

C. Transport issues & opportunities

C.1 Introduction

This section outlines the transport problems and issues that we face on the Island and the opportunities available to address these.

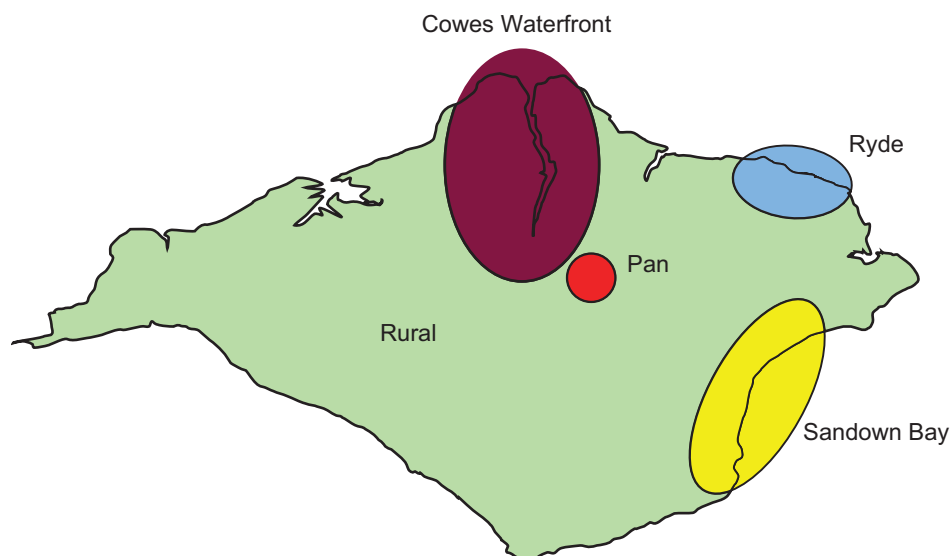
Workshops and consultation

The issues have been identified through our LTP2 workshops, including those undertaken with the QTP which includes transport operators, transport users and others, plus a number of other topic based workshop groups to which were invited representatives from health, education, economic development, local agenda 21, planning, environment, social services and environmental health. It also picks up on the consultation carried out into the Provisional Local Transport Plan (PLTP) and development of the SEA and finalisation of our detailed strategies (Annexed) and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

C.1.1 Delivery through the shared priority and regeneration areas

We will be looking to address the issues highlighted here through the delivery of this LTP. This will be done as part of our coordinated approach to delivery in line with the Community Plan "Island futures", emerging Island Plan, our "Aim High", change management Plan, the LAA and our regeneration areas.

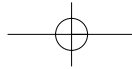
Our five-year strategy sets out the process by which improvements will be made and the investment programme explains how this will be delivered in line with the Island Plan and within the Area Investment Framework (AIF) derived, regeneration areas illustrated below. These areas are: Cowes Waterfront, Pan Urban extension, Sandown Bay, Ryde and Rural Areas.



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Further details of the emerging Island Plan, Area Investment Framework programme and Local Area Agreement are included in Section D - Long Term Strategy.



C.2 Background

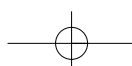
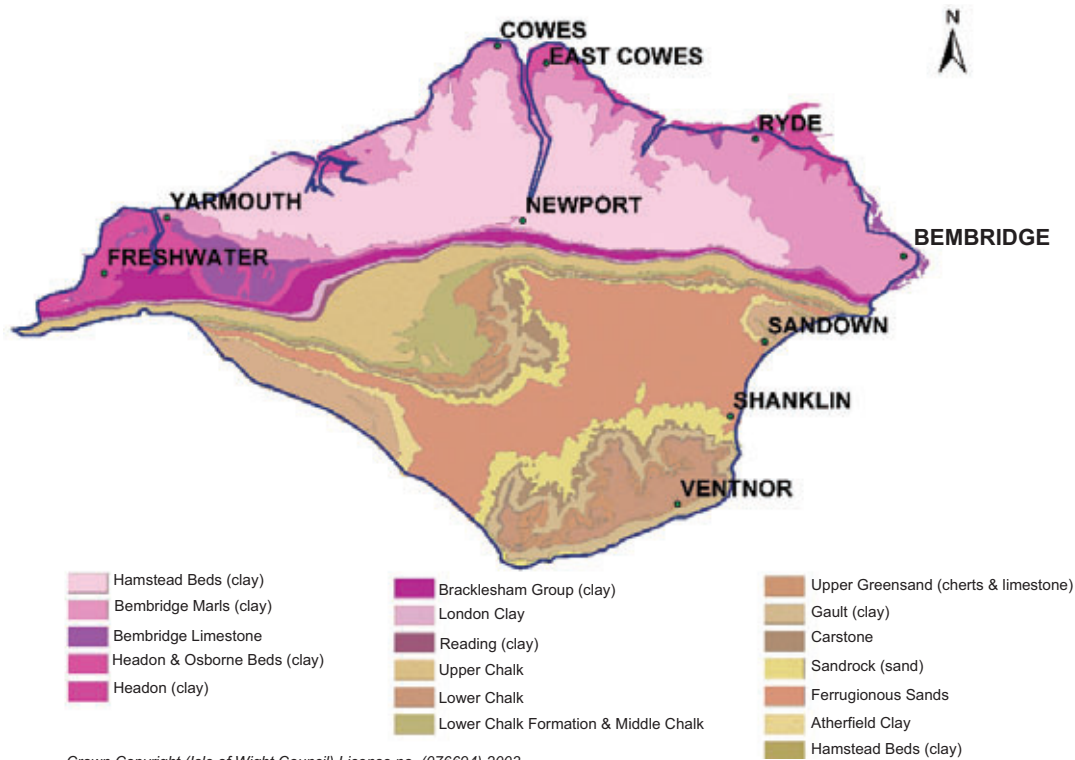
The Isle of Wight is different in many ways to anywhere else in the UK. Although not physically joined to the south coast, because of the Island's size, locations of towns, demography, and employment patterns and proximity to and influence of the mainland - the Island offers a set of unique transport problems.

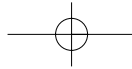
Shaped by history

Roughly diamond in shape, the history and development of the Island, the influence of the sea both in terms of transport and more recently leisure and tourism has resulted in a pattern of settlements, which reflects this maritime influence and transport routes which link them. The Island's capital town Newport, is located at the centre of the Island at the head of the river Medina. The remains of a Roman Villa indicate early settlers in the location and the layout of the town centre's street pattern dates back to its medieval occupation. The river is navigable almost to the heart of the town and it's the influence of this important navigable route that finally ensured the prominence of the town with its river, road and rail links.

The Isle of Wight has 92 km (57 miles) of coastline and a land area of 146.8 square miles (38,014 hectares). The geology of the Island has a huge impact, not only on its appearance, charm and scenic quality but also importantly on the location and quality of its transport infrastructure.

C.2.1 Isle of Wight geology





The Island is divided into two distinct areas by a large chalk ridge running approximately east to west (see Map above) The land to the north of the chalk ridge is largely made up of clay, with heavily wooded areas and a number of inlets and harbours including the River Medina; the creeks of Newtown, Fishbourne & Wootton and the rivers of the Western & Eastern Yar. The Island's 3 largest towns are located in this area (Newport, Cowes and Ryde), accounting for over half of all Island residents.

