

# POLICY COMMISSION BLUE PAPER

<b>RESPONSIBLE BODY</b>  Policy Commission for Business and Infrastructure	
<b>PROJECT NAME</b>  Island Ports Sustainability Study	<b>REFERENCE NUMBER</b>  E1/06
<b>1. PURPOSE OF ENQUIRY AND PROPOSED OUTCOMES</b>  1.1 To recommend to Cabinet how the Isle of Wight Council can work with stakeholders to sustain and develop Island ports to meet the aspirations of the Island Plan.  1.2 To provide Island residents with sustainable cross Solent services.	
<b>2. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  <b>The Council will:</b>  2.1. Encourage investment in existing terminals which will optimise their potential, efficiency and reduce the impact of peak flow congestion on the surrounding highway network and community. Consideration will need to be given to the visual impacts of any terminal development which are the gateways to the Island and impacts on surrounding activities.  2.2. Seek the co-operation of ferry service providers to ensure that where additional route carrying capacity is proposed the full consideration of shoreside impacts and provision of required new or upgraded infrastructure form part of the proposals.  2.3. Support the continuation of choice of routes and methods of crossing the Solent to ensure flexibility and reduce the risk of disruption to service and impact on Island business continuity.  2.4. In principle support opportunities for additional or alternative port facilities where these will secure the longer term sustainability of ferry services to the Island subject to provision (and ongoing maintenance) of adequate supporting	

infrastructure.

- 2.5. Recognise the environmental sensitivity of the Island's coast, much of which is subject to designations, and will fully consult and examine all alternatives when considering proposals for additional or alternative port facilities.
- 2.6. Ensure that any additional scheduled ferry services are provided on an all year round basis as a service to the Island population and economy and not simply to take commercial advantage of the most profitable sectors to the detriment of the overall level of service.
- 2.7. Encourage initiatives to spread the demand for ferry crossings more evenly through the seasons, week and day to make better use of existing and future capacity within the ferry services.
- 2.8. Prepare contingency plans to deal with any major disruption to cross Solent ferry and cargo operations, including consideration of emergency parking provision, signage and directions for traffic management and welfare provisions.
- 2.9. Work with the ferry operators to improve access to up to date travel information including web site alerts and advance variable message signing.
- 2.10. Encourage proposals to promote park and ride, bus services, taxis, cycling or walking to passenger terminals to reduce the impact of car parking and car traffic in the vicinity of terminals.
- 2.11. Promote the establishment of a Quality Freight Partnership and to examine in greater detail the issues and options relating to dispersal of trailer parking and storage and the transportation of construction and building materials.

This body of work and the above recommendations were agreed and accepted by Members of the Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration and Transport on xxxx 2007.

### **3. BACKGROUND TO ENQUIRY**

#### **THE NATIONAL CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Isle of Wight is the only inhabited Island in England and Wales other than the Scilly Isles without fixed links to the mainland. The Island falls within the South East region and is recognised in the South East Plan with special policies for regeneration and economic lead growth. This future growth will be reliant on the provision of adequate infrastructure, including transport and cross Solent links.

#### **THE LOCAL CONTEXT**

- 3.2 As an Island the Isle of Wight relies on cross Solent transport connections for the movement of all imported and exported goods and personal travel and are a major impact factor to the social- economic development and economic prosperity of the Island. There is no form of physical road or rail link between the Island and the mainland and air services are limited. Cross Solent movement therefore relies almost entirely on water crossings and the capacity of related infrastructure.
- 3.3 Concerns have been expressed that the growing demand for cross Solent transport of goods and passengers are placing strains on the Island's infrastructure.
- 3.4 The emerging Island Plan and the second Local Transport Plan recognise that transport networks and infrastructure are of critical importance to the Island economy, regeneration aspirations and the quality of life. These strategies seek to safeguard and upgrade cross Solent gateways for future use for transportation, passenger and freight handling purposes.
- 3.5 A common issue for any uses and services located on the coast is that of operating in a dynamic environment and in particular ensuring that port and ferry facilities are capable of being upgraded to operationally take account of increasing rates of sea level rise and flood risk to essential elements of the Island's infrastructure.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Key stakeholders were invited to present evidence to the Enquiry either in person directly to the Commission, informally, or in writing.
- 4.2 A formal presentation was made to the Commission by consultants MVA for Planning Services. This presentation was of a report entitled 'Cross Solent Movement Study' dated June 2006, and was published and available as the basis for wider consultation with other Stakeholders. Subsequent presentations were made to the Commission by The Isle of Wight Economic Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, The Federation of Small Businesses, The Quality Transport Partnership and Steve Porter Transport Group.
- 4.3 Informal presentations were given by and discussions held with Wightlink, Red Funnel, Hovertravel, Natural England (formerly English Nature), Yarmouth Harbour and IWC Emergency Planning Business Continuity Officer. A meeting was also held with Officers of Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth as the relevant mainland Highway Authorities and IWC Transport Policy Planner and the harbour master of Portsmouth Commercial Port to gather evidence of issues related to Island ferry traffic and terminals.
- 4.4 Written representations were received from Cowes Harbour Commissioners and W A Horne via Andrew Turner MP.
- 4.5 An article and questionnaire were widely circulated in the One Island magazine and on the IWC web site. This resulted in the receipt of 147 returns on line and 587 paper returns through the post by the closing date of 23 March 2007. The results of this survey have already been reported to the Commission at their meeting of 4 April 2007.

