

**NOTES OF QUALITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP OPEN MEETING  
HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2009  
AT QUAY ARTS CENTRE, NEWPORT**

**1. CHAIR'S ANNUAL REVIEW**

David Bottom, welcomed everyone to the Open Meeting of the Quality Transport Partnership (QTP) and outlined the work that had been undertaken by the QTP over the last year.

**2. HOW EASY IS IT TO BECOME LOW CARBON?**

The group received a presentation from Susan Stuart, Deputy Regional Director for Transport and Environment. Susan outlined the Eddington Transport Study and the Government's response to both the Eddington and Stern reports. An overview of the Towards a Sustainable Transport System document was provided along with an outline of the required steps and factors to be considered.

**3. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT**

The group received a presentation from Simon Pratt, Regional Director, Sustrans South East. Simon gave an overview of Sustrans and the work that the sustainable transport charity had been involved with over the years including the development of the National Cycle Network on the Island. Carbon emissions were considered as well as ways of encouraging more sustainable travel including links to schools and personal travel planning.

**4. PANEL – QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME**

David Bottom introduced and chaired the Panel:

Simon Pratt - Sustrans,  
Cllr Tim Hunter-Henderson - Isle of Wight Council  
Marc Morgan-Huws - Southern Vectis  
Susan Stuart - Government Office for the South East  
Roger Barnard - Older Voices.

The audience asked the following questions which were responded to by the Panel.

***What can be done to improve public transport, particularly train travel which is expensive and often over crowded?***

Susan Stuart replied:

- It is a difficult issue, with fares being higher at peak times however reduced fares are often available either side of the peak times.
- Train travel v's car travel can appear expensive however there are a lot of hidden costs with motoring.
- Ultimately someone ends up paying for subsidised services - either the tax payer or the end user.

***Some users of public transport do not have other options such as the elderly and young?***

Tim Hunter-Henderson replied:

- The concessionary fares for the over 60's, which the Council extended, to cover both peak times and train travel have over the past two years resulted in a big model shift.
- The down side, a £3.3 million funding gap.
- The Council has established a Car Share site, the idea being that people think about each journey in turn.

Simon Pratt added:

- People needed to make informed travel choices.
- The extension of Heathrow is absurd idea and should be shelved, with instead investments being made in sustainable transport.

***As a casual user of the Island bus network, a 3 mile journey costs £10, is it possible to have a book of tickets at a fixed cost?***

Marc Morgan-Huws replied:

- Someone has to pay for everything, the user via the fare, subsidies by the council tax payer, or income tax payer.
- The occasional user wants the frequent service but at the lowest possible cost.

***The bus network is very good on the Island i.e. the Newport to Cowes and the Newport to Ryde however the connections between trains, ferries and buses can be difficult?***

David Bottom replied:

- The issue of integration is a huge logistical problem.

Susan Stuart continued:

- The main task for public transport is to get the majority of people to where they need to go, it is, the end to end parts of the services which are difficult to tie in.
- Train punctuality has improved however there are still areas where further improvements are needed.

Simon Pratt added:

- Reliability is difficult, however, a good reliable system has been achieved elsewhere in Europe, for instance Hanover, has a wonderful tram system within the city, and at the end of the system there is always a bus waiting.
- The answer is more investment needed which in turn will result in a more reliable integrated transport system.

***Is the Student Ride scheme going to continue at the £1 rate in the next final year. Young people need affordable public transport particularly in a rural area such as the Island?***

Tim Hunter-Henderson replied:

- The Council are committed to continuing the Student Ride scheme on the present bases i.e. the £1 flat fare.

***The monthly ticket is great, if you use it to commute everyday, otherwise it is a little expensive. Is it possible to buy a top-up card?***

Marc Morgan-Huws replied:

- A bus is like a mobile phone, sign up to a contract and get it cheaper, chose to pay as you go and the discounts will never be as big, i.e. the 90 day freedom ticket.
- Southern Vectis are looking at a five day ticket which can be used on any five non consecutive days.
- The present ticketing systems is 15 years old, and Southern Vectis are investigating systems which would allow integrated ticketing between buses, trains and ferries, as well as excepting the Oyster card.
- Also direct debit schemes, which can be paid either monthly or weekly, at a cheaper rate are being investigated.
- It is hoped that all of these improvements will be implemented within the next few years.

***I was surprised by the amount of traffic in Newport, and felt in particular that the town centre should be pedestrianised. I also think that the Island rail network should be reconstructed!***

Tim Hunter-Henderson replied:

- The Council would welcome the reconstruction of the rail network on the Island however, such a scheme would be cost prohibitive.
- Newport is the County Town of the Isle of Wight, and as a result all roads seem to converge in Newport.
- The road network was not built for the present levels of traffic, although everyone has a part to play by considering each journey and where possible using the bus or cycling.
- The Council has looked at the pedestrianisation of Newport Town Centre in the past however, it was felt that for the scheme to succeed a ring road around Newport would be required.
- It was acknowledged that traffic flows from west to east are limited, and a capital bid has been submitted to SEERA for additional funding to address the issue.

***Cost is the main driving force behind people choice of transport. Can the residents parking permit stay at the present cost?***

Tim Hunter-Henderson replied:

- Residents parking permits and parking charges for the next financial year have remained unchanged. The Council does not want to penalise motorists, but instead encourage them to make good choices.

Simon Pratt added:

- Car costs remain the same however, public transport costs seem to increase dramatically, this really should be addressed at local level, particularly regarding parking charges.

***As a user of the student rider scheme, I feel that there is a lot of discrimination against young people on Island buses!***

Marc Morgan-Huws replied:

- Southern Vectis have to be able to prove to the Council that each passenger travelling under the scheme was entitled to do so, and that is why a valid, readable card, has to be presentable at all times.
- Drivers are trained to deal with all customers politely, and if you have a problem with a particular driver, please report it to us, and I will personally be happy to investigate, and if required take disciplinary actions.

***Need to have more versatility with bikes and buses, i.e. able to take shopping trolleys onboard!***

David Bottom replied:

- There are no alternative to the car for certain journeys.

***I have recently received my over 60's concessions card, and for the first time in nearly 50 years I have been on a bus, it was a wonderful experience, and as a result I have sold my wife's car! I would like to calculate how much I have saved on my carbon foot print with the sale of one of our cars?***

Susan Stuart replied:

- There is a carbon calculator on the DEFRA website, which will hopefully provide you with a more personal breakdown of your carbon savings.

Simon Pratt added:

- Buses can be a nice place, it is just a shame it took you 50 years to find out!

***As a taxi proprietor, we consider ourselves a service which bridges the gap between public transport and the private car, however, we feel as though we are treated like second class citizens by the Isle of Wight Council!***

Roger Barnard replied:

- Older people use taxis regularly and agree that they are the mortar in the bricks of transport.

Simon Pratt added:

- When using a taxi, consider sharing it with others, thus reducing the cost i.e. ask other people at the rank if they are going the same way as you.