

Engineering Services



Rail Strategy



Stephen Matthews BSc (Hons) CEng MICE MIHT
Head of Engineering Services



	Page
A INTRODUCTION	2
B NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORK	3
B.1 National Policy	3
B.2 Regional Policy	4
B.3 Local Policy	4
C ISLAND CONTEXT	6
C.1 Demographics	6
C.2 Geography	7
C.3 Historical Development of the railways	7
C.4 Current Provision	8
D ISLE OF WIGHT COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP	9
D.1 Background	9
D.2 Community Lines	9
D.3 Local Response	10
D.4 Community Rail Development Strategy	10
D.5 Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership	10
E DEVELOPING A PASSENGER RAIL STRATEGY	11
E.1 Research and Consultation	11
E.2 Results of Initial Consultation	12
F OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS	14
F.1 Background	14
F.2 LGA Shared Objectives	14
F.3 Isle of Wight Council Targets & Monitoring	14
F.4 Monitoring and Management	15
G THE PROGRAMME	16
G.1 Delivering the Programme	16
G.2 The Programme	16
G.3 Summary	16
H ACTION PLAN	16
I CONCLUSIONS	17
APPENDICES	
A Community Rail Partnership Constitution	18

A. Introduction -

This document establishes a strategy for Passenger Rail on the Isle of Wight in response to recent changes in the rail industry. It seeks to prioritise the opportunities arising from the recent White Paper 'The Future of Rail' and the publication of the Strategic Rail Authority's Community Rail Development Strategy in November 2004.

With the current franchise for Island Line ending in February 2007 it is important the Isle of Wight Council develops a Passenger Rail Strategy to provide the basis for participation in the re-tendering process.

This Passenger Rail strategy has sought to achieve a cohesive, integrated and realistic approach to the further development of Island Line, which will deliver future sustainable development, encourage modal shift, improve access and deliver better integration with other public transport provision.

With the many changes in the structure and management of the rail industry currently under way it is important that the Island develops a positive business case for new investment to a line that fulfils a number of different functions for both the communities served by the railway and the Island's economy.

B. National, Regional and Local Policy Framework

B.1 National Policy

Railway Act 1921 - During World War 1 the UK's many railway operators were taken under state control that continued through to 1921. It was decided at this point to return the railways to private ownership but in doing so all operators were forced to merge into 4 companies. The Island's railway companies became part of Southern Railway in 1923.

Transport Act 1947 - As part of the nationalisation agenda of the post war Labour Government, the railways, the canals and road freight transport passed into state control in 1948, under the direction of the British Transport Commission.

Transport Act 1962 - The British Transport Commission was abolished and management of the railways passed over to the British Railways Board and subsequently British Rail.

Railway Act 1993 - The Conservative Government laid the foundations for the privatisation of the railways in the UK, splitting ownership and maintenance of the tracks (Railtrack) from the operation of train services (franchises).

Transport White Paper (1998) - In 1998 the DETR (now the DfT) published its Transport White Paper "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone". It set out the Government's policies for future transport development and its aims are to create a sustainable, integrated and socially inclusive transport system. Seeking to extend choice in transport and to secure mobility for the whole community, to develop alternative travel modes and an integrated transport policy are the essential components of the framework. Therefore, the White Paper highlights the need for a co-ordinated approach to be developed through partnerships amongst local authorities, transport operators, developers, major employers and individuals. For the railway it advocated a strategic rail authority, a revised Office of Rail Regulation and a greater voice for the user.

Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan - In 2000 the Government published "Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan". This document is a strategy for £180 billion private and public sector investment to create an integrated transport system, with targets for growth in all sustainable transport modes. Much of its emphasis is on major infrastructure projects and in particular the railways. The Plan seeks to double light rail passenger journeys in the plan period, 2001 – 2011.

The Plan reaffirms previous commitments to improved passenger information (including Traveline) and ticketing. Both revenue and capital funding is expected to be primarily through private investment, government grant and Local Transport Plan settlements.

Transport Act (2000) - Following the 1998 White Paper and Transport 2010 Plan the Act led to the formal creation of the Strategic Rail Authority to determine the strategic direction of the railways over the next 10 years.

Urban and Rural White Papers (2000) - Both of these key planning strategy documents referred back to the 1998 Transport White Paper and the 10 Year Plan to underline a commitment to the railways to reduce social exclusion and to offer choice of travel mode for both urban and rural areas. In particular the Rural White Paper identifies the need to protect rural services within wider rail franchises, and the opportunities to innovate through developing Community Rail Partnerships.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) - Government policies are reflected through Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs), which provide specific planning guidance for various policy areas such as housing, retail and office developments, as well as General Policies and Principles (PPG1). Planning is an important part of the overall transport policy making process and can help in promoting more sustainable travel choices and reducing the need to travel.

PPG13 Transport (March 2001) emphasises the integration between land use planning and transport, as policies regarding the scale, location and mix of land uses can significantly affect the need to travel. In addition, it promotes reduced reliance on private cars and highlights the importance of good interchanges to provide wider public transport choices.