#### **5. ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

##### **5.1 Growth and capacity**

- 5.1.1 The predictions for growth in ferry demand by up to 28% for passengers and 53% for vehicles from 2004 to 2020 in the MVA report were described as 'bullish' but could happen with general economic growth and increasing

desire to travel with cars. Each of the ferry operators recognise that for very limited periods the services are at capacity and stretched with consequent issues of congestion. However it would be uneconomic to invest in vessels, marshalling and staff resources based just on demand for those peak period sailings. Peak summer Saturdays are a case in point largely fuelled by the Saturday change over day in much holiday accommodation with fixed arrival cut off times. Greater flexibility by accommodation providers could assist in easing the peak capacity problems. The Council have no control over expansion of existing route carrying capacity through increased size of ferries or frequency of sailings.

5.1.2 Whilst ferry prices are not within the remit of this study each of the operators referred to having pricing structures which are either (as with Wightlink) based on established fixed fare ticket costs throughout the year but with offers and promotions to encourage off peak use or alternatively encouraging early booking with cheaper prices (Red Funnel stressed that their lead in prices are unchanged from ten years ago) and the price rises the closer to sailing times. The later people book the harder it is for the companies to forward plan. It was also stressed that advertising by the ferry companies is in effect promoting the Island. Support is expressed for extending the tourist season (Tourism Development Plan) as this would promote off peak travel but it needed attractions to remain open to provide reasons to come to the Island. Particular disappointment was expressed that Osborne House closes.

5.1.3 The Island is heavily reliant on ferry crossings for people, traffic and goods. Whilst each of the crossings has its own vulnerability there is security in multiple crossing routes and the number of vessels used. Each of the companies have in the past assisted in providing alternative methods of crossing the Solent where through inclement weather, mechanical breakdown or non availability of terminal facilities one of the operators services has not operated. Consolidation of services into shared terminal facilities will potentially reduce the level of flexibility and increase risks of disruption through congestion or common prevention of crossings.

5.1.4 Each of the ferry operators have in place special arrangements for transport of the emergency services. There are no formal arrangements for dealing with urgent requirements for travel. This is only likely to be a problem at peak

times and will be a matter for the terminal managers to consider on a case by case basis.

## **5.2 Wharfs and bulk goods**

- 5.2.1 Cowes harbour is the major Island Port of entry for commercial shipping, accepting vessels of up to 100 metres (330') in length and 5.4 metres Draft (17'9"). Vessels generally arrive and depart 2.5 hours either side of high water. Approximately 600,000 tons of cargo is handled annually including fuel oil/petroleum, stone, shingle aggregates, timber, grain and general cargo. The Island's ports also fulfil an important role in the local economy through accommodating leisure and sporting sailing and boating as eventing activities, an important arm of tourism and the related shore side support facilities
- 5.2.2 Kingston Wharf was the original wharf for importing coal for the previous East Cowes power station and Kingston Quay North is currently used for importing aggregates. The Kingston Quay South part of the wharf is also used for importing fuel oil for the current power station and the import of petrol and diesel fuels for the Island. This has the heaviest weight capacity capability in the Island and will be served by the new access road to Kingston
- 5.2.3 Medina Wharf remains the Island's most significant aggregate import wharf. The quay walls apparently have a limited life and remedial or replacement walls will eventually be required. The wharf also exports grain from silos of the IoW Grain consortium of farmers direct to European markets. In turn this is supportive of the maintenance of significant rural areas of countryside across the Island and AONB.
- 5.2.4 The wharf at the eastern end of Stag Lane (previously Cement Mills Wharf and Pioneer Wharf) is more commonly now known as West Medina Mills Wharf. Previous oils, aggregates and cement imports by sea have ceased on this site. It is no longer an active wharf but retains cement distribution and ready mix concrete facilities reliant on road transport. The site was recently purchased by SEEDA. The full potential of the Wharf is constrained by existing sub standard (by design and construction) access. Proposals for upgrading the road and a number of options for bringing the site back into economic use are being considered. There may be an opportunity to link the

wharf facilities to waste recycling opportunities; perhaps using parts of the former Stag Lane refuse disposal facilities to the west. The Development Plan allocation is for Minerals Wharf or uses requiring bulk freight transport or distribution (by sea) as is Kingston Wharf and Medina Wharf.

5.2.5 Blackhouse Quay has effectively stopped operating as a wharf when Site Services moved their trading to St Georges Down. The site is too far upstream to accommodate larger vessels which are now available and commonly required to provide an economic bulk materials service. Required capital dredging of the main channel to improve access is likely to meet high hurdles in respect of European Natura 2000 designations. The Supplementary Planning Guidance for Newport Harbour and the SPG Vision for the Medina Valley envisages a mixed employment and residential redevelopment of this site which is unallocated in the Development Plan but within the development envelope.

