

J. Tackling Congestion

Objective

05 To tackle congestion

Key Targets (see Performance Indicator Section for full details)

T17 To restrict traffic growth to 2.3% per annum.

Other Targets (see Performance Indicator Section for full details)

- T1 To achieve a 12.1% increase in bus passenger journeys.
- T2 To achieve 76.3% bus punctuality.
- T3 To increase bus satisfaction to 65%.
- T4 To achieve a 20% increase in train passenger journeys.
- T5 To maintain train punctuality at 97.2% or better.
- T6 To maintain train reliability at 99.5% or better.
- T7 To achieve a 10.6% increase in ferry passenger journeys.
- T8 To triple the number of cycling trips.
- T10 To increase by 5% the number of households able to access Newport within 30 minutes by walking, cycling or public transport.
- T14 To increase to 24% the percentage of children participating in cycle training.
- T16 Modal share of journeys to school - target to be confirmed later in the plan process.
- T18 To have no overall deterioration in condition of the principal road network.
- T19 Non-principal road condition target - to be confirmed later in the plan process.
- T20 To have no overall deterioration in condition of the unclassified road network.
- T21 To have no overall deterioration in footway condition.

J.1 Introduction

Traffic congestion impacts on us all. Whether it occurs on the journey to work, to school, shopping or leisure. It is recognised at a national level that in many towns and cities, congestion is already having a negative impact on economic performance, accessibility and quality of life. The local perception is that things are getting worse here too.

The Government has stated¹, "Measures to deal with congestion are at the heart of the Government's transport strategy. Together with the new traffic management duty place on local authorities, these measures to tackle congestion will aim to deliver freer flowing local roads and associated economic and quality of life benefits."

The Government has asked that major urban areas with a population of 250,000 as well as smaller towns and cities with localised congestion problems consider local issues and set targets to address congestion issues for the period to 2011, which are "both realistic and stretching". The Government guidance is clear that it will "take a close interest in the development of these targets" and with large urban areas, take the opportunity to discuss each authority's approach through direct engagement.

¹ DFT - Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans, December 2004.

Although at 133,000, the population of the Island falls well below the 250,000 threshold our local situation, the fact we are an Island, the location of our towns, limited highway network, radial routes and significance of Newport as the highway hub, means that congestion is an issue for us. We will continue to make the best use of our transport infrastructure, put in place measures to help reduce congestion and use our traffic growth target to measure our performance in this area.

J.2 Background and issues

J.2.1 Local issues

The DfT recognise that “congestion is not an important issue for every authority, but nationally the trend, if effective action were not taken, would remain upwards”. The LTP Guidance is clear that “many towns and cities that do not currently have serious congestion problems will face problems in the future, as road traffic nationally continues to grow”.

Discussions and consultation

Local discussions and consultation indicates that, whilst congestion is not a major problem on the Island, particularly when compared with nearby mainland roads and locations in Portsmouth and Southampton. It is however an issue of concern, particularly where we have a dispersed population and the radial layout of our roads, means that, all roads lead to Newport.

The feedback from the discussion groups and workshops used to develop the LTP and “Island Plan” would seem to indicate that congestion is getting worse and queuing lengths are increasing on our strategic routes particularly as they approach Newport (map ref K4) and on the A3055, through Sandown (map ref O6), Lake (map ref O7) and Shanklin (map ref N8). Problems tend to be worse during inclement weather, when a visit to a local town and its undercover attractions is preferable to a day in the countryside or at the seaside.

J.2.2 Cross Solent issues

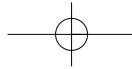
A recent survey carried out by consultants on behalf of the Council as part of the preparation of the “Island Plan” indicates that congestion occurs at peak times at our ferry terminals and, if ferry traffic continues to grow and measures are not put in place to help provide solutions for the longer term, these problems will only get worse. These problems are exacerbated during the summer months when traffic numbers are increased due to holiday traffic. .