PPG13 has a key role in ensuring that all development makes proper provision for access by public transport and it provides a policy framework for integrating transport modes. It also empowers local authorities to 'explore the potential and identify any proposals for new rail, including the reopening of rail lines, or the creation of new stations on existing rail lines.'

Everyone's Railway: The Wider Case for Rail (2003) - This SRA paper gives a detailed case for the contribution that Rail makes to life in the UK. In particular it supports the development of community rail partnerships and the use of micro-franchises to support rural branch lines.

Community Rail Development Consultation (2004) - The high cost of running and maintaining rural branch lines and low passenger figures led to the launch of this review by the SRA of 13% of the national network. The microfranchise model used by Island line is held as an example of how other branch lines might develop.

The Future of Rail White Paper (2004) - This White Paper follows a fundamental review of the rail industry highlighting the need to control costs while at the same time improve its performance for passenger and freight users. It committed the Government to support the SRA's strategy for Community Rail lines, and mentioned Island Line as an example of the micro-franchise model. It clearly stated that micro-franchises would continue to be competitive tendered but would need to be 'explicitly backed' by the unitary council.

The Future of Transport White Paper (2004) - The White Paper seeks to develop a transport network for the UK through to 2030. Two key recommendations will affect Island Line, namely the streamlining of the rail industry structure with the SRA subsumed into the Department of Transport and a commitment to establish partnerships to determine the future of local services.

Community Rail Development Strategy (2004) - The Strategy follows the Consultation carried out in early 2004, and provides the framework, differing models and options for developing the rural branch lines of the national rail network. Although Island Line was not one of the branch line pilots it has subsequently been proposed that it be designated in the second tranche of Community Rail lines.

B.2 Regional Policy

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) - To assist in the co-ordination of transport and land use planning, Regional Planning Guidance notes (RPGs) include the preparation of regional transport strategies covering all transport modes. They provide a strategic framework for transport policies and proposals to be included in the local authority development plan and in the Local Transport Plans. RPGs also cover environmental priorities and strategic policy objectives of regional planning bodies.

Regional Transport Strategy - This strategy replaces the transport section of RPG9 and has been developed through the South East Regional Assembly. The Regional Transport Strategy is the regional framework that will ensure that the investment programmes of local authorities, transport providers and other key stakeholders in the transport sector complement and support the wider regional objective of delivering a more sustainable pattern of development.

B.3 Local Policy

Unitary Development Plan - In 1997 Isle of Wight Council published its Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan and the UDP was adopted on 18th May 2001. The fifteen year strategy incorporates what were the current Transport Policies and Programme objectives and strategies, which have led to the development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives in 2000. Issues include encouraging greater transport choices such as walking, cycling and public transport. It is recognised that the Local Transport Plan should be fully integrated with the Unitary Development Plan. In its objectives and policies the railway is recognised as being a key mode in making local trips more sustainable. The Local Development Framework (LDF) will shortly replace the UDP.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) – Local Transport Plans are statutory documents that identify strategies and detailed plans for transport in the local area for a period of 5 years. It is the prime transport policy document for a local authority and the focus for development of new policies, initiatives and community involvement. They are a method for local authorities to have their transport strategies approved and funded by central Government, and as such replace the previous bidding mechanism established by the Transport Policies and Programme document.

The Isle of Wight Council's Local Transport Plan 2001 – 2006 was published in July 2000. With respect to the provision of a wider choice of transport modes, the plan promotes the integration of transport with key issues including education, air quality, crime, Local Agenda 21, health, social exclusion and travel awareness within a funding timescale of 5 years. The aims identified for the IOW LTP are:

- **To help widen travel choices and provide real alternatives for car owners;**
- **To enhance the quality of Island life;**
- **To encourage the provision of a safer and more secure transport system;**
- **To make the best use of the existing transport infrastructure;**
- **To encourage travel by sustainable means;**
- **To include measures to reduce social exclusion;**
- **To develop a framework by which future transport investment can be made;**

In the LTP passenger rail was considered in detail, with a review of the existing levels of provision and scope for improvement.

The key objectives for passenger rail as outlined in the 2001 – 2006 Local Transport Plan include:

- **To examine the current route and future rail and transport options;**
- **To investigate possible line extensions;**
- **To consider the possibilities for future franchise options, particularly with regards to the Council's role in franchised management;**
- **To consider the role of the rail line as part of an integrated transport system.**

Progress on these areas has been made during LTP1, in particular the Council commissioned a report in 2001 on extending the line from the Jacobs Consultancy. This report gave a number of recommendations for extending the rail network but questioned the high cost, engineering feasibility and whether there is a sustainable business case. At this time the Government is unwilling to support such small schemes.