5.2.6 There are no other recently active aggregate wharfs in the Isle of Wight. Other wharf type facilities do exist relating to past or active boat building activities but it is considered unlikely that these could be brought into aggregate wharfs or similar bulk transport uses due to there being in economically viable employment uses or competition from other development types

### **5.3 Ferry freight distribution**

5.3.1 Use of smaller commercial vehicles for distribution around the Island has been suggested to reduce impact on Island roads of HGVs. One 40 tonner load if split would create seven 7.5 tonners or 13 transit vans taking more road space and adding to congestion. The Channel Islands restrict the size of commercial vehicles resulting in specialist smaller vehicles, mainland companies not being able to use their national fleet vehicles and higher costs.

5.3.2 Existing freight operators are already effectively operating freight distribution centres in the Island at Somerton and Newport. Red Funnel operate a consolidation and break bulk warehouse in Southampton and Newport with Vectis Transport. Newport has an 80 trailer capacity but is often full. Some National carriers have been observed splitting loads into smaller vans in roadside laybys. There are national distribution centres in the Midlands,

central Scotland and on the South coast with a 60 member pallet distribution system. Whilst this means double handling it allows the rapid distribution of goods now expected by customers. 24 hour seven days a week ferry services are vital for next day delivery. Significant increase in individual parcel deliveries through internet shopping and eBay.

5.3.3 Freight is about 80% on to the Island and only 20% off meaning that there is spare capacity for off Island goods. The main freight carried by the ferries are the supermarkets, B&Q, Unigate, Breweries and retail companies.

5.3.4 Supermarkets have their own distribution systems loading from centralised storage for restocking as retail sales are logged in computerised tills. These are in articulated trailers as usually single destination loads, with dwell zones on the mainland and direct from the ferry to the supermarket. Supermarket trailers export their own packaging and cardboard for recycling and sometimes take return loads such as tomatoes.

5.3.5 Freight operators are every day and all year customers of the ferries but can also be frustrated by delays on peak sailings. Suggestions that there should be a flat rate cost by tonnage as larger freight operators have discounted pricing to the disadvantage of smaller or new operators is no more than a normal commercial reality of volume discounts.

5.3.6 Suggestions in the MVA report that there would be advantage in establishing an Isle of Wight Freight Quality Partnership has been supported by ferry operators and their customers. Inaugural meeting of a Freight Forum set up by the Council took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007. There are common issues such as trailer parking and handling. Suggestions have been made that services could be improved by having dedicated freight trailer parking facilities. The sites listed by MVA have each been rejected either through the planning system or by land owners in the past. Both vehicle ferry operators have commented that trailer parks remote from terminals would incur additional cost due to double journeys and double handling of vehicles.

5.3.7 If a separate freight service were established it would be logical to have specialised ferries and handle freight traffic and trailers through Portsmouth commercial port with excellent access to the motorway network. Shipping

designed for the River Medina would need to be relatively shallow draft (Like the Blade Runner boats) for regular sailings and have limited capacity when compared to the existing 8 trailers per night-time sailing.

- 5.3.8 Neither of the vehicle ferry companies considered that a freight only service would be an advantage nor would want to operate such a service. Night sailings are offered for freight and dropped trailer services but some freight has to travel during the daytime due to time restrictions for deliveries and National logistical schemes. It was considered that freight only services would need to be subsidised and costs could be up by a factor of three. A separate freight service would reduce the demand for night sailings resulting in reduced frequency for sailings also used by car customers.

## **5.4 Vehicle ferry terminals**

### **5.4.1 Yarmouth**

- 5.4.1.1 The vehicle ferry terminal at Yarmouth, including the linkspan, is owned by Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners. The vehicle ferry service from Yarmouth to Lymington is operated by Wightlink. Wightlink lease the berth and quayside, the marshalling area, the ticket office and the overflow marshalling area. Historically Wightlink have introduced each new generation of larger ferries on the busier Fishbourne/Portsmouth route and moved the previous generation to the Yarmouth Lymington route. The three ferries on the Yarmouth/Lymington route which operate an half hourly service are about 30 years old with a vehicle capacity of 56 Car Equivalent Units and 450 passengers. These vessels are able to operate either from the linkspans or with alternative bow ramps directly from slipways in Yarmouth or Lymington greatly reducing the risk of significant disruption to services should linkspans fail.

- 5.4.1.2 Issues of channel width and depth in Lymington river have meant that Lymington Harbour Commissioner have not permitted the current Fishbourne ferries to be switched to the Yarmouth route. As a result Wightlink focused their investment on the Yarmouth route. They have designed and ordered a new generation of ferries specifically for this route, with the same bow shape but vehicle capacity raised to 65 vehicles (CEUs) and allowing for taller

vehicles, but with a reduced passenger capacity. Revised mezzanine deck arrangements mean that these vessels should be quicker to load in spite of handling more vehicles. The boats will be taller with a passenger lounge at the same height as the current bridge. It is anticipated that two of these ferries will come into commission in summer 2008 with perhaps a third to follow.

