

MINUTES OF QUALITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Held on Thursday 25th September 2008 at Quay Arts Centre, Newport

PRESENT:

David Bottom – (Chairman)
Alex Brown – Isle of Wight Council
Morris Barton – Chamber of Commerce
Marc Morgan-Huws – Southern Vectis
Don Vincent – IW Bus Users Group

Steve Porter – Steve Porter Transport
Hugh Walding – IW Friends of the Earth
Chris Wells – Isle of Wight Council
Charlotte Westwood – Isle of Wight Council
Brenda Wilkins – I.W Group of Advanced Motorists

1. APOLOGIES

David Blake – Federation of Small Businesses
Kevin Bolan – Isle of Wight PCT
Alan Cook – Isle of Wight Council
Dawn Cooper – Isle of Wight Council
Susan Cracknell – Isle of Wight Council
Ashley Curzon - Isle of Wight Council

Jock Darroch – Hovertravel Ltd
Lisa Scovell – Isle of Wight Council
Loretta Lale – Hovertravel Ltd
Val Lawson - CycleWight
Wendy Perera – Isle of Wight Council
Ron Wallis – I.W Motorcycle Training

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the 26th June 2008 were agreed.

3(b) – Hospital Travel Arrangements

Don Vincent (DV) expressed thanks to Kevin Bolan of the PCT for new crossings and footways at St. Mary's Hospital.

5 – Private Finance Initiative

It was identified that there would be a particularly large number of road closures within the beginning of the PFI contract. It was therefore felt useful if affected bus routes were to be listed in road closure notices. Greater advanced notice of road closures and diversions effecting bus services would also be helpful. It was also felt that budgeting for mitigation of road closures should have been given higher priority within the process.

7 – Variable Speed Limits/Speed Indicator Signs and '20s Plenty'

It was highlighted to the group that there had been driving test fails where pupils had adhered to advisory 20mph limits which are not enforceable. It was also stated that slower speeds decrease vehicle efficiency. In order to progress these matters, it was felt more information was needed.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(A) Report from the Freight Forum

The Freight meeting was presented with a brief explanation of Coppins Bridge, discussing options to enhance the current system, including non-controlled junctions. Park & Ride as a solution to congestion and other issues in and around Newport was also discussed with a presentation from Marc Morgan-Huws.

The notification system for road closures and maintenance was criticised, it was suggested that a feedback mechanism would be advantageous, Malcolm Smith agreed to look into the current system adding that a rolling story in the County Press detailing maintenance was to begin shortly

An update on over hanging hedges identified the issue was progressing, with notices issued to land owners, other remedies were also discussed. Road material recycling was also discussed in the context of PFI, Malcolm Smith confirmed that it would be used, reducing the volume of imported and waste materials.

(B) Island Plan Update

It was felt the consultation discussions on 2 September 2008 were useful and constructive. Newport was highlighted as a focal issue for the Island in terms of congestion and reducing car usage. Current parking policy was seen to be encouraging car usage. It was also felt that the LDF should support the LTP more, but recognise the timescales (5years / 20years).

(C) Wightlink's plans for Fishbourne Terminal

The Executive met with Andrew Wilson, CEO Wightlink on 10 September 2008 to discuss Wightlink's planned improvements to the Fishbourne-Gunwharf ferry link. The Executive welcomed the proposed improvements which offered greater efficiency and punctuality, as well as improvements in high-space flexibility for freight vehicles and coaches.

The only concerns with the proposed changes were effects on traffic entering and exiting the terminals and the reliability of forecasts for traffic growth. It was stated that improvements in marshalling and lane management would offer improvements over the current situation in Fishbourne Lane, with more punctual ferries reducing the incidents where late ferries cause build up of vehicles waiting to board. It was also thought that with recent economic conditions and rises in fuel prices that forecasted traffic growth may not be reliable, although it was recognised that increased costs of travel may encourage more holidaying cars from closer areas.

In principle the Executive welcomed the changes, stating the Island would always need a punctual and efficient ferry service. It was agreed the QTP group would offer a general endorsement of the proposed improvements.

ACTION: QTP Secretary to prepare letter of endorsement.

4. PARK & RIDE

Marc Morgan-Huws (MMH) gave a presentation on Park & Ride as part of a package of solutions to congestion in and around Newport. The group agreed that alone, Park & Ride did not constitute the answer, but combined with other measures, such as improved signing, changes to current parking policy, School Travel Plans, Workplace Travel Plans and changes in attitudes through 'hearts and minds' approaches it could provide and sustain a reduction in peak-time traffic entering Newport. It was also felt that focus on the three strategic corridors (Cowes-Newport, Ryde-Newport and South Wight-Newport) and a cohesive strategic approach was required to deliver a solution and offer a quality transport network.

5. "STREETS FOR ALL"

Brenda Wilkins offered an insight into shared street surfaces, an idea which began in Scandinavia, now present in some London Boroughs. It focuses on removing street 'clutter' including signs, yellow lines and other street furniture deemed unessential to make streets more attractive and pleasant places to be. This idea has some issues surrounding access by blind and disabled users who use street furniture and kerbs to navigate or who could be otherwise impeded. It was noted that these issues could be overcome through design.

The issue of signage obstructed by hedges and unnecessary use of signs was also raised. For example, 30mph speed limit signs at half height. The response was given that signage is erected and designed to national regulations, it was thought that inviting Kevin Burton - Traffic & Road Safety Team Leader to a future meeting would be beneficial in discussing this issue further.

ACTION: QTP Secretary to invite Kevin Burton to future meeting.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR AGM

DB informed the group that plans for the AGM were to host a 'question time' style debate with guest speakers, potential speaker of note Susan Stuart of GoSE had been invited, pending a reply. Steve Porter (SP) volunteered to appear as a panellist. Ideas for topics should be forwarded to the QTP secretary.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Considerable discussion about the future direction of the QTP took place, with focus on the relationship between the QTP group and the Council. The group thought that to maintain impetus, it would be beneficial to have the Head of Service and Elected Member represented at meetings so as to ensure strategic decision makers could contribute to and address issues raised at meetings. It was also highlighted that contributions from other group members, such as the train and ferry operators was valued and currently missing from debate and discussions.

ACTION: QTP Secretary to write letter to the Leader of the Council & Portfolio holder and organise meeting of the Executive with new Head of Service (Highways).

ACTION: QTP Secretary to prepare letters to train and ferry operators.

8. DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

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.