Local Transport Plan 2 - The Council's second Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 was submitted in draft form to the Government in July 2005 with the full Plan due in March 2006. This second LTP has been prepared in accordance with Government guidance and:

- **Sets transport in the wider context;**
- **Identifies transport problems and opportunities;**
- **Contains a 20 year vision and a 5 year strategy;**
- **Sets locally relevant targets;**
- **Offers best value for money solutions.**

A number of priorities were agreed nationally between the Government and the Local Government Association which informs the LTP 2:

- **Increase accessibility;**
- **Improve road safety;**
- **Tackle congestion;**
- **Improve air quality.**

Alongside these priorities the Council has added the following local priorities of "Economic Prosperity and Regeneration" and "Effective Management".

In the second LTP, passenger rail is being considered in more detail with this separate strategy that seeks to deliver public transport improvements that meet the agreed priorities.

Other Policy Initiatives - The recent Best Value Review of Transport has looked at the railway within the context of future transport options. A suggestion was made that a guided bus way should replace the railway, this was rejected as being both unfit for purpose and lacking sufficient return on investment for both the public and private sector to invest in its construction. A number of recommendations were made on better integration with modes of transport and to concentrate the future development proposed under the 2020 Vision in the Ryde- Shanklin corridor.

It is important that the Council spends our money wisely and ensure the highest quality and best value in terms of the services we deliver. The Council must now report how well we are delivering our services and these are measured against a range of nationally recognised indicators, Best Value performance indicators (BVPIs). There are currently no rail related BVPIs.

Island Futures : The Community Strategy – This corporate plan for the period 2002 to 2012 covers all aspects of life on the Island and specifically considers access and travel. It builds on “Island Voices – Speak Out for the Future” and the Island Agenda 21 Strategy, to deliver a strategy for enhancing opportunities for Island people, delivering sustainable growth and protecting the environment.

The Council has to develop a wide range of plans, policies and strategies that will, to varying degrees, cross-refer to the Passenger Rail Strategy. This will include:

- **Community Plan;**
- **Local Development Framework;**
- **Local Transport Plan 2;**
- **School Travel Action Plan;**
- **Bus Strategy;**
- **Bus Information Strategy;**
- **Tourism Development Plan;**
- **Regeneration Strategies- Ryde, Sandown Bay.**

C. Island Context

C.1 Demographics

The Isle of Wight’s demographic growth has helped drive the development of the railway over many years.

The Island comprises large rural and semi-rural areas with a number of villages, small towns and established urban areas. It has a total resident population of 132,731 and its main local centres are Cowes, Newport, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor.

With its mix of urban areas mainly on the coast and low-density populations in its rural areas the local bus network needs careful coordination to ensure all needs are met.

In its demographics the uniqueness of the Island and the impact that has on the provision of bus services is brought into focus. Many of these factors influence and lead to high levels of social exclusion for residents of the Island. In national rankings the Isle of Wight remains one of the most socially excluded local authority areas, but within this figure there are great variations and considerable multiple deprivation in particular wards.

These factors combine to create an area that would traditionally be seen as likely to be a good market for public transport, because of relatively low incomes, high unemployment, seasonal patterns and an elderly population. However this assumes only a social welfare role for public transport, yet Island Line also have an increasingly important role in offering a solution to increasing traffic levels and congestion in the Ryde to Shanklin corridor.

C.2 Geography

By the nature of its Island location the development of the railways has been different to that found elsewhere in the southeast region. It developed as a separate network linked by a number of ferry services to the mainland.

The Solent ensures that, for example, a higher number of visitors make use of the Island's public transport system than equivalent holiday destinations on the mainland.

There are a number of environmental issues facing the railway on the Island, most notably flooding in the Ryde Esplanade and Brading areas. While in the long term a rise in sea level due to global warming could threaten services through Ryde Tunnel and on Ryde Pier.

C.3 Historical Development of the Railways

The first Railway on the Isle of Wight began construction in 1859 and was designed to run from Newport to Cowes carrying commercial goods from the sea to the central connection. The track was only 4 ½ miles long and was opened in 1862. In 1877 Medina Wharf was built and this produced more industry for the railway, as it transferred heavy goods such as coal and heavy goods. The railway at this point in time was the only stable means of transport for such industrial materials. The railway line continued to transport goods in this manner for over 50 years. Only later did the introduction of passengers happen.

The line became so successful that another line was constructed, this connected Newport to Sandown. This line, was planned by the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway Company in 1868, and would stretch a distance of 9 miles. However this failed numerous safety inspections so its launch was delayed. Finally the track opened and ran until 1880. However the company ran into receivership and was forced to sell to the Cowes and Newport Line, who then changed their name to the Isle of Wight Central Railway.