The area to the south of the ridge is generally flatter in nature with the underlying geology predominantly greensand with small areas of clay in the south-eastern tip. The main tourism resorts of Sandown and Shanklin are situated in this southern region, with Ventnor located on the periphery of the clay beds.

Our settlement patterns have been influenced by the shape and form of the Island - its inlets, rivers, cliffs and downs. The charm and challenge of building close to the coast and need to develop on what we now know to be difficult underlying clay sub soils, has left us an expensive legacy, in terms of trying to maintain and improve what were in terms of the underlying ground conditions, originally very poorly constructed roads.

Hub and spokes

The construction of Osbourne House, Queen Victoria's summer residence boosted the Island's popularity and the development of many of our coastal resort towns including Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin, Cowes, East Cowes, Freshwater, Totland and Yarmouth took off during the Victorian period. The resulting settlement pattern means that, with the exception of Newport, our main towns are located predominately on the Island's northern and eastern coasts. This has in turn influenced the location of our radial road pattern.

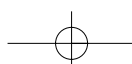
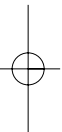
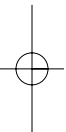
The table in the Section B - "Transport in the wider context," illustrates the current size of settlements on the Island and it is clear from this, that the bulk of recent development has been concentrated on Newport and Ryde with the result that these are now the two largest settlements.



Some of the earliest employment was shipbuilding, located on the river at Cowes and East Cowes.

Many of the people employed in these areas lived locally and travelled to work by foot or bicycle. More recent developments have included, aircraft construction, high tech composites, the development and expansion of the local prisons and employment at the local hospital and within the local authority.

Issues such as ongoing changes in lifestyle and revisions to the provision of services such as, location of healthcare provision, access to and location of education, and employment together with increase in car ownership, means that people can have a more flexible approach to where they work and how they travel. The result for many is an increasing number of longer and more frequent car based journeys; a gradual decline in bus patronage, reduction in accessibility for those without a car, increasing congestion and pollution.



C.3 Overarching issues

It must be recognised that there are a number of issues, which affect transport and the availability of transport on the Island. Some of these will be similar in many ways to, or the same as experienced elsewhere on the mainland, others will be particular to the Island.

Taking a coordinated approach

These must be considered in the context of the four "key themes" which are now driving our main plans and policies, notably our Community Strategy - "Island Plan," Local Area Agreement (LAA) and "Aim High - the Council's own Change Management Plan.

The challenge will be:

- To achieve economic prosperity and regeneration.
- Whilst at the same time maintaining and improving our environment.

The Island factor

The overarching issue for this authority and the one that has the biggest influence on transport and a range of issues including the way in which we live, the cost of living, access to health care, further education and employment, is the fact that we are an Island and separate from the rest of the UK.

Being an Island brings both problems and opportunities. The Solent acts as a "buffer" between the mainland and the Island and crossing the Solent can help make a holiday, or frustrate and add expense to an everyday journey. That narrow strip of water helps give us our special feel as a community has an influence on many of the issues listed below.

C.4 Local transport issues

Our local transport issues therefore include the following:

People

- Accessibility.
- Growing population.
- Distribution of population.
- Ageing population.
- Deprivation.
- Equality and diversity.

The economy

- Location of employment.
- Unemployment - seasonal variation.
- Cross Solent issues.
- Tourism and transport.

Internal travel

- Increasing car use.
- Traffic growth and increasing congestion.
- Reduction in bus patronage.
- Slowing in the growth of numbers cycling.
- Freight distribution.
- Impact of cross Solent travel - car access and commuters.
- Changing retail patterns.

Infrastructure

- Radial road network – all roads lead to Newport.
- Limited highway and transport infrastructure.
- Deterioration in highway infrastructure.
- Road safety issues.

Environment

- Environmental impact.
- Health issues.

C.5 People

As a predominantly rural community, transport is a key issue for many people and the availability of a car; access to public transport is essential for many people for travel to work, for shopping, health, education and leisure pursuits.

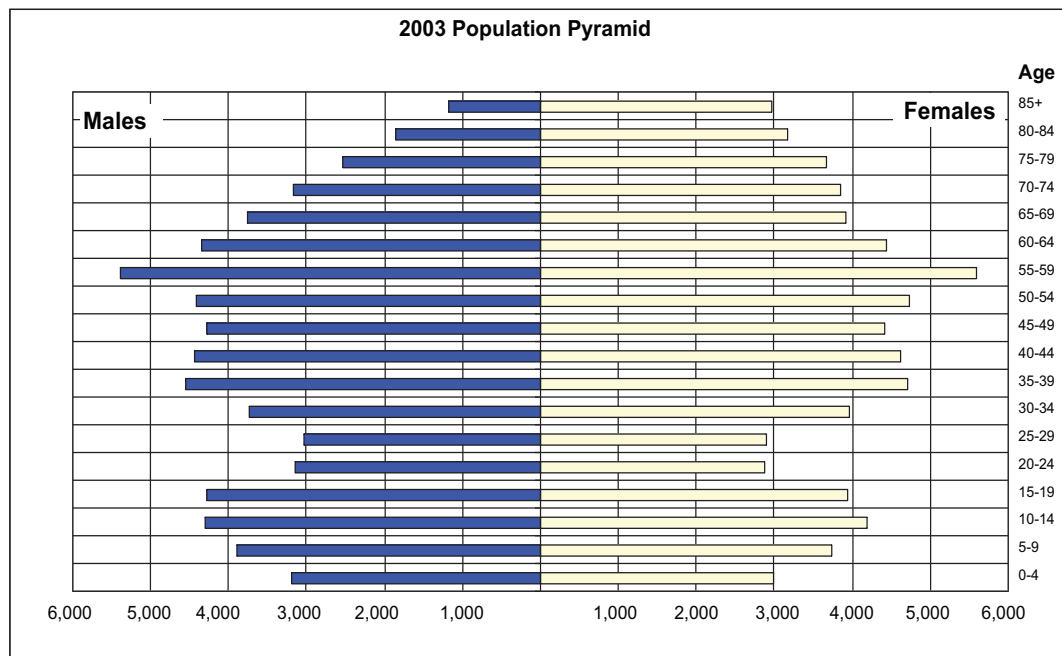
C.5.1 Accessibility

Some 26% of local residents have no access to a car and many live in rural areas, some of which have limited public transport provision. People without access to either public or private transport provision can in effect be excluded from society and facilities they need. This can pose particular difficulties for those who have mobility problems, or are on low incomes, or who may have trouble getting to basic services on or off the Island.

The highest incidence of households without a car is typically within our town centre locations, notably Newport wards Newport North and Ryde, Ryde North East and Ryde South East and Lake South ward. This may be due to a number of factors including affordability, availability of bus and rail services, easy access by foot and cycle and proximity to workplace shops and services.

C.5.2 Ageing population

The Island has an ageing population and in 2001, 28.4% of the Island's population were aged 60 years and over (compared with 20.9% in England and Wales). This is considerably higher than the 18.2% who are aged under 16 years (20.2% in England and Wales).