Commuting to the mainland

The continuing growth and attraction of our faster crossings from Ryde (map ref O2), Cowes (map ref J1) and Yarmouth (map ref D4) has helped to make commuting to the mainland for work or school more attractive. This brings with it a range of problems, primarily associated with the method by which commuters arrive at the port and issues in terms of car parking and in many instances the impact on the availability of parking for those who live in or want to visit the area.

J.2.3 Car use

Section C of this Plan gives details of the local situation with regards to growing car ownership and car use. We know from the information gained through the Census that car ownership levels are rising on the Island and monitoring carried out as part of the LTP process and reported every year in the APR, shows that at peak times nearly 80% of cars entering Newport are single occupancy vehicles.



Add that to the fact that nearly 60% of journeys on the Island are less than 3.2 km (2 miles) long and the picture is one of a large number of short journeys undertaken in the car on their own.

J.2.4 Delivering the goods

The increase in population, demand for housing, retail development and demand has helped fuel the continuing growth in the numbers of large delivery vehicles coming to and travelling round the Island. Issues exist, not only in terms of the size and number of vehicles, particularly where these must use our narrow roads, but also in terms of adding to the congestion at the port areas in particular the required delivery and the method by which and time they are loaded.

The increased use of drop and load and night time sailings has advantages in terms of reducing pressure on daytime capacity, but can add to the problems associated with storage, marshalling and potential for night time noise at terminals. This can be an issue for local residents in particular those who live near the ferry terminals. Further consideration is given to this issue in Section I - "Air Quality and the Environment".

J.3 Our Five Year Strategy

The Isle of Wight is changing. Our vision is now to establish a strong focus on regeneration using economic growth, new employment and the development of new skills to drive our economy. This will no doubt bring issues and opportunities and the goal we have to achieve will be to do this without having a detrimental impact on the area where we live and adding to existing levels of local traffic congestion.

There can be no doubt that traffic congestion will rise unless we consider measures to address the issue. These measures will include a number of longer term, land use related measures secured through the emerging "Island Plan" plus more immediate measures and initiatives, put in place through this Plan. It is essential that both Plans work together.

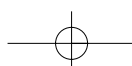
J.3.1 Ensuring Regeneration

The emerging "Island Plan" is driven by the need for economic regeneration and is guided by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, which indicates that the Island should maintain its current average housing construction levels of 520 houses built per annum until 2026.

The development of the Island Plan's Core Strategy has used extensive consultation to help establish the approach to development, including:

- **The provision of employment and supporting economic regeneration.**
- **Establishing where development will take place.**

These issues are key to the development of the Island and are a major factor when considering issues of sustainability and how we can address the future demands on our local transport system. Future economic regeneration and enhancements to quality of life requires the provision of efficient and sustainable transport connections between our towns and villages and if we are to regenerate the Island, also between the mainland and the Island.



Increasing the availability of transport and transport choice is a key element of the core strategy and where people live in the future and how easy it is for them to access means other than just the private car, are essential if we are to regenerate the Island, retain its attractiveness as a holiday destination and address congestion issues.

J.3.2 Balancing the need

This Plan seeks to improve accessibility for all and it is important that the measures we put in place to reduce congestion help to increase travel options and encourage travel by sustainable means, whilst taking into consideration the needs of those whom use of the private car is a necessity.

J.4 Measures to reduce congestion

If we are to deal effectively with the effects of congestion, a number of specific measures are likely to be employed as our local circumstances permit. These include an analysis of exiting travel patterns - understanding the current situation, using census information, local surveys and information including journey times, bus punctuality and changes in peak traffic flows on key corridors.

We will be looking at the opportunities and advantages of developing additional Park and Ride sites, not just to help address issues associated with cross Solent commuting, but whether such facilities are relevant on the Island where journey distances are comparatively short and where parking capacity currently exists in most towns. We will as part of this process continue our car occupancy counts, which take place on Newport approach roads; monitor public transport use and modal split information achieved through School Travel Plans and Workplace Travel Plans.