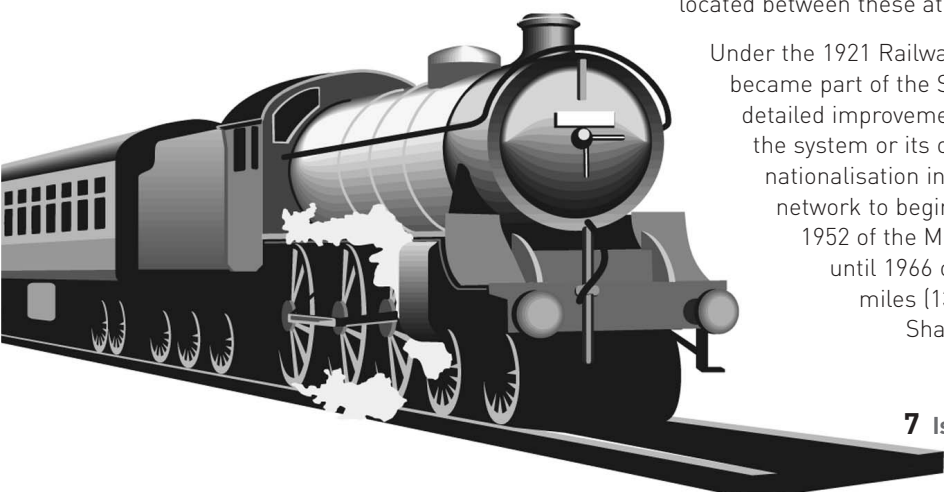
To the west of Newport a line was opened in 1889 by the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway in partnership with the Isle of Wight Central Railway linking the West Wight with the rest of the Island. This railway had a chequered financial history eventually becoming part of Southern Railway in 1923, its fortunes failed to improve and it was closed in September 1953.

The Isle of Wight Central Railway developed a further line running from Newport to Ryde. The line ran from east to west joining the Isle of Wight Railway at Smallbrook Junction and the end of the line at St Johns Road in Ryde.

The last section of the steam railway system to be built on the Island by the Isle of Wight Central Railway Company was the Newport to St Lawrence line, which was part of the Isle of Wight Central railway network. The track headed from Merstone south to Godshill, Whitwell and St Lawrence. It opened in the July of 1897 and was later extended to Ventnor in June 1900.

Another railway company was prominent on the Island; this was called the Isle of Wight Railway. They too constructed a number of railway lines; the first of these was opened in 1867, running from Ryde St Johns Station to Shanklin. The line was later extended to Ventnor in 1866. In 1882 a stretch from Brading to Bembridge was opened with one station located between these at St Helens.

Under the 1921 Railways Act the Island's railways became part of the Southern Railway, who made many detailed improvements but no substantial changes in the system or its operation. This was followed by nationalisation in 1948 which led to the Island network to begin to contract with the closure in 1952 of the Merstone-Ventnor branch; from then until 1966 other lines followed so that only 8½ miles (13.6km) from Ryde Pier Head to Shanklin remain today.



C.4 Current Provision

Following the 1993 Railway Act the Ryde to Shanklin branch line was privatised under the franchise name, Island Line. This line has been used to pilot the micro franchise approach whereby the franchisee would also be responsible for the maintenance of the line, even though Rail Track and subsequently Network Rail retained ownership. The first 5-year franchise for Island Line, starting on 13th October 1996, was awarded to Stagecoach Holdings Plc (www.stagecoachplc.com). This has now been extended twice (2001, 2003) which will now take the current franchise through to the end of February 2007.

Island Line Ltd currently operates along 13.6 km of track employing 39 staff to use 6 pairs of 1938 London Underground Driving Motor cars. The company has a turnover for 2002/03 of £3,576,000 and producing a pre-tax profit of £381,000. Full details of services and fare structure can be found at www.island-line.co.uk.

Island Line remains the first and only example of the microfranchise in the rail network. Under this model the Train Operating Company is responsible for both the running of the train services and the maintenance of the infrastructure. This gives Island Line a unique level of control over the line.

The SRA/Department for Transport began the process of tendering for the next franchise during the latter part of 2005. As part of the Community Rail Development Strategy the Council will have a role in this process.

The Island enjoys rail links from all 3 mainland ferry ports. Portsmouth Harbour is a mainline station for South West Trains, Wessex Trains and Southern. Southampton Central Station can be reached by a bus link from the Red Jet Terminal, and is used by train services operated by South West Trains, Wessex Trains, and Virgin CrossCountry. Lymington is a branch line station for a South West Trains service to the mainline station at Brockenhurst and connections to South West Trains and Virgin Cross-Country services.

Alongside Island Line the Island also has a heritage railway, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway who have been running steam services since 1971. This volunteer based organisation run services on 5 miles of track from March to December, from Wootton, through Havenstreet and Ashe, to Smallbrook Junction. In association with Island Line and Wightlink they offer a number of through tickets for their services. Full details on this organisation and its rail services can be found at www.iwsteamrailway.co.uk.



D. Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership

D.1 Background

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) came into being following the passage of the Transport Act 2000. Its Strategic Plan sets out the priorities for Britain's railway over the next ten years. The SRA is responsible for delivering the Plan, within available resources, and in particular the Government's key targets of 50% growth in passenger kilometres and an improvement in punctuality and reliability of rail services. It provides overall strategic direction and leadership for Britain's railway, as well as letting and managing passenger franchises, developing and sponsoring major infrastructure projects, managing freight grants, and is responsible for some aspects of consumer protection. Further details on the SRA can be found at www.sra.gov.uk.