Source: Census of Population 2001

C.5.3 Distribution of population

The census indicates that the highest proportion in this age group live in wards at Seaview and Nettleston, Bembridge North, Lake South, Ventnor West and predominately rural areas of Brighstone and Calbourne, Freshwater - Afton and Norton and Totland.

Local facilities

Recent years have seen a change in the way and frequency we use the services located in our smaller towns and villages. Typical of many similar rural areas the Island has seen a reduction in the numbers employed in agriculture, decline and closure of local facilities including small or independent shops, banks, post offices and pubs, together with the rationalisation and centralisation of other services such as hospitals, banks and growth of multiple stores.

The move away from local sustainability and centralisation of services and facilities can have an impact on accessibility and put additional pressure on transport requirements, particularly for those who may not have access to their own transport and live in deprived or rural areas.

C.5.4 Areas of deprivation

The Island has some areas of social deprivation and 15 of our 48 wards are within the top 20% of nationally recorded deprived areas. The index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the combined deprivation score from seven individual indicators¹.

¹Full details at www.odpm.gov.uk/indices

These indicators are:

- **Income deprivation.**
- **Employment deprivation.**
- **Health deprivation and disability.**
- **Education, skills and training deprivation.**
- **Barriers to housing and services.**
- **Crime.**
- **Living Environment deprivation.**

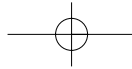
Ward	Indices	National (of 8414)		Regional Rank (of 2735)	Island Rank (of 48)
		Rank	%		
St. Johns-1	47.35	677	10% Most Deprived	37	1
Pan	46.28	742		48	2
Ryde North East	44.50	849	11-25%	62	3
Ventnor-1	39.61	1149		103	4
Newport Central	37.80	1283		123	5
Totland	37.60	1295		126	6
Lake-1	37.23	1323		131	7
Shanklin North	35.56	1446		155	8
Osborne	35.49	1450		157	9
Sandown-2	35.43	1454		159	10
Sandown-1	35.30	1464		165	11
Ryde South West	35.29	1465		166	12
Cowes Medina	34.36	1552		182	13
Ryde North West	33.95	1582		191	14
Ventnor-2	33.89	1587		192	15
Shanklin South	32.61	1709		220	16
St. Johns-2	32.61	1710		221	17
Ryde South East	32.37	1739		232	18
Mount Joy	30.78	1890		271	19
Freshwater Norton	30.44	1929		280	20
Freshwater Afton	30.32	1944		287	21
Fairlee	29.53	2041		311	22
Cowes Central	29.39	2062		318	23
East Cowes-2	29.17	2098		326	24

Ward	Indices	National (of 8414)		Regional Rank (of 2735)	Island Rank (of 48)
		Rank	%		
Brading	28.98	2128	26-50%	332	25
Shanklin Central	28.75	2152		341	26
Lake-2	27.03	2341		403	27
Wroxall	26.93	2358		409	28
Parkhurst	26.83	2372		421	29
Ashey	26.34	2442		438	30
East Cowes-1	26.07	2493		454	31
Calbourne, Shalfleet & Yarmouth	25.25	2618		493	32
Bembridge-2	24.06	2828		554	33
Northwood	23.40	2937		591	34
Carisbrooke West	22.42	3101		630	35
Chale, Niton & Whitwell	22.35	3113		634	36
Arreton and Newchurch	21.87	3203		661	37
Wootton	21.61	3259		687	38
Gatcombe, Godshill & Rookley	21.54	3265		690	39
Cowes Castle-1	20.39	3480		756	40
Bembridge-1	19.49	3661	823	41	
Brighstone & Shorwell	19.18	3724	846	42	
St. Helens	18.98	3762	860	43	
Seaview & Nettlestone	16.44	4316	1050	44	
Cowes Castle-2	16.14	4395	1076	45	
Gurnard	16.06	4427	1089	46	
Carisbrooke East	15.55	4563	1133	47	
Binstead	14.29	4918	1265	48	

Of the 32,482 nationally defined "super output areas" (smaller than a Census Ward area), six areas fall within the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas are located in Ryde - St Johns West and Ryde North East, Newport - two areas in Pan Ward, and Mount Joy and Ventnor East.

Transport and deprivation

The development of our accessibility strategy has given us the opportunity to look at the ways in which the availability of transport impacts on deprivation. Further details of this are included in Section F of this Plan.



C.5.5 Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity is a “golden thread” running through the Council’s services and is key to our aim of encouraging and developing opportunities, which together contribute to “improving life for the whole community”.

The Council recognises that there are groups of people within our community who may face discrimination (intentional or unintentional) because of their background or personal circumstances. The delivery of this LTP and the measures and initiatives contained within it can help to ensure that we avoid discrimination in terms of race, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and geographical location.

The Council is committed to treating people in the way that they would wish to be treated and our Comprehensive Equality Plan (CEP) provides a framework within which we can bring equality and diversity into all aspects of our daily business, including policymaking and provision of services. Successful implementation of CEP will enable the Council to achieve all five levels of the Equality Standards for Local Government.

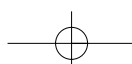
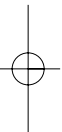
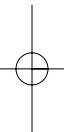
Details of our Comprehensive Equality Plan can be found at www.iwight.com/equalityanddiversity/cep.asp

The Council’s is committed to:

- Provide excellent services to the community.
- Act as community leaders.
- Develop effective consultation with and employment opportunities for both staff and local people in a way that is consistent with the equality and diversity policy.
- Accommodate future legislation as it develops.
- Actively promote social inclusion of all Council services.

We will:

- Celebrate diversity to promote a positive image of people from all sectors of the community.
- Treat everyone fairly, challenge inequalities and promote opportunities for all.
- Work in partnership with other community organisations to provide services - which meet the requirements of the Island’s community.
- Use this plan and initiate our Accessibility Strategy and Accessibility Action Plans to ensure that services are accessible to those who need them.
- Use the QTP and other mechanisms to involve local people and service users when taking decisions that affect them.
- Help provide support for training for all staff and partner organisations, including the not for profit sector to raise awareness of diversity issues, in line with our corporate training policy and the achievement of the Council’s priorities.



Particular issues for this Plan are:

- Understanding issues, by working in partnership with the QTP, other user groups and organisations.
- Improving signing and information and ensuring that information is available in alternative formats when requested.
- Improving accessibility to transport – low floor buses, ramps etc.
- Improving facilities for those with mobility, sight and or hearing problems.

C.6 The economy

The Council is looking to improve the economy of the Island and has identified regeneration as one of its key priorities.

This will be achieved through:

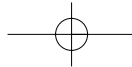
- A better understanding of the problems and opportunities.
- Coordinated approach through plans and policies.
- Working in partnership to deliver improvements.
- Delivery of “Island Futures” (Community Plan - LSP).
- The delivery of the “Island Plan” – LDF.
- Implementation of this Plan (LTP).
- Improving our infrastructure through our PFI bid.
- Delivering schemes through the Area Investment Framework (AIF).