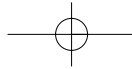


J.4.1 Making the best of what we have

The Traffic Management Act (2004) helps provide the legislative framework under which the country's road network can be better managed for the benefit of all road users. The aims of the Act is to ensure that local authorities establish managerial and organisational structures and adopt specific policies and objectives under which effectiveness of different roads within their network can be monitored. The Act requires that we demonstrate that we have delivered a planned response across the whole organisation and that agreed actions have been implemented. It is important that the authority leads by example and applies the same standards and principles to their own activities, as it requires from others.

Keeping the traffic moving

The Council has identified the role of Traffic Manager and by adopting a more coordinated and structured approach are ensuring that we make the best use of the existing transport network. Through this process works are planned and scheduled so as to help keep traffic moving, reduce congestion and air pollution and address our targets and shared priorities.



In those circumstances where road diversions and closures are inevitable we are putting in place measures to reduce the impact on the travelling public. Our Investment Programme includes measures under which we will improve travel information and signing for road users and those using public transport.

Improving signing and information

Variable message signing at our ferry ports and town centre approach roads will be used to inform motorists of possible hold ups and delays, events, destinations, car park locations and capacity. We will also consider interventions which will improve traffic flows and reduce congestion.

Real time information can also be used to inform and keep up to date those people who travel by public transport. Further details of these specific options are included the Bus Information Strategy and Rail Strategy, which are included as an Annex to this Plan. We are also exploring the possibility of including real time information within the new transport interchange at Ryde Esplanade.

J.4.2 Working in partnership

By working in partnership with the QTP, Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and other transport operators' boost the attractiveness of public transport by marketing, promotion, and the reduction of travel costs where possible. Walking and cycling can be attractive for shorter journeys and will be encouraged as part of the development of travel plans and by improving safety, signage, training, publicity and route maintenance.

J.4.3 Developing travel plans

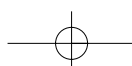
If developed properly, Workplace and School Travel Plans can help increase travel choice and reduce the number of vehicles on the road at peak times. We all notice the difference at holiday times, when the numbers involved in the "school run" and travel to work are reduced. Initiatives introduced as part of the development of these plans, such as car sharing, incentives to use public transport, walk and cycle can all make a difference to congestion on our roads.

Workplace travel plans

As one of the largest employers we will work in partnership with others in the business community and elsewhere to put in place workplace travel plans where these seek to increase travel choice and using new technology and other methods reduce the need to travel, the number of journeys and journey length. The use of new technology and the ability to work and network from home can reduce the number of journeys. Working flexi time can help to stagger journeys to work, help shift the peak and reduce congestion.

School travel plans

The Council has been very successful in developing School Travel Plans and by working with the DfES, Local Education Authority, schools - pupils, parents and Governors, is helping to make a real difference on the ground. It is recognised that the success of any such travel plan is through a combination of "hearts and minds" and engineering and safety measures, where these make the shift from car use seem both desirable and possible.



We will continue to use a partnership approach to the development of STPs and will build on the "best practice" approach where schemes are developed through a small team which led by our School Travel Plan Officer calls on expertise from Planning, Road Safety, Education, Property Services, Healthy Schools Initiative, Cycling Officer, as well as the professional staff who put hard engineering measures in place.

This team approach, which has been nominated for the 2006 National Transport Awards will be used to deliver our first Local Accessibility Action Plan, which seeks to improve accessibility, safety and reduce congestion around a cluster of schools located in a densely populated residential area at Carisbrooke just to the west of Newport. Further details of this are included in Section F - "Increasing Accessibility."

J.4.4 Parking measures

The Council has recently reviewed its approach to on and off street parking, particularly in terms of cost and duration of stay. Under the approved scheme, a parking permit will be available at a cost to local residents, but for those without a permit the cost to park in Council Car Parks will increase on a "longer you stay, the more you pay basis." Charging will be introduced in new locations. Residents parking areas increased and the duration of stay reduced in town centre car parks so as to reduce congestion in these areas.

The Council is also currently looking to introduce decriminalised parking where this will lead to greater efficiency and improved enforcement.