The SRA's review of the rural branch lines was prompted by a need to examine the role of the railway in a changing society with different demands and expectations of public transport. This has resulted in strong growth in passenger numbers hitting 1 billion passenger journeys in 2003-04 and a network carrying 25% more trains than prior to privatisation.

However this growth has been focused on a number of key routes and areas of the network leaving a substantial part of the network under used. At the same time a significant gap between costs and income on the under used section of the network had become an issue. This reflected the high fixed costs of providing a rail service with its own infrastructure and stations irrespective of the number of passengers using these lines.

The SRA, realising that conventional cost-cutting or line closure were not an option, decided to examine in more detail the role of the rural branch lines to deliver other objectives such as alleviating local congestion, as part of the tourist economy or providing environmentally friendly access to historic coastal towns and national parks.

The SRA defines rural rail lines as ones that typically:

- Speed limit of 75 mph or less;
- Are of a low frequency (normally hourly or less);
- Have a single operator;
- Are local or rural in character;
- Do not carry international passenger traffic.

Using this definition the SRA have determined that 1,300 route miles of the existing rail network would be included in this review, representing 12.5% of the network and 420 stations (17% of the total).

D.2 Community Lines

The model currently being proposed by the SRA draws its inspiration from the regional branch lines in Germany, Netherlands and Denmark. In all these countries independently locally managed railways have been part of regional transport provision for decades. In the past few years Germany have been particularly successful in transforming the fortunes of loss making rural lines through involving the local management and the communities on the route in the management of the branch line.

In the UK the concept of the Community Rail Partnership has been around now for about 10 years with over 30 lines now run in this manner. Many of these lines had been lost in far larger franchise areas and had been starved of resources, funding and management support for years. In each case the Partnership has the following characteristics:

- Local management within Train Operating Company (TOC);
- Engaging with a wide circle of local stakeholders;
- Shared management of local stations;
- Improved local and regional marketing;
- Ability to access new funding.

D.3 Local Response

In February 2004 the SRA launched a consultation paper on community rail development identifying a number of lines that would be considered for a pilot. Included in this list was Island Line due to its structure as the only micro-franchise within the current rail network. As part of the consultation process the SRA asked for responses to 27 questions on the subject of community rail by 28th May 2004.

The Council's response stressed the essentially urban nature of Island Line and the higher passenger numbers and service frequency compared to the standard definition of community rail branch lines.

The Rail Working Party (RWP) of the Quality Transport Partnership supported this response.

Full details of the consultation process and subsequent policy developments can be found at www.sra.gov.uk/communityrail.

D.4 Community Rail Development Strategy

Following careful consideration of the responses the SRA drew together a strategy for community rail that was published in November 2004. This process was also informed by the details contained in the recent Government White Papers on transport and the future of rail.

The Strategy proposed that Island line would continue to develop the microfranchise model with additional input of a community rail partnership. However Island Line was dropped from the list of pilot lines due to its unique franchise structure and that it is a more substantial line than the other branch lines included in the remit of the Strategy.

D.5 Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership

In the meantime a major steer from the SRA had been to establish a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) to support Island Line through the pilot stage of the new strategy. On the Island the Rail Working Party (RWP) of the Quality Transport Partnership has championed the Island's role in the pilot and led the wide-ranging discussions on putting together a CRP.

At the RWP meeting on 21st December 2004 a proposal to evolve the Working Party into a Community Rail Partnership was approved. This was ratified by the full QTP on 13th January 2005.

A paper 'To support the Quality Transport Partnership in developing a Community Rail Partnership' was presented to the Council's Executive Committee on 6th October 2004. The Executive with the commitment to provide financial support to the emerging Community Rail Partnership passed this unanimously.

The CRP was established in January 2005 and is jointly funded by the Council, Island Line/South West Trains, Wightlink, Leader + and LIFT.

This new body seeks to co-ordinate the many activities currently underway at the main stations as well as the various initiatives providing new transport links and interchanges. Alongside this work the CRP seeks to support Island Line's case for improved investment in infrastructure and rolling stock.

ACoRP, the national federation of community rail partnerships, has provided a considerable amount of development support and advice to the Isle of Wight CRP. The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (www.acorp.uk.com) is a not-for-profit organisation working in partnership with the SRA to develop good quality and innovative services on local and rural railways across the United Kingdom.

E. Developing a Passenger Rail Strategy

E.1 Research and Consultation

The Isle of Wight Council has prepared this draft Passenger Rail Strategy having undertaken research and initial internal consultation. The research and consultation stage in developing the Passenger Rail Strategy has been achieved through a number of methods:

- Desktop review of current provision
- Benchmarking against other local authority areas
- Best Value Review of Transport
- Key stakeholder interviews
- Brainstorming sessions, and
- Group consultation

In the following section the results of these reviews and discussions are considered, particularly where they gave insight into those issues and concerns that have particular relevance in developing a Passenger Rail Strategy.

Consultation was undertaken on an individual and group basis, in stages. Initial structured interviews and brainstorming sessions with the Council's own technical staff identified issues for consideration and further research. Through this process existing views were challenged and opportunities for innovation and service development was encouraged. Central to this process was priority setting and realistic consideration of both constraints and opportunities of the rail sector.