5.4.1.3 Most of the vehicle traffic comprises cars and coaches with relatively little freight traffic. The marshalling area on the quayside comprises six lanes and traffic is sorted by booked and non-booked vehicles. This has sufficient capacity for most times, which is expected to be the case with the new ferries, but at peak times, and in emergencies or the case of vehicles diverted from other routes, this has insufficient capacity and overflow remote marshalling facilities located to the south of the main public car park are brought into use. At extremely busy times there are competing demands for ordinary car parking, ferry traffic and through traffic (also exacerbated by the need to open the Yarmouth bridge every 30 minutes in the summer). With generally more traffic on the one main road year on year the tailback from opening the bridge becomes longer with the frequency of interfering with traffic to the marshalling area increasing.

5.4.1.4 Tourism in West Wight is thought to benefit from having a direct ferry service to Yarmouth although many travellers just leave Yarmouth itself with little direct benefit to the town. Wightlink are conscious that the ferries run into Yarmouth alongside the historic castle and conservation area. It is unlikely that the service could be expanded much beyond the new ferries as further expansion at Lymington is unlikely to be able to match it.

#### 5.4.2 East Cowes

5.4.2.1 The vehicle ferry services from East Cowes to Southampton are operated by Red Funnel Group and operate within the waters of Cowes Harbour Commission in the Medina Estuary and the waters of Associated British Ports as Harbour Authority for Southampton Water. The main harbour safety issue for the continued growth of ferry operations in Cowes harbour is the width of the navigable channel to the ferry terminal and its safe capacity for competing demands of a commercial harbour and internationally renowned yachting destination and event centre.

5.4.2.2 The Red Funnel ferry capacity figures in the original MVA study were incorrect in that they refer to the original Raptor class ferries before they were stretched and overall figures included the period when smaller relief vessels were in use in 2004.

5.4.2.3 Updated figures for 2006 are appended to this report. The £12 million programme of raising and lengthening the three ferries has increased the carrying capacity of the ferries from 140 car equivalent units to 200 car equivalent units (or 16 coaches) and 895 passengers each, up by 65% which has more than addressed the immediate capacity concerns of MVA. The ferries could not be extended further and still operate from the existing berth in East Cowes.

5.4.2.4 Marshalling of vehicles in East Cowes is currently split between three sites in the town centre. The main approach to the terminal is from Ferry Road with traffic passing through the 'Phoenix Yard' marshalling area before crossing Castle Street to access the main marshalling area before embarkation. In addition there is a temporary freight vehicle/trailer marshalling area off Castle Street. Proposals for alternative marshalling facilities on parts of the former GKN northworks site have been included in the master plan for the regeneration of East Cowes town centre. This and the suggested modifications to the highway network and routing of ferry traffic should ease some of the current conflict between local, floating bridge and ferry traffic at peak times and allow more efficient acceptance of vehicles into the marshalling area and hence reduce tailbacks. However it is not possible to allow fully for breakdown or adverse weather conditions which disrupt sailings and create long tailbacks on the highway network.

5.4.2.5 Red Funnels aspiration in the longer term is to increase the vehicle ferry fleet from three to four vessels. Operationally this would require double docking facilities and necessitate a total relocation of the terminal as an additional linkspan and berth cannot be added at the existing site. New infrastructure would need to be in place both on the Island and on the mainland in order to develop and expand the service. Early master plan consultation options for East Cowes included alternative locations for ferry services and marshalling facilities with equal support for improving the existing arrangements and for a

complete relocation to the Shrape. Current plans for the outer harbour area under investigation including an outer detached breakwater, secondary navigation channel and marina do not include a new terminal but equally does not preclude the provision of new terminal facilities to the north of the Shrape breakwater. The Harbour Commissioners supported the principle of relocation on safety grounds but considered the visual impact of earlier proposals was unacceptable.

#### 5.4.3 Fishbourne

5.4.3.1 The vehicle ferry service which operates between Fishbourne and Portsmouth is operated by Wightlink. The service is provided by four similar Saint Class ferries introduced in 1990, each with a capacity for 1000 passengers and 120 cars and the newest of different design introduced in 2002 with a capacity of 750 passengers and 160 cars. Future modifications could increase capacity to 180 ceus.

5.4.3.2 The marshalling area was extended when the saint class ferries were introduced and a dedicated exit route established. Current marshalling capacity is two boat loads. At that time the road junction of Fishbourne Lane/Kite Hill/Eleanor's Grove was improved and traffic light controls installed. More sophisticated light controls were installed here last year allowing more turning movements. At peak times and when sailings are delayed or disrupted traffic arriving at the terminal for embarkation tails back along Fishbourne Lane. Wightlink's current focus for investment is on new ferries for the Lymington route but there are opportunities to improve the Fishbourne terminal. The relocation of the ticket office within the site would create more queuing space at the terminal. Such changes are likely to cost in the order of £1 million but Wightlink consider that the increased capacity should cater for the next 10 – 15 years.