C.6.1 Location of employment

Changes to the type and location of local jobs, the gradual decline in Cowes based engineering and electronics and growth in Newport based high tech composites industries means that travel to work patterns have changed and in some instances the number and length of car journeys has increased.

Cross Solent issues

On going improvements to the speed and frequency of cross-Solent travel means that an increasing number of people are choosing to, or have to commute to jobs on the mainland. The crossings times are designed to tie in with mainland and Island rail timetables, and dedicated buses give good links from Southsea Hovercraft terminal to the Portsmouth City centre and rail station, from the Red Jet terminal at Southampton directly to the City centre and rail station and from the ferry terminal at Lymington to Brockenhurst and the main London line.



Year	Passengers	Cars	Coaches	Commercial
1975	6,680,000	610,000	N/A	105,000
1985	6,473,572	837,026	12,560	140,267
1995	7,607,798	1,203,562	20,630	180,700
2005	9,406,601	1,759,859	24,815	266,779
% Increase				
30 Years (1975-2005)	40.8	188.5	N/A	154.1
20 Years (1985-2005)	45.3	110.3	97.6	90.2
10 Years (1995-2005)	23.6	46.2	20.3	47.6

Cross Solent commuting

Surveys show that an increasing number of people are choosing to, or having to, cross the Solent each day for a number of reasons including employment and education. Similar, though less frequent journeys may be required for specialist health treatment at mainland hospitals.

Surveys undertaken on the Cowes to Southampton Red Jet service have helped to give us a better understanding of these changing Solent travel patterns. The method by which people access the ports, where they park, leave their cycles or arrive by public transport can have an impact on our northern coastal towns. We have already provided a park and ride facility at Cowes to help relieve pressure on town centre parking and the park and ride facilities have been put in place at Ryde, St Johns railway station, as well as Sandown and Shanklin. The improvements put in place at Brading Station have also and have also made this more popular with commuters.

Considering the recent trends it is clear that this Plan will have to consider the implications of the increase in cross-Solent commuting and examine ways that accessibility to the ports can be enhanced and maintained without further increasing traffic on our local roads and placing additional burden on parking in the already congested town centre / port areas.

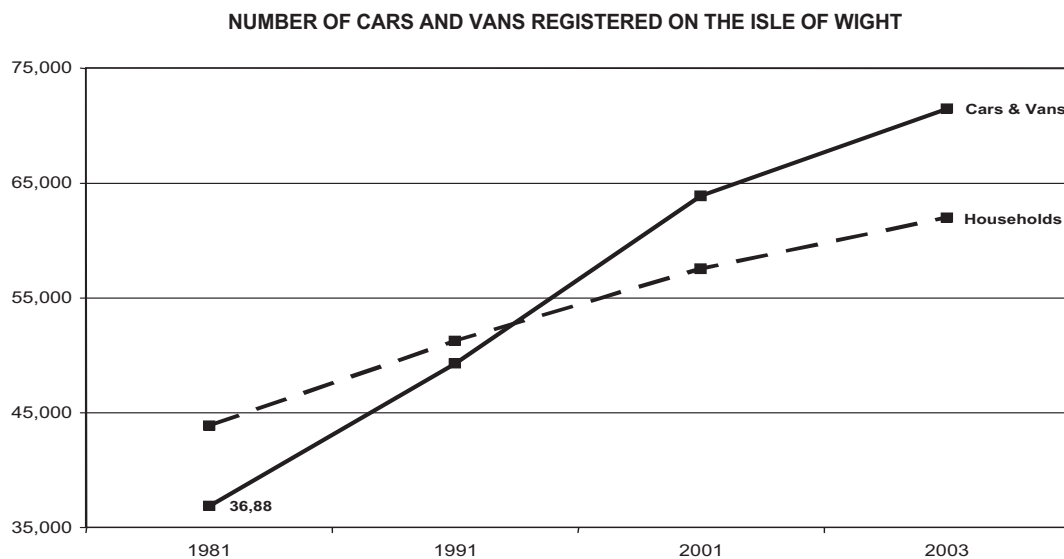
C.7 Internal travel

Travel by car can be convenient and for some an essential way of getting about. Whilst it is generally acknowledged that the coverage of our bus service is very good for what is predominately a rural area, the cost of travel and frequency of service is often identified as a determining factor when choosing by what means to travel.

Details of recently introduced travel initiatives are included later in this section under "Opportunities - Improving travel choice".

C.7.1 Increasing use of the car

The incidence of car ownership has increased on the Island over the last 10 years and is now roughly the same as occurs in England and Wales. During the same period the number of households without access to a car has fallen from one third to approximately one quarter. Increased car ownership is reflected in "Car ownership" – B.6.2.



Source: Census of Population, DfT & ONS

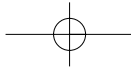
C.7.2 Traffic growth and congestion

Our monitoring indicates that the amount of vehicles using all our roads is increasing, but the largest increase is being recorded on the routes, which link our coastal towns - the "rim" of the wheel, however there has also been a significant increase on the major routes, - the "spokes" which radiate towards the centre of the Island, to access or pass through Newport. This has resulted in roads, which are becoming increasingly congested, are less cycle and pedestrian friendly, hamper access by bus and increase journey times for all users.

We also regularly monitor car occupancy levels on vehicles using the approach roads to Newport. These surveys show that at peak times nearly 80% of vehicles using these routes are single occupancy vehicles. Add this to the fact that nearly 60% of journeys on the Island are less than 2 miles long and you have a picture of an increasing number of short journeys undertaken by people in cars on their own.

C.7.3 Reduction in bus patronage

The Island has one main bus operator and for some the lack of competition is seen as an important factor when looking to reduce travel costs and increase coverage and frequency. At peak times many of our local buses are employed transporting children to school. Organised as a partnership between the operator and local education authority the system marries the availability of buses, organisation of routes and school opening times to make the best use of the facilities available. This does however mean that, just at the time when buses could offer a fast and direct alternative to car use, our local buses are almost fully utilised elsewhere.



For those who travel by bus the ability to safely access the bus and store pushchairs and wheelchairs is essential for those with mobility requirements. Southern Vectis are continuing their programme of introducing easy access low floor buses and now operate 27 low floor buses from within their total fleet of 112.

For those who own a car, the convenience and flexibility offered by weatherproof personal transport plus the investment in purchasing the car and fixed cost of car tax and insurance, is a primary consideration when deciding whether to travel by car or not. Car owners are understandably reluctant to leave unused on the driveway, what can be the second most expensive household purchase and instead brave the elements and travel by bus, walk or cycle.

Mode	Number
Buses	
Low Floor	27
All	112

C.7.4 Travel by train

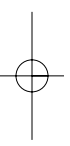
The Island's railway runs from Ryde Pier head to Shanklin and includes stations at Ryde Esplanade, Ryde St Johns, Brading, Lake and Sandown. The line has an excellent train punctuality and reliability record and carries something in the region of 1.2 million passengers per year. Travel by train offers easy timetabled connections with the Wightlink catamaran, which operates from Ryde Pier Head to Portsmouth Harbour Station. For those who live on the south eastern side of the Island, travel by train can offer a real alternative to the car. The recent addition of a dedicated train / bus link between Shanklin Railway Station and Ventnor has further enhanced the use of this line.