Following these first meetings the draft framework for the Passenger Rail Strategy was created and formed the basis for consultation and interaction with the following key stakeholders:

- Councillors;
- Government Office for the South East;
- Train Operating Companies;
- Community Rail Partnership;
- Isle of Wight Steam Railway;
- User Groups;
- Local Ferry and Hovercraft Service Operators;
- Network Rail;
- Quality Transport Partnership;
- Community Groups;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Isle of Wight Tourism;
- Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce;
- Neighbouring Local Authorities.

The general public had an opportunity to view this document through their local libraries and on www.iwight.com.

E.2 Results of Initial Consultation

Some of the points raised were structural, reflecting the relationship of the Council with Island Line and the workings of the heavily regulated rail sector, while other points raised reflected the need for long-term investment in the line. The following have been identified as key issues:

- Rolling stock
- Service Frequencies
- Level of subsidy
- Infrastructure and Interchanges
- Rail Information
- Accessibility
- Staff
- Integrated Transport Policies

Rolling Stock

The age of the current rolling stock used by Island Line and the high cost of leasing 68 year old vehicles was seen as a major concern. Replacement rolling stock might not necessarily be 'heavy rail' (the current vehicles) as there are light rail options available.

Service Frequencies

Service frequency is key to attracting passengers to public transport and particularly those who have the car as a convenient alternative. In particular for Island Line there is a need to meet the FastCat services arriving and leaving the Island at Ryde Pierhead.

Level of Subsidy

Concern over the high level of subsidy given to Island, totalling £10.2m during the current franchise. However it is clear that only half this subsidy reaches the Island to support Island Line and maintain the infrastructure.

Infrastructure and Interchanges

While there has been investment in the track in recent years there is still a need to replace track between Smallbrook Junction and Brading Station. Also the options of raising the height of Ryde tunnel should be looked at, to improve the range of rolling stock that can be used on the line.

The Council's support for the Ryde Interchange project in the Provisional Local Transport Plan 2 is an example of improving station facilities.

Rail Information

The provision of rail travel information is good via the Island Line Timetable and on the internet. There is no immediate need for real time information at all stations in the short term although such a system, including details of onward connections and other local modes of public transport, would be desirable in the longer term.

Accessibility

There is common recognition that the demographics of the Island make ensuring both vehicle and station accessibility is a priority. To date Island Line's record in this area has been very good, with only Ryde St Johns Station causing concern over access.

Staff

Island Line currently employs 40 members of staff. Employment by Island Line has been seen as a good career move and the TOC confirmed that advertisements for positions with Island Line had always generated a high number of applicants.

Integrated Transport Policies

It was considered that the Local Transport Plan 1 offered a number of policy objectives for passenger rail within the Island's transport provision, but in LTP2 there is improved integration with other modes of transport and the inclusion of clear and realistic initiatives and objectives for passenger rail. A good example of this in action has been the recent launch of the No 16 Ventnor Rail Bus Link linking passenger rail services at Shanklin Station with Ventnor and St Lawrence. Average weekly passenger boarding figures are 1000 per week.

A key improvement to help the trains reach the FastCat ferry connections would be putting in a passing loop near Brading Station.

Summary

The wider consultation process has been a valuable exercise in identifying the objectives, roles and concerns of the key stakeholders in the delivery of rail services on the Isle of Wight. There is a need for clear agreement by the Council with stakeholders on the specific roles or actions needed to develop effective passenger rail on the Island and for all stakeholders to work with the Department for Transport on the detail of the next franchise.



F. Objectives and Targets

F.1 Background

Although on the Isle of Wight the car is currently the primary choice of transport and for the majority will remain an important means of travel, the railway still forms an essential part of the local transport system in the Ryde to Shanklin corridor.

It is therefore important to set out clear and achievable objectives and targets for the Isle of Wight Council Passenger Rail Strategy. While the objectives define the overall aims of the strategy at a broad level, the targets set out measurable goals. This helps to assess whether or not the objectives are being achieved. It will also provide a basis upon which changes that result from the implementation of the Passenger Rail Strategy can be monitored.

F.2 LGA Shared Priorities

The Government and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed, in July 2002, a set of seven shared priorities for local government. These priorities, which include raising the standards across schools, transforming the local environment and meeting local transport needs more effectively, are a focus for the efforts of Government and councils for improving public services.

Within the shared priority for transport there are a number of key themes that should be addressed, they include:

- **Accessibility**
- **Congestion**
- **Air quality**
- **Road Safety**

The Department for Transport will be looking for clear evidence that these shared priorities are at the heart of all local transport strategies and Local Transport Plan 2. However it has been up to the local authority to decide the relative importance of each of the shared priority themes on the Island.

The Council through its initial consultation process for LTP2 decided to add two additional local themes to its LTP; they are Economic Prosperity and Regeneration, and Effective Management.