5.4.3.3 Commenting on the suggestion of double berths Wightlink did not consider these to be practical at Wightlink ports and commented that two ferries would not fit alongside each other at Portsmouth. They acknowledged that decking of marshalling areas to provide two levels would increase capacity but would be expensive to achieve. However two level loading and discharge with high level ramps such as at East Cowes could increase capacity by speeding

loading and discharge and hence turn round times.

#### **5.4.4 Additional or Alternative Terminals and Services**

5.4.4.1 Suggestions for the need for additional ferry services and terminals to create competition, to relieve congestion at existing terminals or to replace existing terminals have been made in the past, such as the reaction to the option of relocating the East Cowes Terminal to the Shraper area when King's Quay was suggested as an alternative which could also have provided a joint alternative to Fishbourne. This suggestion and others have been repeated by contributors to this enquiry and through the public consultation with a wide range of Island and Mainland (and France) service destinations being identified.

5.4.4.2 The benefits of new terminals have been suggested as providing multi berthing facilities with improved loading/unloading times and effectively extending the holding capacities of terminals. The ability to provide sufficient car marshalling facilities and dedicated trailer and freight parking areas and appropriate access route to the main road network. The opportunity for spreading of the peak loads and creating additional capacity for future growth.

5.4.4.3 Counter to this are suggestions that additional services would only be interested in creaming off lucrative car traffic and only during peak weeks without wanting to provide the all year services, including uneconomic sailings as the current providers do. As such this would undermine the level of service currently provided with cost being spread across the whole year.

### **5.5 Passenger ferry terminals and routes**

#### **5.5.1 Cowes**

5.5.1.1 Red Funnel high speed passenger 'Red Jet' service. Currently selection of two smaller craft Red Jet 1 and 2, a larger Red Jet 3 and the newest and largest Red Jet 4.

5.5.1.2 Restricted vehicular access via Fountain Yard. Small buses serve to the door

of the ticket office together with Taxi rank. Rapid bus service to Newport. Pressure on towns parking provision. Park and ride scheme from Somerton. Lack of secure bike storage at Cowes is an issue particularly as the service does not carry bikes. Southampton City Council pay for the bike storage facilities at Town Quay which are on ABP owned land. Day return tickets are available for off peak sailings. Red Funnel together with Southampton City Council and West Quays subsidise the free bus service from Southampton Town Quay to the town centre and Southampton Central railway station. The current agreement is secure only for the next two years but Southampton CC recognise the benefits and is unlikely to leave a vacuum although a small charge may be required.

#### 5.5.2 East Cowes

5.5.2.1 Red Funnel have an aspiration and had planning permission for a new pontoon at East Cowes north alongside the existing pontoon for a Red Jet service. Infrastructure to support this would need to be in place. The regeneration of East Cowes town centre would boost this and attractions such as Osborne House and other attractions should be encouraged to remain open all year. RF would welcome a park and ride scheme for East Cowes which could combine with links to Osborne House and act as a local bus service. It is hoped that the need for transport interchange facilities can be addressed in the detailed rearrangement of marshalling facilities as part of the East Cowes town centre regeneration.

#### 5.5.3 Ryde Pier

5.5.3.1 Wightlink 'Fast Cat' service operated from the end of Ryde Pier, which is a Grade II Listed structure. The service links directly to the Island Line trains from the pier head station through to Shanklin and with buses at Ryde Esplanade Station where a transport interchange is planned. The service runs directly into Portsmouth Harbour Station for mainland rail connections. Cycles are carried onboard. Wightlink were considering the development of Ryde Pier, however the 'top section' is built on reinforced concrete piles (rather than cast iron piles) and are suffering from erosion. WL have an aspiration to accommodate more cars at the pier head to serve the passenger service. WL consider that there is scope for car ferries to run from the pier head but

investment would be needed and if marshalling space could be created it may not be sufficient for a ferry load. The car ferries do on occasions of inclement weather call at Ryde pier to provide a passenger service when the Fast Cats are unable to safely come alongside.

#### 5.5.4 Ryde Esplanade

5.5.4.1 Hovertravel operate two 95 seat hovercraft on the route between Ryde Esplanade and Southsea. One hovercraft can run a two crossings an hour service with four crossings an hour at busy times when both craft are operating. Hovercraft do not operate overnight with the last service being 2045 hrs in summer and 2000hrs in winter although consent exists for a service up until 2200hrs. A parcel service is also operated and cycles are carried in panniers if sufficient space allows. There is bike storage at Southsea but not at Ryde terminal. A new craft built at Fishbourne and St Helens costing 33million is undergoing sea trials at present (April) with a 130 passenger capacity. A second large craft may be ordered later. The relocation of the original ticket office has created sufficient slipway space at Ryde for all three craft. Space at Southsea is at a premium and consent to extend the landing pad to accommodate the new craft has recently been granted. The new more powerful craft should be more weather tolerant thereby improving the reliability of the service. The proposed transport interchange at Ryde should improve access across the railway line to the bus and railway station. The existing seafront car parking facilities are important to the Hovercraft service which is in effect a park and ride service to Southsea and Portsmouth. There is a dedicated bus connection, subsidised 50% by Hovertravel, from Southsea terminal to Portsmouth town centre and Portsmouth and Southsea mainline railway station.