The Ryde to Newport road is the most heavily used transport corridor and a number of studies have been carried out looking at the possibility of extending the current line or providing a suitable more flexible alternative – such as light rail or guided bus. Alternatives must take into consideration a number of issues, including possible funding options, value for money, peak summer loadings, current line width, physical operational limitations and timetable requirements.

Mode	Number
Railway	
Trains	6 x 2 cars
Length of Track	13.6 km (8.5 miles)
Stations	8

C.7.5 Walking and cycling

Travel by cycle can also be faster and more convenient than using other forms of transport, especially for short journeys. The Council has successfully increased the numbers cycling on the Island by the development of a number of initiatives using pump-priming money made available through the adoption of a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA). This plan includes proposals and initiatives to continue this good work and is also covered in the Smarter Choices document included as an Annex to this Plan.



C.7.6 Freight distribution

The last 20 years has seen a decline in the amount of freight arriving on the Island by coastal shipping and a corresponding growth in the amount of freight transferred by lorries via roll on, roll off ferry.

Movement of freight by rail is not an option on the Island, due to the limited rail coverage and the type of rail rolling stock currently used. As a result, all internal freight movements are by road.

Infrastructure issues

The Island's roads are generally narrow and in many cases have not seen extensive modification or upgrading since they were constructed. Rural routes must pass through protected landscapes and villages. Urban roads are bound to use our historic street patterns, the fabric of which is in many locations protected by Conservation Area status and in many instances contains listed structures of historic or architectural interest.

Whilst it is recognised that lorries, large vans and trucks play an essential part in delivering goods to, from and within the Island, their growing use and size of vehicles can pose a problems in a number of ways. These include:

- **Environmental impact - pollution, noise, vibration disturbance and visual intrusion.**
- **Increased congestion.**
- **Access problems - delivery, parking, loading and unloading.**
- **Health and safety issues - conflict with pedestrians, cyclists.**

Freight and the environment

The Island is, in common with many other parts of the country, experiencing a change in delivery patterns. Because of its location and the additional time required to cross the Solent, the Island is for some operators a unique collection and delivery area. The change to "just in time" work practices has resulted in changes to both the frequency and size of deliveries.

Whilst the Council remains committed to the development of a buoyant economy, the continuing growth has led to greater demands for the movement of freight within the Island. The change to more frequent, larger and heavier vehicles can play a significant role in increasing noise, pollution and road deterioration.

These issues have been examined as part of the development of the Strategic Environmental Assessment into this Plan and a number of options are explored later in this section of the Plan under C11.1.

C.7.7 Changes in retail patterns

The evolution of the Island's towns has resulted in the prominence of Newport as the main retail town and a major employment area and development of our smaller towns as "satellite" retail areas catering for niche markets such as yachting interests, tourist related activities, leisure, and antiques.

An Island-Wide Retail Capacity Study carried out by consultants Drivers Jonas² for the IW Council dated February 2005 acknowledged these changes and stated that the IOW "retail hierarchy has changed since the Isle of Wight UDP was prepared (1997) and adopted (2001). There have been changes on the Island itself, and the same time pressures have increased from retail developments in Southampton (West Quay) and Portsmouth (Gun Wharf)". The study indicated that in 1998 there was 4.9% leakage of expenditure on comparison goods off-Island and this figure is liable to have increased since the opening of these new shopping centres.

The changing shape of retailing on the Island means that many one-off shops or multiples are now concentrated in Newport. The Drivers Jonas report identified that since its original study in 1998 "Newport remains the dominant centre. It continues to be the main focal point for retail development activity on the Island". The report noted that, "the remaining centres have all improved, most notably Ryde with the Somerfield development strengthening the town centre. Ryde continues to face challenges because it is "over shopped" - too many shops on a linear layout - but has improved since our last analysis". Newport now has for example, the Island's largest full time cinema (11 screens), with the only other cinema at Ryde. Newport is also the site of the Island's main Hospital, main Council offices, Fire Station, Jobcentre Plus and the Island's only retail units such as Marks and Spencer, Halfords, Next, British Home Stores, Matalan, B&Q, Laura Ashley, MFI, Argos, Magnet, Evans and Mothercare.

The prominence of Newport as the main shopping puts additional pressure on the approach roads and increases demand for parking particularly at peak periods.

C.7.8 Demand responsive services

Travel by taxi can fill the transport gaps by offering a tailor made transport solution. The Council is looking to increase accessibility for those who don't have access to a car and has a policy to encourage the provision of new fully accessible vehicles appropriate for the use of those with mobility problems.

However, travel by taxi on the Island is seen to be expensive, and is currently operated on two zone areas. There is a perception that travels costs and availability would be improved if these zones were removed and discussions have already taken place with the operators to change the method of operation.

Mode	Number
Taxi	
Hackney Carriages	163
Private Hire Vehicles	58

C.7.9 Powered two wheelers

Travel by powered two-wheelers (PTWs), motorcycle, moped, and scooter can offer an attractive alternative to other means of transport and the opportunity exists to increase facilities for these vehicles.

The poor condition of our minor roads can be a deterrent for some potential PTW users and improvements in this area will be a benefit for these users.

²Island-Wide Retail Capacity Study - available at www.iwight.com

C.8 Our limited highway and transport infrastructure

The layout of our road network ensures that many everyday journeys use what are a limited number of routes, some of which are inadequate in terms of width and standard. Problems occur where roads crossing the Island pass through or close to Newport town centre and use the Coppins Bridge gyratory system, which at peak times is close to capacity.

We also experience problems where roads have to be temporarily closed to allow for essential road works and traffic has to be diverted onto other already busy or substandard routes.

This plan will look to make the best of our existing infrastructure and employing effective management ensure we achieve the best possible value for money.

Classification	Length
A Roads	126 km (78 miles)
B Roads	92 km (57 miles)
C Roads	185 km (115 miles)
Unclassified (including urban footpaths)	430 km (267 miles)
Total	833 km (517 miles)

C.8.1 Deterioration in highway infrastructure

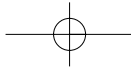
Maintaining our roads to an acceptable standard is a fundamentally important issue if we are to ensure access to and between our centres of population for all road users - including car, bus, cycle and on foot.

Many of our road stability problems are as a direct result of the geology of the Island. The majority of the northern part of the Island is made up of clay, and considerable expense has been incurred in stabilising sections of our strategic road network. Many of our roads lack proper foundations and the hot dry summer of 2003 resulted in extensive cracking and heave. Some of our coastal roads are also showing signs of failure. The A3054 east of Yarmouth has recently been repaired and some roads in Ventnor are suffering as the result of large-scale ground movement.

The Council is looking to tackle the longer term maintenance issues and currently preparing a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) bid, which if approved, will secure the funding necessary to bring our roads up to the required standard. We are also looking to prepare major bid submissions as part of this Plan so as to secure the funds necessary to carry out repairs on some of our key road sections. Details of these bids are included in Section M of this Plan. Details of our PFI bid are included in Section K - "Effective Management".

