

MINUTES OF QUALITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP USER GROUP MEETING

Tuesday 8th January 2013
Seaclose Offices, Newport 10:30 -12:30

PRESENT

David Rogers (DR) – Chair
Eddie Elsom (EE) – People matter / IW
Older Voices
Rachel Mills (RM) – Isle of Wight
Council (IWC)
Tricia Merrifield – IOW bridleways group.
Morris Barton (MB) – Chamber of Commerce
Valerie Lawson - Cycle Wight
Hugh Walding – IW Friends of the Earth

Brenda Wilkins – IW Advanced Motorist
Stuart George (SG) – IW bus and rail
users group.
Bobby Lock (BL) – Community Rail
Partnership
Chris Wells (CW) - IWC

1. APOLOGIES

Wendy Perera – IWC
Edward Giles CC – IWC

Tim Thorne - Cycle Wight
Ollie Boulter – IWC

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. Copies of QTP minutes agendas and other relevant information can be found at www.iwight.com/transport

Points arising from minutes:

1. Concern raised by Bus and Rail Users Group (BARUG) regarding the way in which Southern Vectis cater for bus passengers with disabilities / accessibility issues.
2. DR clarified that any concerns regarding bus services should be addressed to Southern Vectis in the first instance, rather than referred them to the traffic commissioners.

Action: BARAG to meet with Southern Vectis to discuss access and disability issues.
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3 PRESENTATIONS / UPDATES

PFI – update.

RM gave an update regarding future roads maintenance programme which from April 2013 will be delivered through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

After that date works will be carried out by successful bidder Island Roads a joint venture between Vinci and Ringway. Majority of IWC highways staff will be seconded to the new company prior to the start of the contract, including current highways dedicated call centre staff.

The council will retain PFI contract monitoring, intelligent client role, public transport issues, democratic functions, parking enforcement and transport policy and strategy. A decision over where rights of way function will sit is expected within the next few weeks.

It is recognised that there is a need to ensure the best possible public relations and so as to smooth transition and set up appropriate processes; some key staff have transferred to Island Roads who will be based at offices in Daish Way, Riverway Industrial Estate, Newport.

A key element of the project is to support the local economy and skills and the company will be employing local contractors where possible.

Action: CW to invite Island Roads representative to next meeting.

Island Plan update

CW explained that the Island Plan – Core Strategy has been adopted following Examination in Public. The council is now working on “daughter documents” Area Action Plans (AAPs)

An amended Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been published. This is the timetable for document production for the Council’s main planning documents, which has been updated to give realistic timescales.

The first phase of public consultation for the Medina Valley AAP is now programmed for August / September 2013, with adoption in 2014. Key dates for the Ryde AAP are first public consultation February / March 2014 and adoption 2015; The Bay AAP first public consultation August / September 2014 and adoption 2015; and the Delivery & Management DPD first public consultation November / December 2014 and adoption 2015. All of this information is available on our website.

A monitoring report has been prepared setting out our progress against a range of indicators contained in the adopted Island Plan – Core Strategy, including a number of transport related ones. This will also be available on line in the next few weeks.

Action: Details of the AAPs will be made available on line and there will be opportunities to comment and contribute. QTP groups will be kept up to date.

Action: Anybody wishing to be contacted specifically regarding AAPs to contact CW

Local Transport Issues

Island Transport Plan - update

CW gave a brief update on the ITP He explained that for the latest round of Local Transport Plans the government has moved away from the need to set targets as has been the case for the previous plan. Experience had shown that whilst targets might have been useful in establishing a “goal”, in practice Local Transport Authorities often had little or no influence over the ability to achieve them. While some targets were very easily achieved, others were over optimistic and virtually unachievable.

The council has therefore set a range of local transport indicators and will continue to collect relevant information, including bus patronage, punctuality, train patronage, punctuality reliability, ferry patronage and cycle trips. Issues such as road condition will be monitored in partnership with colleagues in Island Roads. These will form the basis of a transport monitoring report which when complete will be made available on our website.

Island Line

Island Line – CW explained that South West Trains (SWT) have just announced the intention to undertake a study into the options for the future of the Island Line. The council has expressed the desire to be included in these discussions as had the Island’s Community Rail Partnership (CRP).