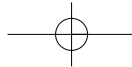
Car parking as part of development proposals are currently considered using the parking guidance included in our existing Unitary Development Plan. This guidance takes account of national guidance set out in the Planning Policy Guidance note 13 (PPG13) produced by the Government in March 1994. Our own guidance uses a zonal approach, based on the size of existing settlements and takes account of local circumstances, including accessibility and the availability of public transport. Already included as an issue in the LDF Core Strategy, our parking guidance will be reviewed as part of the development of the LDF and updated to take into consideration more recent revisions and our requirements for regeneration.

J.5 Increasing travel choice

The Council recognises the importance of maintaining and improving transport choice and is looking to improve travel by public transport.

J.5.1 Increasing the numbers travelling by public transport

The Council recognises that reducing the cost of travel by public transport will help achieve a number of our aims, including increasing travel choice, reducing congestion and pollution. The Council has brought this about by extending a planned Government initiative and through close working with partners in the local bus and rail industry.



The local bus operator (Go Ahead - Southern Vectis) is also looking to roll out network and timetabling changes that will help the bus to compete with the car. It is considered that this, together with reducing the cost of travel, will help increase the number travelling by bus. The Council will also continue to support those non commercial bus routes that are of benefit in terms of improving and maintaining accessibility.

Free travel for over 60s

The Council has agreed to introduce from 1 April 2006 free bus and rail travel on the Island for residents with certain disabilities and those age 60 and over. Under the scheme travel will be free 24 hours a day, seven days a week 365 days a year. Replacing the current "Islander Card" discount travel scheme, this initiative seeks to build on and further enhance the Government's own initiative, and by removing any limitations placed on time of travel and extending the scheme to rail services, this will help provide a realistic alternative method of car free travel for those age over 60 who are still in employment.

The Council is looking to introduce a possible £1.00 flat fare in 2007, for those people not covered by the above scheme.

Student Rider scheme

The Council has looked at ways in which it can further improve our existing "Youth Mover" scheme under which scholars can, for a small charge (maximum £15.00 per academic year), obtain a Youth Mover Ticket, which in simple terms entitles them to free travel by bus and rail after 17:00 hrs. The "Student Rider Scheme" developed with the operators and Youth Trust and also to be introduced on 1 April 2006, will be open to scholars aged 5-19 years of age and will allow a single journey, by rail or bus anywhere on the Island, for 50 pence.

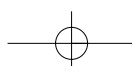
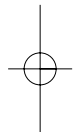
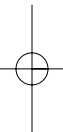
This scheme builds on the innovative Youth Mover card, and by extending the age range and removing any previous time barriers, offers those in full time education a tangible alternative to car ownership.

The Council believes that both of the above schemes will help offer a realistic alternative to car use and in doing so help us achieve a range of targets contained in this Plan.

J.5.2 Developing our railway

The Council recognises the importance of the railway which runs from Ryde Pier head (map ref O2) to Shanklin (map ref N8), in particularly its ability to offer a reliable and traffic free route linking the Islands key tourist towns. The importance of the route was considered during the preparation of the "Island Plan" and with its dedicated and timetabled rail bus connection to Ventnor, was an influencing factor when selecting the final option to be included in the LDF core strategy.

The Council recognises the importance of maintaining and improving the railway and will continue to work in partnership with the rail operators to examine methods by which funding can be achieved to improve facilities and infrastructure which will help increase the numbers travelling by train. The Council values the partnership working delivered through the QTP and local Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and will look to deliver schemes to further enhance rail travel, by working with a range of partners including local Town and Parish Councils.



J.5.3 Making the best use of our Rights of Way network

Our Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) identifies the advantages of using our 800 km (500 miles) of existing ROW as sustainable links into and between settlements. It is recognised the positive benefits that using our rights of way network can have on reducing congestion. The measures contained in our Investment Programme (Section M) will help support the necessary improvement of routes and initiatives. Any extensions and improvements will take account of the SEA process.