C.8.2 Tourism and transport

There can be no doubt that the impact of tourism on the Island is extensive. The Island's economic, environmental and social well-being is fundamentally influenced by the tourism industry. Tourism is



worth over half a billion pounds to the Island's economy. It currently generates £360 million of direct tourist expenditure, plus another £175 million indirect spending to suppliers etc and also supports 20% of jobs on the Island.

The IOW Tourism Monitor Annual Report 2004 recorded 2.66 million visits arriving by ferry. It is estimated that an additional 247,000 yachtsmen came to Cowes during the year. Visitors arriving by yacht at Yarmouth and other harbours are not recorded in this survey.

The influx of car-based tourists undoubtedly places additional strains on our roads during the summer months and it is generally recognised that summer traffic undoubtedly contributes to traffic flows and congestion particularly at peak times and on wet days when the beaches are less popular.

Tourism also brings many positive benefits and the extent of facilities and services that are created by tourism are both varied and substantial and give Island residents a much greater choice and quality than would normally be available to a population of this size. The size and operation of our local buses is to a large extent geared around the summer visitor trade and there can be no doubt that visitors coming to the Island help offset the cost to Islanders crossing the Solent. In the peak season over 12 crossings an hour from 4 ports provide residents, businesses and visitors with regular and reliable means of travel and access to the mainland.

C.8.3 Cross Solent travel

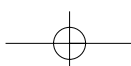
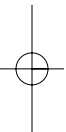
Maintaining and improving good cross Solent links is essential to the well being of the Island. The ability to cross easily, quickly and at an acceptable cost has an influence on the popularity of the Island as a holiday destination and a place to do business. It also has an influence on where people live and work. Ongoing improvements to the services available, in particular the fast ferry connections, has helped make living on the Island and commuting to the mainland on daily basis a reality for an increasing number of people. It would appear that an increasing number of people are also commuting from the mainland to work on the Island.

The ability to cross the Solent in 10 minutes by hovercraft from Ryde to Southsea, 15 minutes Ryde Pier Head to Portsmouth and 22 minutes from Cowes to Southampton could increasingly be a better alternative than commuting into these destinations from elsewhere on the mainland.

The numbers of people and vehicles crossing the Solent continues to rise and over the period 1994 - 2004 passenger numbers increased by 41.5%, cars by 118.6%, coaches by 120.7% and commercial vehicles by 100.4%. The latest information shows that in 2004 - 9,319,179 passengers, 1,701,706 cars, 24,806 coaches and 262,653 commercial vehicles crossed the Solent. The continuation of these trends will place additional burden on our transport infrastructure, ferry ports and surrounding areas.

C.8.4 Environmental considerations

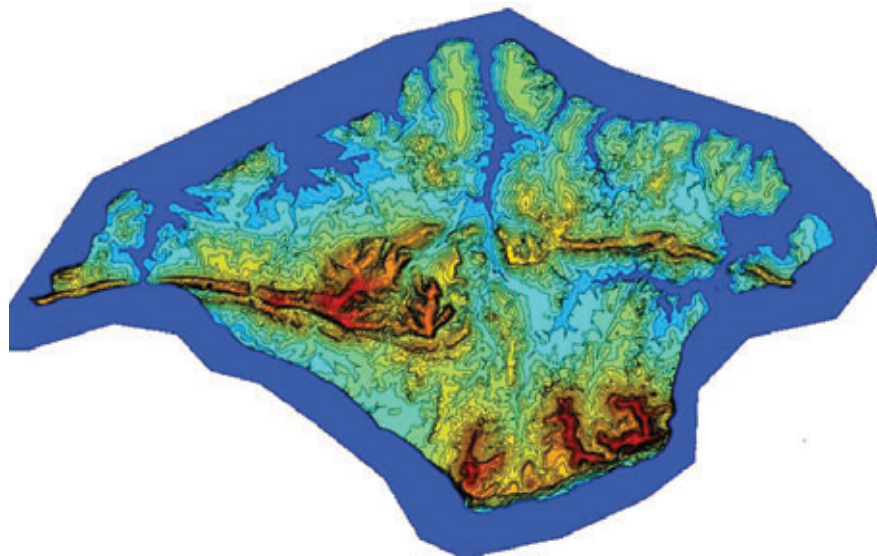
The fact this is an Island brings with it a set of particular challenges. The interface between the sea and the land has literally formed where we live and continues to shape the land today.



The impact of climate change

It is now generally recognised that the impact of climate change and global warming will have an increasing impact on all our lives. Issues such as warmer winters, higher levels of rainfall and freak weather conditions are now contributing to landslip and instability problems within geologically sensitive areas across the Island. Problems associated with many of our coastal roads, notably Undercliff Drive, Military Road the A3054 east of Yarmouth and sections of Ventnor are a direct result of environmental and geological influences.

The map included below dramatically illustrates the impact that a 10-metre sea level rise, without defences scenario would have on the Island.



*Based upon OS digital map data with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
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Rich and diverse species and habitats

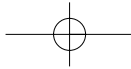
The Isle of Wight is a microcosm of South East England and is unusually rich in species and habitats compared to other areas on the mainland. Many of our towns and villages have Conservation Areas and contain buildings of architectural or historic interest. They also have historic street patterns, some of which date back to the medieval period.

The development of this plan will need to ensure that the impact that transport and transport schemes have on the built and natural environment is reduced as far as is practicable.

C.9 Transport opportunities

The workshop approach used in the development of this Plan has helped us identify transport issues and possible options.

The following opportunities have been identified through a number of structured workshop discussions, consultation undertaken on the PLTP and development of the SEA. These have in turn helped frame our 5-year strategy and investment programme.



Transport opportunities include the following:

Making the best of what we have

- Working together – partnership.
- Reducing the need to travel.
- Travel planning.

Regeneration and our economy

- Improving freight.

Improving travel choice

- Improving travel by bus.
- Enhancing travel by train.
- Making smarter choices.
- Powered two wheelers.

Improving our transport infrastructure

- Making the best use of the transport network.
- Maximising our Rights of Way.
- Improving road safety and health.
- Demand responsive solutions.
- Water transport.
- Air travel.

Maintaining and improving our environment

- Reducing the impact on the environment.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment.

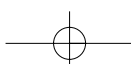
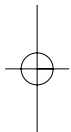
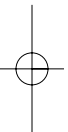
C.9.1 Making the best of what we have

Working together

The Council recognises the role it has to play in improving transport facilities on the Island. We do not however operate ferries, trains or the majority of local buses. The Council is not in a position to improve our transport on our own and we must deliver transport improvements in partnership with others.

Quality Transport Partnership

The operation of the Quality Transport Partnership offers a real opportunity for change. This group, which includes all of our transport operators - bus, rail ferry, taxi and freight, plus transport users including motorists, bus users, cycle groups and environmental groups gives us the platform for discussion and debate. It has links into the LSP and is the conduit or interface that exists between policy and strategy and delivery.



Improving Accessibility is one of the four key themes that drives the delivery of the Community Plan and the Chair of the Island's Quality Transport Partnership is the "theme champion" for one of those groups. The QTP has helped define our emerging transport strategy and it is members of this group that together with us help put in place the transport improvements that make things happen.

