council may provide a better solution. David Blake (DBL) added that sometimes use of voluntary hospital cars could cost more than a Taxi and that drivers were not required to have a CRB (Criminal Records Background) check.

Val Lawson (VL) highlighted Southampton Hospital as a model of best practice as they have a successful travel plan in place, in contrast to St Mary's. It was perceived that Hospital staff occupied the majority of car parking spaces on the site and contributed to the congestion in Newport. MB added that he felt the hospital was difficult to access for all persons due to practical problems. Marc Morgan-Huws (MMH) felt that the absence of a Workplace Travel Plan was a major contributor to the problems, and that both the Primary Care Trust and the Council should prioritise the development of the plans, adding that the Council should lead by example.

4. **UPDATE ON ISLAND PLAN CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTIONS**

Dawn Cooper (DC) updated the group on the Island Plan consultation process and that a report on the feedback from February's workshops had been prepared. Now that the preferred options had been chosen, a further round of consultation with themed workshops would be held between 18 August 2008 and 22 September 2008. She also added that public 'surgery sessions' would be held to ensure that the preferred option policies could be shaped by all.

MB felt that the Island Plan and Economic Strategy should be strongly linked, and that there were discrepancies between the two plans. MMH added that the placement of industry, retail and office buildings in locations not suitable or more suited to other uses in terms of existing infrastructure would exacerbate traffic congestion on the Island. DC stated that these issues could be discussed further in the forthcoming consultation sessions and asked that the QTP Executive have a meeting with Wendy Perera to discuss the Island plan in more detail.

ACTION: QTP Secretary to call meeting of the Executive and invite Wendy Perera.

5. **PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE**

Malcolm Smith (MS) informed the group that the Isle of Wight Council had been selected as a "Pathfinder Authority" to undertake a Highways Private Finance Initiative (PFI), along with Hounslow Borough Council and Sheffield City Council.

The Council have until January 2009 to submit a full business case and in May 2009 the Treasury would make the final decision, hopefully this should only be a formality. The procurement process should be completed by March 2011, with actual work starting in November 2011.

The contract would be a 'fence to fence' approach, dealing with all aspects of maintenance including surfacing, drainage, and bridges, however the PFI would not extend the network. The first seven years of the contract would bring the network up to an agreed standard, followed by 18 years of maintaining the network. The contract would be worth approximately £850million and where possible the contractor would use local materials and contractors.

Over the first seven years, there would be a number of road closures, and therefore there would have to be close co-ordination between the Council and utilities to avoid multiple closures of roads. MMH explained that the impact on bus services was likely to be severe in some areas, particularly where alternative routes are inadequate. Andy Morris (AM) assured the group that maintaining bus services to all areas was important. MMH and Simon Richardson (SR) asked if any funding was being made available to assist with the impact that multiple closures could have on the Police and bus operator. MS felt that this was unlikely. DBL added that Taxis and licensed drivers would also be affected by road closures and diversions and should be included in any further discussions on the issues.

6. **2008 LTP ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

(A) Progress Towards LTP Targets

Charlotte Westwood (CLW) gave a presentation on the 2008 Local Transport Plan (LTP) Progress Report. She provided a brief overview of the LTP process and thanked the QTP members who had contributed to the report. She outlined that of the 21 indicators contained within LTP2, 13 were on track, 6 were not on track and 2 had no clear evidence, the group discussed the relevance of including ferry patronage as an indicator within the plan. The 2008 Progress Report was being prepared and would be submitted in July with the final submission in October 2008. The report would look back over the past 2 years and forward over the next 3 years. CLW highlighted some of the successful initiatives, including within the plan such as School Travel Plans, Cycle Promotion events (Bikers Breakfast, Bike-2-School Weeks) and Road Safety campaigns such as Crash Awareness and Driver Awareness Training.

VL asked how Eco-Island and LTP2 fitted together, CLW explained that the Eco-Island strategy recognises the importance of transport and accessibility and therefore the strategy had many of the same ambitions as LTP2.

(B) Bus Strategy and Bus Information Strategy

AM provided the group with a status report on the Bus Strategy and Bus Information Strategy. He explained that Bus Patronage figures were increasing year on year partly due to free travel for the over 60's and flat £1 fare for Students. It was also felt that investment by Southern Vectis had contributed to making bus travel more attractive particularly by ensuring that most of the fleet were accessible to

disabled users and air-conditioned. MMH stated that Bus Users UK would be conducting an audit of services from a customer's perspective in August and September 2008 and producing a report of recommendations of possible improvements.

AM highlighted that of the 12 action points within the Bus Strategy 10 had either been completed or were underway. The two outstanding action points, were the development of Work Place Travel Plans and the establishment of a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP), both of these would be progressed over the remainder of the three years of the plan period. MMH stated that he fully supported the establishment of a QBP as it would represent a long term mechanism for future delivery and ensure a closer working relationship between the Council and Southern Vectis.

7. **VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS & SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES**

Rachael Thorne (RT) informed the group that the Council had undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure that drivers were aware of their speeds particularly around schools and through villages. Various methods were being used to remind drivers of their speeds for instance, Speed Indicator Devices (SID) that flash the actual speed at which the vehicle was travelling and signs that flash a reminder speed sign if the limit was being exceeded. The SIDs can also record speed data, which can be analysed to determine whether drivers are adhering to the changes, an example being Whippingham Primary School that showed an approximate 4-5mph reduction in vehicle speeds following the introduction of an advisory speed limit at school times. A Speed Assessment Framework would be carried out over the next three years and would revise speed limits where necessary.

VL stated that as a cyclist, she supported the initiative, as slower vehicle speeds were helpful for both cyclists and pedestrians on roads where visibility was poor, thus improving safety. She also hoped that it would help raise awareness of speed issues, encouraging drivers to allow adequate time for their journeys. DBL enquired as to why the speed limit on the approach to the Racecourse roundabout had not been reduced down to 40mph, RT explained that Lushington Hill through to North Fairlee had undergone a speed limit revision and that the area would be examined again during the forthcoming speed assessment framework if required.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

DBL felt that Taxi & Licensed Drivers on the Island were in a difficult situation with regards to increasing fuel prices, particularly as the Council had rejected a request to increase fare tariffs, as a result some drivers were selling their vehicles and leaving the trade. DB asked that the group be presented with a paper or proposal so that the issue could be progressed.

At the previous meeting DB explained that Hugh Walding (HW) would be chairing a working group, looking at the constitution and membership of the QTP, and asked for volunteers to assist.

9. **DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 25th September 2008, at Quay Arts, Newport. (*note: the meeting will take place in the Theatre, not the Seminar room as previously advised*)

Ashley Curzon to be invited the next meeting to update the group on the progress of Regeneration.

ACTION: QTP Secretary to invite Ashley Curzon to the next QTP meeting.

DB informed the group that plans for the AGM were to host a 'question time' style debate with guest speakers, potential speaker of note were Susan Stewart of GoSE. In light of the proposed format of the meeting, it was suggested that the AGM be re-scheduled from December 2008 to January 2009.

ACTION: QTP Secretary to re-schedule AGM and contact guest speakers.