#### 5.5.5 Yarmouth

5.5.5.1 Passengers on the Wightlink vehicle ferries have the onward connectivity of a local train service from the station at the Lymington terminal and the mainline network beyond.

5.5.5.2 A summertime and winter weekend service is operated by Puffin Ferries between Yarmouth and Lymington town quay linking to Lymington town

centre and the market.

5.5.5.3 There is an occasional seasonal passenger ferry service between Yarmouth and Hurst Castle and Keyhaven. Occasional tourist services run from Portsmouth calling at Yarmouth on the way to Bournemouth (with connections to Swanage) and on to Weymouth by the Waverly or Balmoral. An occasional boat runs 2 or 3 times a summer from Brownsea Island. All of these latter routes operate primarily as tourist attractions rather than regular scheduled ferry services.

#### 5.5.6 Inter-ticketing

5.5.6.1 One suggestion in the original MVA report was for inter-ticketing to enable outward and return journeys to be made by the most convenient route for timing and origin and destination. Each of the operators work with the railway network for through ticketing but have expressed concerns about such a scheme due to competition issues, not least because it would reinforce claims of a monopoly or duopoly. RF understand that Office of Fair Trading would not welcome inter-ticketing between ferry companies. There are no standing arrangements for emergency inter-ticketing but Wightlink did accept Red Funnel tickets in March 2006 when the Southampton linkspan was damaged. Wightlink Fast Cats and Hovertravel have also provided cover for each other in the past. Red Funnel Group, Wightlink and Hovertravel are distinct and separate businesses, each competing for customers in their own ways by route, timetable, service and price.

### 5.6 Mainland terminals and connections

5.6.1 The efficiency and capacity of any ferry route is reliant on the terminals at either end of the route as well as the means of crossing the Solent. The mainland authorities recognise that cross Solent links are critical to the Island's success. In overall terms the volume of traffic generated by Isle of Wight ferries is small in comparison with the general traffic flows on the mainland networks.

5.6.2 Southampton city centre is getting more congested with delays up to 16 minutes in pm peaks but the circulation is generally satisfactory. The Red

Funnel vehicle terminal is located at one of the worst points on the network. There are issues with trailers within the marshalling area and tailbacks of traffic spilling out on to the highway network. Comments have also been made about the congestion within the terminal delaying discharge of vehicles from the ferry itself. Southampton CC have little control over what happens within the marshalling area as it is part of the operational port estate of Associated British Ports (ABP). The marshalling area is constrained in its present location. Earlier plans for relocation of the ferry terminal and the redevelopment of Royal Pier no longer appear to be progressing following ABP's reappraisal of long term port strategy and requirements.

- 5.6.3 There are peak summer Saturday problems at Wightlink's Gun Wharf terminal where traffic spills out on to the highway network, particularly if there are delayed sailings but generally traffic from the ferry runs well in Portsmouth. There is potential to move the highway and incorporate a parking area opposite within the terminal to provide additional capacity. Wightlink rent the terminal from Portsmouth City Council on a recent long lease providing a good revenue stream.
- 5.6.4 There are many rumours that Wightlink will be moving their terminal to the continental ferry port or other opportunities which may follow the Naval Dockyard Port review. Wightlink have not formally approached the continental ferry port about this. There may be opportunities to use land around or within the commercial port which has good links to the motorway network for ferry services to the Island but this is not something that Portsmouth or Hampshire are pushing.
- 5.6.5 Other suggested mainland terminal location have not been explored in detail but locations such as Gosport or Calshot/Fawley are located at the end of peninsulars and there will be associated infrastructure requirements for highway improvements, particularly with Gosport.
- 5.6.6 The Solent Transport Plan runs until 2026 and with the Partnership of Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) sub regional planning strategy envisages a water transport link between Portsmouth and Southampton and subject to the provision of landing facilities the intervening communities. Alternative pedestrian ferry routes have been tried in the past for special events –

Portsmouth/Cowes/Southampton for the Southampton Boat Show; Lymington / Cowes and Portsmouth / Cowes for Cowes week but ticket costs and round trip times have not shown viability.

5.6.7 It is possible that mainland park and ride schemes could serve day trippers to the Island. The South-East plan envisages 5 park and ride schemes outside the cities. Parking space is underused at IBM in Portsmouth at the weekend and University and health sector in Southampton may assist.

5.6.8 Natural England have noted that in Lymington the marshes are eroding, which form a natural breakwater. As a consequence there may be a need for an engineering structure to ensure the long term protection of the harbour.

#### 5.6.9 Signage

5.6.9.1 National standards for place naming on trunk road network mean that the IOW ferries are signed as the destinations rather than the Isle of Wight itself. Suggestions that some freight traffic could be separately handled through Portsmouth Commercial Port could be logistically difficult to sign. Southampton has real time variable message signalling system from the motorway network with similar key messages for Highway Agency, Hampshire CC and Southampton CC.