Cross boundary working

The Council is involved with the Solent Transport group, which includes Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils. Working with this group offers the potential to consider the broader cross boundary implications and helps ensure that fullest consideration is given to links to and links through the Solent Transport region. A copy of the Solent Transport strategy is included as an annex to this report.



C.9.2 Reducing the need to travel

Opportunities to reduce the need to travel will be increasingly important during the next five years and particularly into the longer-term period.

Reducing the need to travel can be achieved by:

Future land use allocations

- Through "Island Plan".

Workplace travel plans

- Home working.
- Car sharing.
- Walking.
- Cycling.
- Increased use of public transport.

School Travel Plans

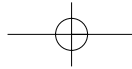
- Car sharing.
- Walking.
- Cycling.
- Increased use of public transport.

Increased home working

- By individuals.

Internet shopping

- Home deliveries.



C.9.3 Transport and the “Island Plan” (LDF)

The longer-term strategy will be to work with the land use policies emerging through the LDF and to co-locate housing, employment, education, leisure facilities and retail development in order to create sustainable communities.

The location or retention of key services and facilities within our existing towns and villages will help enhance community facilities and reduce the need to travel.

C.9.4 Travel Plans – workplace and school

Other methods by which travel can be reduced include the introduction of workplace and school travel plans, the greater use of “flexible working” measures, working from home, staggered working hours and video conferencing.

Opportunities exist to reduce the number, type and frequency of journeys through the introduction of workplace and school travel plans. The Council has embraced the national target and is looking to have an adopted school travel plan at every Island school by 2010.

The Council is also looking to develop its own workplace travel plan in partnership with St Mary’s Hospital and money has been secured to ensure that WTPs are embedded in the planning process and secured as part of every employment development.

C.10 Regeneration and the economy

It is recognised that improving the Islands economy is fundamentally important part of delivering our longer-term vision for the Island.

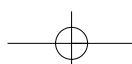
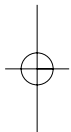
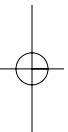
The improvement of our transport infrastructure has a key role to play in achieving this goal. This will be achieved through the delivery of the objectives set out in this Plan, through our investment programme.

The natural dynamics of the Island and resourceful nature of its people make it an exciting and progressive place to work live and play. A determined focus on priorities expressed through our Community Plan, Aim High - our Change Management Plan and the LAA will help to build economic success.

Our long term vision expects the delivery of higher standards and aspirations in all areas of the Island’s activities and the existing road network can either be the thing that holds our progress back, or acts as the catalyst that provides the foundation for the road to regeneration. Our PFI bid for Highways maintenance is perceived as the foundation on which our wider investment and sound future developments will be based.

C.10.1 Improving freight management

It is recognised that maintaining and improving freight deliveries are essential if we are to improve the local economy. Whilst it is recognised that lorries, large vans and trucks provide an essential link, their increased use and size of vehicles using our often narrow and unsuitable roads, can bring with it a number of concerns and issues. These include environmental impact, increased congestion, access problems and health and safety issues.



Quality Freight Partnership

The Council is seeking to address these problems in partnership with our partners in the LSP and QTP and through the QTP directly with the freight industry.

Our situation as a clearly defined destination with a limited number of points of access, no through traffic and comparatively small number of operators lends itself to the development of a Freight Quality Partnership. A meeting has already taken place with those who are influential in this area including the chair of the QTP, freight and ferry operators. This approach will be developed during the Plan period as part of our Accessibility Action Plan (See Section F).

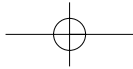
Route Hierarchy

The development of the SEA has highlighted the problems associated with the size and number of large vehicles using our road network. The Island does not have any motorways or trunk roads and our strategic road network is made up of narrow often twisting roads. It is not practical or possible to reallocate any significant lengths of road space, just for use by heavy or large vehicles and the ability to construct new roads or bypasses is limited by environmental and financial constraints. We must therefore look at other alternatives if we are to maintain and improve delivery services.

Issues for consideration must therefore include:

- **The establishment of a QFP.**
- **Maintain essential access for freight traffic.**
- **Improved routes and signing.**
- **Work with the QFP and QTP to reduce the impact on the environment.**
- **Improve cross Solent access.**
- **Consider options for bulk freight.**
- **Look at measure to improve freight handling - smaller vehicles and onward shipment.**
- **Look at the improvements required to ship materials to improve our highway infrastructure as part of the PFI bid.**

It is important that any changes are considered in partnership with the operators and following the widest consultation and these issues are examined further in the five-year strategy and 20 year vision.



C.11 Improving travel choice

C.11.1 Improving bus travel

Increasing the attractiveness of travelling by bus will be key to increasing travel choice. This is now being done by improvements to the following:

- **Fares and prices** - the price of travel is often cited as a main influence in mode of travel and the introduction of free bus and rail travel for Island residents aged 60 and over, will help encourage travel by public transport.
- **The introduction of the 50p Student Rider initiative** for scholars aged 5-19 will also encourage travel by bus and rail. Extending the current age limit to 19 will also help to offer a real alternative to those who may otherwise have to or chose to buy or use a car.
- **Service provision** - improving the frequency and availability of services is key to reducing social exclusion.
- **Bus Priority** - introduce bus priority measures at junctions and in ways that help beat congestion.
- **Introducing more direct routing** to address commuter requirements.
- **Transport interchange / shelters** - improve interchange, between buses and other modes, as taking place at Ryde Esplanade, Newport Bus Station, Shanklin and elsewhere.
- **Vehicle provision** - support the continuing introduction of low floor vehicles suitable for those with mobility issues.
- **Integration** - improve integration between timetables, so that journeys are seamless and reliable.
- **Passenger Information** - the provision of easily accessible and understandable travel information can assist journeys. This information should be available before and during the journey.
- **Safety and personal security** - reducing crime and the fear of crime an affect travel by public transport.
- **Future provision** - It is important that future developments take account of the need for bus access and other facilities.

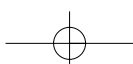
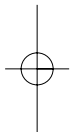
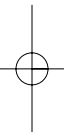
These issues are covered in more detail in our Bus Strategy, a copy of which is included as an Annex to this Plan.

C.11.2 Enhancing travel by train

Although only comparatively short, the Island's rail line nevertheless offers an important role by offering a traffic free connection between towns on the Island's south east coast and the fast ferry service and hovercraft at Ryde.

The recent introduction of free and reduced price travel for Island residents' aged 60 and over and scholars age 5-19, will no doubt help encourage travel by rail.

The opportunities exist to further develop this service, which is currently running at something like 60% capacity. The installation of a passing loop, will allow better use of what is predominately a single track route and service enhancements - improved interchange, park and ride facilities, timetable accessibility and publicity and promotion will make train travel even more attractive.



The Council is currently working with the local train company and has recently launched a jointly funded Community Rail Partnership (CRP) to help focus the promotion and development the line. The opportunities offered by this congestion free link, will be one of the issues considered when looking at future land allocations as part of the development of the LDF.

A copy of our Rail Strategy is included as an Annex to this Plan.