F.3 Isle of Wight Council Targets and Monitoring

To achieve the above objectives it is necessary to adopt various targets to be applied to promote and improve rail services on the Island. Each target should be easily understood, measurable and relevant. The Isle of Wight Council has needed to consider, develop and adopt appropriate targets following the consultation stage of developing the Strategy.

Under LTP1 the following Local Performance Indicators were established and reported annually in the APR:

- **Number of train passenger journeys (2003/4 Target= 830,520, Actual= 867,000)**
- **Train punctuality (2003/4 Target= 95%, Actual= 97.7%)**
- **Train reliability (2003/4 Target= 98%, Actual= 99.9%)**

These remain the principal indicators against which targets should be set. It is however believed that the correct current figure is close to 1.2 million train passenger journeys and that the target should be based upon a continuing increase to that revised base figure.

F.4 Monitoring and Management

The preparation of a monitoring framework would be essential to ensure that the Passenger Rail Strategy is meeting its objectives and targets, allowing it to be reviewed and amended if necessary. The monitoring could be carried out through continued liaison between the Isle of Wight Council and the current, and future, Train Operating Companies to monitor changes in service, reliability and patronage on the line serving the Island.

The Council will report on its own performance as part of the Local Transport Plan 2's Annual Progress Reports. The rail monitoring would be integrated with the wider monitoring undertaken as part of the Local Transport Plan process and Best Value community surveys.

G. Programme

G.1 Delivering the Programme

These objectives and targets lead to a programme of rail service and infrastructure initiatives for the Island that will be included in the 2006 – 2011 Local Transport Plan 2. These initiatives for development of the rail service and its infrastructure can now be achieved through the Council, the Community Rail Partnership and the Train Operating Company. Future Passenger Rail Strategies can review those initiatives and identify further measures to support rail services on the Isle of Wight.

G.2 The Programme

The initiatives that are proposed for implementation or to be investigated during the 5 year Local Transport Plan 2 period (2006-2011) will fall into the following areas:

- Integrated transport;
- Island Line;
- Isle of Wight Steam Railway;
- National rail network;
- Other rail proposals.

G.3 Summary

The proposals for the programme will include a mix of capital and revenue funding, extensions of existing initiatives and the introduction of new innovations. They will need support from officers, councillors, TOC, the CRP and other transport operators and the wider community if they are to be effective.

H. Action Plan

The implementation of the measures in this Passenger Rail Strategy should be closely co-ordinated with the 5 year programme established by the Local Transport Plan 2 and with other Council transport initiatives. To deliver the Passenger Rail Strategy it is important to have a clear understanding of what can be achieved over time with existing resources but also identifying where additional funding or staffing may be secured. It is recognised that any Action Plan will need to be considered as part of the wider consultation on the Passenger Rail Strategy and that some elements may be delivered earlier or later dependent on reprioritisation or external factors.

I. Conclusions

This Passenger Rail Strategy sets out a clear and practical framework for the development of the local railway on the Isle of Wight, which reflects national transport policies, the Local Transport Plan 2 and the Councils priorities. It also reflects the demographics, economy and operating conditions of the Island, and the limits of a railway line serving only part of the Island.

The Local Government Association's Shared Objectives that are central to the Local Transport Plan 2 will also be reflected in the Passenger Rail Strategy and its targets on:

- **Congestion**
- **Accessibility**
- **Safer Roads**
- **Air Quality**

Alongside these Shared Objectives, the Council has added to local objectives that will be reflected in the Passenger Rail Strategy:

- **Economic Prosperity and Regeneration**
- **Effective Management**

The Passenger Rail Strategy will use monitoring and review processes as essential to achieving the overall objectives.

The measures and initiatives identified are often an extension of existing programmes and projects, but they can now be drawn together to achieve a combined impact alongside the work of the Community Rail Partnership.

Investment in local rail services by the Government has become more difficult because of a new focus of value for money in providing rail services outlined in the recent White Paper. New funding opportunities, whether from local government or the private sector need to be explored fully to improve local rail services and facilities.

The timescale for the Passenger Rail Strategy objectives and key themes is 5 years, reflecting the period covered by LTP2 but many of the measures likely to be included in the Action Plan are predominantly planned for the immediate two years. This reflects the timescale of the existing franchise that ends in February 2007.

The Action Plan is to be provided to ensure that the delivery of these measures is properly managed over the 5 years and that all of the partners are aware of their role in achieving successful implementation. The Passenger Rail Strategy will be subject to widespread consultation and the Action Plan will be developed and revised accordingly.

Appendix A: Community Rail Partnership Constitution

1. Title

The Title shall be the Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership (here in after referred to as 'the partnership').

2. Aims

The Aims of the partnership will be:

- To increase use of existing train services and Solent connections;
- To develop community goodwill and involvement with the local railway;
- To improve station facilities and environment;
- To develop integrated transport links to and from the railway;
- To assist with developing agreed long-term strategies for the local railway.