5.6.9.2 There are currently no plans for congestion charging or road charging in either Portsmouth or Southampton and the potential for such proposals to adversely impact on through traffic to the Island is recognised.

### 5.7 Real Time travel information

5.7.1 The MVA report advised that real time travel advanced warning of delays to sailings and subsequent congestion at ferry terminals to manage traffic at these times. Advanced signing would need to be of authorised design, construction and standard and controlled by the Highway Authority and not by the ferry companies themselves. The communication system and protocol for ensuring early warning of problems would need to be clear and parameters agreed. The operators are reluctant to broadcasting problems which could give their competitors an advantage.

5.7.2 In terms of where to locate the signs they need to recognise the three ferry terminals and the wide range of approach roads with sufficient capability to divert away from the congestion. This would primarily require signs at Racecourse roundabout (both way), Fishbourne Traffic lights (both way), and the approach to East Cowes (facing racecourse roundabout in the Osbourne House area). It is debatable whether further signs would be beneficial at Binstead Cross Roads (facing Ryde), Wootton (multi way at Cedars Traffic Lights), Newport (both way at end of North Fairlee Road), Newport (multi way at Coppins Bridge roundabout). In addition signs to be determined for Yarmouth route.

5.7.3 Emergency Planning are investigating the provision of temporary holding areas for delayed traffic. These will be required if there is insufficient capacity on alternative routes to accept diverted ferry traffic. Additionally there may need to be contingency plans to provide support for people (especially the vulnerable) waiting for services and the differing requirements ranging from extreme cold to extreme heat.

## **5.8 Environmental Impacts advice**

### **5.8.1 AONB**

5.8.1.1 In the opinion of the AONB partnership, the Island has an innate capacity to accommodate traffic, and unlike other counties in England is afforded the opportunity to assert a level of control over increased traffic by the management of the development of ports, through the planning system. The needs of the Island's economy, people and environment must be carefully considered in all plans and policies in order to have a truly sustainable approach.

5.8.1.2 Suggestions of a new port for the combined use of Red Funnel and Wightlink located at King's Quay causes AONB partnership grave concern. Whilst it is accepted that such a re-sited terminal would alleviate the current and future pressures experienced by Ryde and East Cowes, King's Quay is not an environmentally sustainable option.

5.8.1.3 The environmental quality and sensitivity of the King's Quay area has led to it benefiting from a number of designations which act as a necessary constraint to development. Nationally, it lies within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). From a European perspective, King's Quay is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and a Special Protection Area (SPA).

5.8.1.4 Once again we believe that there is a fundamental need to assess what constitutes sustainable development in an Island context. We agree with the need to provide economic regeneration for sectors of the Island's economy currently under performing and support efforts to provide for the social needs of our community, but this must be done in the context of the Island's major asset, its environment. There must be a sustainable balance to ensure that the future of our Island is secured.

#### 5.8.2 Natural England

5.8.2.1 Natural England prefers the term 'integration' to 'balance'. They understand the Island's unique complexities and recognise the need to plan for the Island's economy but also the need to enhance the natural environment. The Council now has a duty to enhance wildlife in SSSI's not just to protect.

5.8.2.2 There are ongoing concerns about Wightlink's operations at Wootton Creek – the impact of the ferry wash, number of boats and speed of ferries on the mudflats. There is also an issue over the erosion of the foreshore and whether it is ferry induced or natural causes. NE's view to date has been that there is a sufficient case to ask Wightlink to take some measures to reduce the likely hood of harm to the site but not sufficient to enforce through regulation.

5.8.2.3 Most areas in scope of the Ports Inquiry are covered by European or international conservation designations. (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and Ramsar sites). Natural England very rarely if ever simply advise that a particular development proposal should be rejected out right when first suggested. The full range of options and alternatives should always be explored seeking to avoid or reduce the potential harm at every stage. If any option on a designated site would be damaging then

Natural England would be expected to object. However Natural England and previously English Nature now have an established history of working through the potential impacts of port developments and identifying working solutions.

5.8.2.4 NE would need to be consulted about any project for a new port. The level of protection of designated areas have could be a major hurdle. There would need to be an appraisal of alternatives, including enhancing existing and integration and better use of facilities as part of the process. More efficient use, reductions in demand etc. Each proposal would be judged on its own merit.

### 5.8.3 Archaeology

5.8.3.1 The Island coastline is a dynamic feature which has historically attracted mans activities for food, defence, travel and other activities. The archaeological record is particularly rich around the coast as illustrated by the number of entries in the 'Sites and Monuments Record' (over 2600 records within the maritime, intertidal and coastal zones), Scheduled Monuments and Areas of High Archaeological Potential. Sites with no recorded archaeological remains area likely to reflect the absence of investigation rather than an archaeologically sterile landscape, preservation of organic remains can be unusually high in intertidal muds and areas. Any proposals for works associated with port or ferry terminal change, expansion or additional facilities will need to be subject to archaeological assessment by both English Heritage Maritime Unit and Council Archaeologists and early consultation about proposals is recommended.