C.11.3 Making smarter choices - walking and cycling

The Island is a popular location for recreational walking and cycling and currently hosts very popular walking and cycling festivals. Travel on foot and by bike can offer real alternatives to car use, particularly for shorter journeys.

It is healthy to walk and cycle and with promotion and encouragement there is the potential to translate what is seen as a popular recreational activity into an everyday form of travel. The opportunity exists to increase pedestrian priority and safety, both as part of new developments and within the current highway network. Pedestrian improvements can improve the shopping environment and the provision or upgrading of new footways and footpaths can help create usable links and allow access between areas and help link urban and rural environments.

We have sought to increase the numbers cycling to work and school as part of a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) and have seen the numbers increase in an attempt to achieve the (recently abandoned) national cycle target. We will continue to increase the numbers walking and cycling through the development and adoption of workplace travel plans, school travel plans, healthy schools initiatives, promotion and training. Our Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights the benefits of active transport and sets out the linkages between recreation and transport.

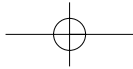
A copy of our Smarter Choices Strategy and Rights of Way Improvement Plan are included as Annexes to this Plan.

C.11.4 Powered two wheelers

Powered two wheelers (PTWs) can provide a realistic and affordable alternative to the car particularly in locations where public transport is limited or the distance is too far for walking or cycling.

It is now recognised that public transport cannot always meet the increased and diverse demands placed upon it. Whilst buses may be able to offer links between and around urban centres, it is not easy to reach every rural location on bus, foot or by bicycle. The transport solution does not lie in one particular area or mode, but a whole range of options, one of which is travel by PTWs.

The Council will support travel by PTWs as an alternative to car use and will add to the range of facilities and initiatives currently in place to encourage travel by such means. The Council has already made steps to cater for motorised two wheelers by providing free spaces in car parks and close to shops and services.



C.12 Improving our transport infrastructure

C.12.1 Making the best use of the network

It is important that we make the best use of our transport infrastructure if we are to ensure the best possible value for money, maintain access and reduce congestion and pollution.

The Council has identified the role of the Traffic Manager whose task is to coordinate street works and keep traffic flowing. This is particularly important on the Island where we have a limited road network and necessary closures and diversions can add to congestion on other routes.

Section K - "Effective Management" sets out how we intend to improve our traffic management and ensure value for money.

This Plan seeks to ensure that transport spend supports our economic development and our investment strategy included in section seven is based upon the phased approach set out in the Island Plan and AIF priority areas.

C.12.2 Improving road safety

Owning a fast and manoeuvrable sports motorcycle is attractive particularly with older "born again bikers" who may have sufficient disposable income to purchase a machine for fun use. The incidence of personal injury accidents has prompted concerns regarding the vulnerability and potential for personal injury associated with travel by powered two wheelers. The Council is already putting measures in place to "design out" those locations where accidents occur and where speed is a feature will use speed enforcement measures to deter what can be dangerous riding.

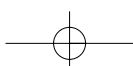
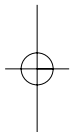
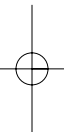
Further details of how we are improving road safety and health are included in section five of this Plan. Following initial consultation we have taken the opportunity to revise our Road Safety Strategy, which, when adopted will run concurrent with this Plan. The document has been made available for extensive consultation and a copy of the document is included as an Annex to this document.

C.12.3 Demand responsive solutions

For those who don't have access to car, taxis and private hire vehicles and demand responsive buses can make an important contribution towards helping deliver an integrated and more sustainable approach to transport.

The Council acknowledges that taxis and private hire vehicles have the ability to fill the gap for journeys, which cannot be undertaken by timetabled bus or are too impractical on foot and bicycle.

The public perception is whilst travel by such vehicles can be beneficial, it can be prohibitively expensive for some users, particularly when travelling alone. The Council recognises the important role that taxis can play and has already investigated ways in which the service can be enhanced.



The Island's taxis currently operate within the four zones of the old Borough Councils. These are the former Urban District of Cowes and former boroughs of Newport, Ryde and South Wight. It has been recognised that operating within these zones unnecessarily restricts coverage and the operational flexibility of the service. Extensive surveys and consultation have been carried out with the operators, public business groups and others to establish what options are now available. Having considered these options the conclusion is that removing these artificial boundaries will improve coverage and flexibility and allow the operators to more easily meet the needs of the service. The development of this Plan will allow this matter to be progressed.

C.12.4 Water transport

Our location as an Island can offer real advantages in terms of access by water. A factory for the construction of wind turbine blades was specifically located on the banks of the River Medina at Newport with the specific aim of shipping the finished blades away from the site by barge, and the allocation and development of new employment sites at Cowes as part of the Cowes Waterfront project will help make the best of this waterside location.

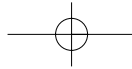
The number and size of craft crossing the Solent has changed over recent years. The introduction of larger capacity Red Jets and improvements to the Fast Cat service and Hovercraft from Ryde has helped to facilitate commuting to and from the mainland.

The opportunity exists to increase the number and frequency of Solent crossings and use both the Solent and River Medina as transport corridors catering for mainland-to-mainland journeys as well as to connect with the Island. This issue has already been raised within Solent Transport and will no doubt be progressed during the Plan period.

C.12.5 Air travel

There are two airports on the Island, at Bembridge and Sandown. Both are privately run and restricted in their use by current facilities. Bembridge Airport is the site of Pilatus Britten Norman, aeroplane manufacturers; it has a concrete runway and limited facilities. The airfield at Sandown is privately owned, has a grass runway and used primarily for pleasure flights.

It is recognised that air transport has a potential contribution to make to the tourist, recreational and economic redevelopment of the Island. The UDP acknowledges this potential and has identified the airports for appropriate improvements. The opportunity also exists to develop helicopter services linking the Island and mainland destinations, these could include links to nearby airports - possibly Bournemouth and Southampton and potentially London airports, subject to agreement and operational requirements. These options will be considered, during the period of this Plan and consideration will have to be given to the potential viability of a service, and local transport and environmental implications as part of the SEA process.



C.13 Maintaining and improving our environment

The environment is considered to be one of the Island's most important assets. For many it is the reason they come here on holiday, for others it may be one of the reasons they set up home and stay.

The Island is unique in many ways. The varied geology, farming practices and pattern of occupation has together created a rich tapestry of landscape and fascinating environment, which is valued, by both locals and residents alike.

Importance of the SEA process

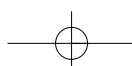
It is recognised that without sufficient consideration, transport can have a negative impact on the very areas we cherish. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process used to develop this Plan has considered the environmental implications that this strategy and its actions will have. The SEA has undertaken two types of analysis, these are:

- **Compatibility analysis between the PLTP - long term vision and Five year strategy and the SEA criteria.**
- **Assessment of the potential environmental effects of bids and measures.**

This process has helped shape the content of this final Plan. This issue is discussed further in Sections E and I.

C.14 Addressing the issues through this plan

We will be looking to address these issues through the delivery of this LTP. Section D of this Plan, explains how we will be addressing these issues as part of our long-term vision and in tandem with the emerging Island Plan. Sections E - L sets out our 5-year strategy and how we will make improvements in line with the shared priority.



Transport issues & opportunities