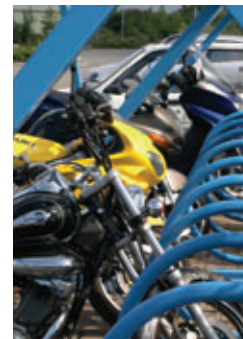
J.5.4 Walking and cycling

The Council recognise that travel by foot and cycle can be quicker, healthier and more convenient especially for shorter journeys and will continue to develop and support sustainable travel where this will help increase travel choice.

The Council is one of only a few LA's to attempt to achieve the (now abandoned) national cycling target, to triple the numbers cycling. Our successes achieved through a Public Service Agreement (PSA) with Government, have seen the numbers cycling increase and the profile of cycling raised - both for transport, fitness and as part of School Travel Plans. Cycling is now embraced within the school curriculum at many local schools and working in partnership with Sustrans has enabled us to make great progress both in terms of joint investment and a number of exciting sustainable transport initiatives. This collaborative work will continue in the development of STPs, our Local Accessibility Action Plan, (see above and elsewhere in this section) and in the development and extension of a number of attractive and convenient, congestion beating, cycle routes. (See "Smarter Choices Annex for more details).

J.5.5 Powered two wheelers

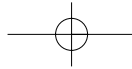
The Council recognise the benefits of travel by powered two wheelers, particularly where these help improve accessibility and reduce congestion. Our local riders are represented on our QTP and efforts have been made to ensure that free parking is provided both on street and off street in suitable locations. It is recognised that further work could be done in this area to improve facilities and it is hoped that this will encourage their use as an everyday form of transport rather than just a leisure sport.



J.5.6 Improving water transport

The Island is well placed to make the best of transport by water and we have been talking to our partners in Solent Transport, regarding the potential to develop new cross Solent commuter links, where this will help reduce congestion, by operating new services between the Island and ports such as Portsmouth, Southampton and possibly Lymington.

The IW Tourism Strategy (www.islandbreaks.co.uk) identifies the opportunity to develop links from the mainland directly to the Bay Area and the development of the waterbus service between Cowes (map ref J1) and Newport (map ref K4) may offer a congestion-beating alternative.



The opportunity exists to develop the use of coastal shipping for the delivery of bulk materials. This will be an important issue if our PFI bid is successful and could offer an alternative to the use of existing car ferries for the delivery of the bulk materials required for the reconstruction of our highways. Such a scheme would help reduce congestion at our existing port areas.

J.6 Interventions and improvements

The Council will continue its dialogue with freight operators and ferry companies to ensure the effective use of our road network, so as to reduce as far as possible congestion and any harmful impact.

In those situations where it is feasible, measures to increase capacity and traffic flow will be put in place, these include improvements to traffic lights, traffic control and travel and other information. Other measures will include improvements to road junctions, public transport infrastructure, better footways and cycleways.

J.6.1 Supporting regeneration

The Island is well placed to utilise water transport, both on the River Medina and cross Solent. The transport of bulk freight to the Island by barge may be appropriate in certain circumstances and the retention and improvement of local facilities and routes could help reduce the size and number of lorries on our local roads.

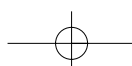
This issue has been highlighted during the preparation of the "Island Plan" and Core Policy 15 included in T1 - Transport and Accessibility, explains we will work with our partners to:

"Establish effective bulk material handling infrastructure at suitable locations to improve capacity and support economic regeneration". This facility will be of particular importance if our PFI bid is approved and we need to import bulk materials to reconstruct our transport infrastructure. Whilst the precise implications are not known at present, the development of our PFI bid will require the submission of a full New Approach to Appraisal assessment (NATA) which will examine a wide range of issues including the social, environmental and economic consequences of our proposal.