Action: CW to update QTP on rail study

Local traffic issues

Of particular concern to East Cowes Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce, MB asked if the traffic plan for the IOW festival will be made available for information.

Action: RM to enquire if the festival traffic plan will be made more widely available.

Cross Solent Travel

MB had attended recent public meeting organised by the TUC (RMT, UNITE and UNISON) to discuss cross Solent ferry issues. Attended by in the region of 200 people, discussions highlighted a range of issues including the cost of travel and reduction in services.

It would appear that a number of options were considered and a motion carried to seek support from government and press for improvements to timetable and reduction in fares.

DR explained that a further meeting was due to take place in Yarmouth on Monday 14th January 2013 one of the aims of which was to establish the Solent Ferry Users Group (SFUG) and positions within that group.

QTP agreed that the services were an essential lifeline for the Island. Whilst all would support the reinstatement of services and a reduction in cost of travel, it was also recognised that the companies are privately owned and as such could not be obliged to maintain services or reduce prices.

Points raised by members:

1. QTP should be involved in discussions.
2. Representative of SFUG should be invited to attend a future QTP user's group meeting.
3. Is there an emergency plan in place if a service is cut or dramatically reduced?
4. Opportunity exists to lobby government for support.
5. Island Apart report (1997) may be of help here.
6. TfSH were looking into options to get a fuel duty rebate as per local bus services.

Action: CW to invite representative of SFUG to next QTP Users Group Meeting.

Action: CW to investigate question regarding existence of an emergency / contingency plan.

Action: CW to explore methods of supporting ferry companies.

LSTF - Local sustainable transport fund bid

RM explained that IWC had been successful in achieving a bid to government for funding to improve local transport.

Totalling some £5.2m the tourism based project seeks to encourage visitors to travel to the Island without a car, or leave it at holiday destination. The project is made up of three main elements – improvements to information and signing, new and improved walking and cycling routes and promotion of sustainable tourism in partnership with the newly established destination management organisation (DMO).

Work is now well underway on carrying out the improvements to a number of walking and cycling routes including:

- Newport to Sandown route – improvements at Alverstone area liable to flooding. completed before Christmas.
- East Cowes to Newport upgrade of footpath – underway.
- Shanklin to Wroxall – upgrade of disused railway line, underway.

Improvements to bus services are also planned as part of project – including new service to Alum Bay and modification of buses to allow the carriage of bikes and surf boards on some routes. Discussions are currently underway with bus operator on these issues.

Action: RM offered to meet with BARUG and people matter / older voices groups. EE to arrange if required.
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Improving information on buses – RM confirmed that improving information on buses is outside the scope of the LSTF bid, but it might be possible to achieve some money for this through a Better Bus Access Fund (BBAF) bid.

Importance of floating bridge - MB raised concerns regarding lack of signing and information available for visitors arriving on the Red Jet and wanting to get to Osborne House.

Action: LSTF bid includes funding for travel plan coordinator to work with accommodation providers, tourist attractions and transport operators to encourage and promote sustainable travel. This could potentially include working in partnership with Osborne House.

TfSH -Transport for South Hampshire

CW explained that IWC has now formally joined TfSH a strategic transport planning group including Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils.

TfSH is recognised and valued by DfT and joining the group, will bring a number of benefits to the Island, these including, improve dialogue with our neighbours and operators, joint working on range of issues such as a cross boundary travel card and support and promotion of LSTF projects.

CW explained the links between TfSH and Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and that they share the same boundary and how TfSH with the LEP could under government proposals become a Local Transport Body (LTB) – to whom Government will delegate future (major) transport funding.

4 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

Community Bus services – in response to a question from SG RM explained that the council would wish to continue to support community buses beyond current contract 31/03/13, however the level of support would be subject to available funding (eg government and council).

Subsidised buses – in response to a question from SG, RM explained that the current agreement operates until 31/08/13

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 21 May 2013.

All meetings scheduled for 10:00 (tea / coffee) - 10:30 start. Seaclose Offices, NEWPORT.

Meeting closed at 12:35