3. Objectives

The partnership will work with the local management of Island Line to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify potential growth markets for the rail service;
- To support station development projects along the line and act as a catalyst for other projects;
- To work positively with other transport providers;
- To work with the tourism industry on the island to promote use of rail;
- To ensure that the railway is an active participant in regeneration strategies for the Island;
- To identify new potential stakeholders in the community;
- To work with community organisations to harness people's energies and creativity;
- To participate in community based events and activities which promote the local railway;
- To identify and secure external funding for projects which meet the CRP's vision, aims and objectives.

4. Membership

The partnership will have two types of membership:

Stakeholder – Defined as an organisation with a substantial primary or secondary interest in Island Line providing a minimum level of funding to the partnership.

Groups/ Businesses – This is defined as any groups or businesses on the Isle of Wight with an interest in the future of the railway.

Nominations for Groups/ Businesses membership will require the support of an existing member. Nominations to be circulated not less than 28 days in advance of the next Executive Committee meeting and any objections to be put in writing for consideration at that meeting. Full membership shall follow a favourable majority vote by those present with voting rights at such an Executive Committee meeting.

5. Officers

The Officers shall comprise a Chairperson and Treasurer and shall be elected for a term of 1 year by the whole membership.

A Deputy Chairperson will be elected by the Executive Committee to deputise in the Chairperson's absence. The function of the Treasurer shall be to carry out monthly audits of the decision-making/purchase order system and prepare an annual financial statement.

The Rail Development Officer will provide secretariat support to the partnership's Executive Committee.

6. Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee responsible to the partnership.

The membership of this committee shall include:

- **The officers of the partnership;**
- **The Stakeholder Members;**
- **Two elected representatives of Groups/Business;**
- **Up to 3 co-opted members, two places to be reserved for representatives of the Quality Transport Partnership and Isle of Wight Tourism.**

If any committee member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without good reason, he shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and the vacancy may be filled at the next meeting of the group.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to: -

- **To direct the work of the partnership and the Rail Development Officer;**
- **To consider the needs of the members and advise the Island Quality Transport Partnership, the Department for Transport and other bodies accordingly;**
- **To appoint such sub-committees and project groups as may be necessary;**
- **To distribute publicity newsletters etc as may be agreed by the partnership or Executive Committee;**
- **To make such arrangements for receiving and raising finances etc as shall be necessary;**
- **To take all such other action as may be delegated from the partnership from time to time.**

7. Auditors

An Auditor shall be appointed annually at the AGM who shall not be a member of the Executive Committee.

8. Accounts

The Executive Committee shall maintain an interest bearing bank or building society account in the name of the partnership. Transactions on these shall be operated on the authority of the treasurer and/or one other nominated member of the Executive Committee.

9. Subscriptions

The partnership's year shall commence on 1st April and the annual subscription for Stakeholder members and Groups/Business members shall be determined at each AGM.

10. Meetings

AGM

The AGM shall be held within six months of the beginning of each financial year. Not less than 21 clear days notice of the convening of the AGM shall be given in writing to all members together with a copy of the audited financial statement, and any proposed alterations to the constitution.

At the AGM the business shall include the election of Group/Business members of the Executive Committee and the Officers, and the consideration of annual reports on its work since the preceding AGM.

Nominations for the officers and elected members of the Executive Committee shall be made in writing to the Chairperson to be received no later than 7 days before the date of the AGM.

Nominations must bear the names of the proposer and seconder and indicate the willingness of the nominee to stand for election.

The election of the officers requires a majority vote of both types of membership.

Ordinary Meetings

(a) Ordinary meetings shall be held at least twice each year (in addition to the AGM). These meetings will concentrate on a particular topic of interest and value to the membership as a whole.

(b) Resolutions or directives may be made at these meetings for the consideration or action of the Executive Committee. Such resolutions require a majority of both types of membership to be considered as adopted by the Meeting. In this event, a progress report must be given at the following meeting, whether an ordinary meeting or an AGM.

Extraordinary General Meetings

Extraordinary meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or at the written request of one half of the both types of membership, such written request to be delivered to the Chairperson. Notice of an EGM shall be given to all members at least 21 clear days before the date of the meeting and shall state the purpose for which the meeting is to be called.

11. Voting

At the AGM or an EGM, each paid-up member shall be entitled to one vote. Proxy votes are permitted by writing and by representation.

At any meeting the Chairperson, or in his absence the Deputy Chairperson, shall have the casting vote.

12. Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the Executive Committee shall be 5 members.

13. Alterations to the Constitution

This Constitution may be altered by the assent of at least two thirds of the full membership, represented and voting at the AGM or EGM. The Chairperson shall receive any proposals for the alteration of the Constitution at least 28 clear days before the meeting at which such a proposal is to be considered. Each member organisation shall be notified in writing and given full details of any such proposal at least 21 clear days before the meeting at which it is to be discussed.

14. Dissolution

(i) The partnership may be dissolved at any time by a decision of two thirds of the full membership.

(ii) Any assets remaining on dissolving the partnership after satisfying any outstanding debts and liabilities shall be distributed on the advice of the Island Quality Transport Partnership.