J.7 Reducing congestion through a major bid for Newport

The Council is looking to reduce congestion and improve accessibility and safety in our major town Newport (map ref K4) as part of the submission of a major bid. Currently in its very early stages of development, part of this £10+m project will be to help to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion at key locations around the town, including Coppins Bridge the gyratory system that acts as the "hub" of our radial highway network. The opportunity exists to improve the capacity of the current highway network for all traffic, whilst at the same time allowing easier access by bus and improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

We will be developing this bid through the early part of this plan period and are already in discussion with the Regional Transport Board at SEERA to ensure that the scheme is likely to attract the necessary



funding before spending the time or money developing the bid. The final bid process will require the development of a detailed design for each element of the proposal, plus extensive consultation and consideration of the environmental consequences as part of the SEA process. We will also have to produce a NATA appraisal, which will consider in depth a wide range of issues including the social, environmental and economic consequences of our proposal. Details of NATA appraisals can be found at www.webtag.org.uk

J.7.1 Summary of key actions

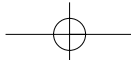
Our 5-year strategy therefore includes the following indirect and direct measures so as to help reduce congestion on local roads.

Any engineering works will be delivered through our priority ranking process and will take full account of the SEA process.



Issue	Method
Reduce number and length of journeys	<p><i>Working practices</i> - facilitate working from home, internet links, broadband.</p> <p><i>Meetings</i> - locate with easy access, encourage video conferencing</p> <p><i>Planning</i> - short-term - reuse buildings in urban areas, upper floors.</p> <p><i>Planning</i> - longer-term - land use planning to ensure sustainability and ease of access by all modes. As part of LDF proposals locate development to reduce the need to travel.</p> <p><i>Encourage and retain mobile services</i> - take the services to the people i.e. mobile library, home deliveries etc.</p>
Encourage modal shift	<p><i>Workplace Travel Plans</i> - car sharing, encourage walking, cycling, travel by bus and train.</p> <p><i>School Travel Plans</i> - car sharing, encourage walking, cycling, travel by bus and train.</p> <p><i>Planning process</i> - ensure new developments allow for easy access by all modes</p> <p><i>Powered two wheelers</i> - encourage travel by PTWs. Provide safe convenient parking and help improve rider training and safety.</p>
Partnership working	<p><i>Work with others</i> - including the QTP, freight partnership, transport operators, business community and others to ensure best possible operation and interchange between modes.</p>

Issue	Method
	<p><i>Solent Transport</i> - work with neighbours to consider wider transport issues. Links to and from mainland.</p> <p><i>Promotion</i> - encourage and facilitate transport options.</p> <p><i>Solent Transport</i> - work with our Solent Transport partners to improve cross Solent and cross boundary travel.</p>
<p>Make the best use of the existing transport infrastructure</p>	<p><i>Traffic flows</i> - improve traffic flows at key locations - i.e. Coppins Bridge.</p> <p><i>Information</i> - Introduce variable message signing at key locations to inform of hold ups, car park locations, capacity etc.</p> <p><i>Public Transport</i> - facilitate access by and access to public transport - bus and rail. Reduce travel costs where possible. Work with operators to introduce "real time information" - buses, trains and at ferry ports.</p> <p><i>Ferry ports</i> - work with operators and others to make the best use of existing infrastructure to help ease congestion.</p> <p><i>Work with schools and employers</i> - to reduce peak time congestion, by where possible staggering opening times and offering flexible working hours.</p> <p><i>Freight</i> - establish a QFP and work with our partners to make the best use of the infrastructure, so as to improve services and reduce impact on the environment.</p> <p><i>Walking and cycling</i> - improve extend and sign existing routes</p> <p><i>Rights of Way</i> - work with our partners to deliver our Rights of Way Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Traffic management</p>	<p><i>Ensure effective traffic management</i> - through liaison with the utilities and others, wherever possible reduce hold ups and maintain the free flow of traffic.</p>
<p>Water transport</p>	<p><i>Retain and improve facilities for water transport</i> - cross Solent, in terms of links to the mainland. Internal - where this will improve links between towns e.g. Cowes and Newport.</p> <p><i>Freight</i> - Maximise the opportunity to transport bulk freight by water. This is particularly relevant in terms of regeneration and our PFI bid.</p>



Tackling congestion