## 5.9 **Conclusions**

5.9.1 The Isle of Wight is well served by regular, frequent passenger and vehicle ferry services with a choice of routes.

5.9.2 Whilst an individual route might be disabled for a period due to mechanical failure or inclement weather there is usually capacity on alternative routes and multiple vessel operations spreading the risk. Terminals with single loading facilities remain vulnerable with higher risk of significant disruption to services.

- 5.9.3 Each of the operators are separate business entities and receive no subsidy for the provision of services. Provision of subsidies could be considered as promoting unfair competition. Travel by water is not seen as the same as by highway in terms of public investment or subsidy. The cost of service provision is spread throughout the year with popular crossing periods subsidising uneconomic crossings. There is significant private capital investment in the existing operations serving the Island residents and visitors.
- 5.9.4 The passenger routes generate and rely on significant parking requirements and can be regarded as park and ride to mainland destinations. Onward connections and links to public transport routes are vital.
- 5.9.5 All the existing vehicle ferry terminals struggle to accommodate traffic at peak demand times with consequential tailbacks of traffic on the highway network, particularly if exacerbated by delayed sailings.
- 5.9.6 Emergency contingency plans should be prepared to cater for passengers needs and vehicles in the case of catastrophic failure of crossing capacity.
- 5.9.7 The implementation of potential improvements of marshalling at Fishbourne and East Cowes could reduce peak traffic handling problems and meet immediate general growth predictions. Constraints at each terminal will restrict longer term growth opportunities.
- 5.9.8 The creation of new alternative terminal facilities with double berthing facilities will reduce the risk and vulnerability of routes with single berth terminals.
- 5.9.9 Separate freight only services are not favoured and could increase costs and reduce the frequency of sailings available for car traffic. Separate trailer parking facilities away from terminals will involve double handling of vehicles, additional highway journeys and increased costs.
- 5.9.10 Wharfs in Cowes harbour and the Medina Estuary are of strategic importance for the movement of bulk goods and cargos vital for the Island's economy.
- 5.9.11 Any proposals for alternative terminals, regular routes and scheduled services

should provide the full range of services and be considered as adding to the all year, regular ferry services and not just catering for peak demand and limited markets. The assembly and splitting of freight loads is already being undertaken within the commercial sector within their own sites as part of National distribution networks required to meet customer expectations for rapid delivery times. Many loads do not require splitting if they have common destinations.

## **6. ACTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 The Council have little ability to control the operations of private companies who provide ferry services and could do nothing and just let existing operators continue to provide the current level of service from existing terminal facilities. This potentially will lead to a continuation of peak period congestion around terminals with longer and additional periods as growth is spread over longer periods. This would be exacerbated if ferry capacities continue to be increased without commensurate improvements to onshore and highway infrastructure.
- 6.2 However the Council could seek the reduction of impacts of ferry traffic on areas surrounding existing terminals in the short term by encouraging the ferry companies to upgrade and improve existing marshalling areas sooner rather than later. Options are available at East Cowes to replace the current split marshalling area with a single marshalling area as part of the East Cowes regeneration. Wightlink acknowledge that re-arranging facilities within the Fishbourne marshalling area will increase the capacity and efficiency of handling traffic. These changes will be in the interest of the companies themselves and improve the adverse reaction to the impacts of peak period congestion.
- 6.3 Each of the vehicle ferry terminals has a finite capacity based on the size and number of ferries capable of being serviced and the capacity to assemble and marshal vehicle loads. If demands on the services continue to grow then routes will need to relocate to provide all the infrastructure to create the greater capacity or stagnate. For the longer term therefore the Council should promote the relocation of existing terminals and services to new facilities with appropriate level of supporting infrastructure and/or the provision of additional terminals. The Council will be in a position to apply

conditions to any planning consents granted for new or expanded terminals and to ensure that adequate off site infrastructure is provided.

6.4 It has been suggested that the creation of a new multi berth terminal which would be available for current ferry operators to relocate to is the way to resolve the problems at existing terminals and cater for future growth. The provision of new larger shared terminal facilities for the consolidation of ferry services into one focussed location is one potential option.

6.5 An alternative proposition is to promote and encourage the provision of additional terminal location(s) together with additional ferry services to spread the load of peak capacity and future predicted growth and introduce additional competition and choice into cross Solent transport.

In relation to the introduction of additional services these could take two forms :-

6.6 One is the provision of additional seasonal services just to address the peak capacity problem. The existing services have sufficient capacity, particularly if marshalling area improvements above are enacted, other than at peak times or during operational problems. The concern with the introduction of services during only busy periods (of the season or day) or for the easiest traffic to deal with (i.e. cars) is that the costs of providing the service of ferries in quiet times which alone would not be economic is in effect subsidised by the times when the ferries are full. Specialist peak services could lead to reduction in quiet time services and/or the need to recoup costs by higher fares.

6.7 The alternative which is probably preferable is to seek to ensure that any new terminals and services are for all year services not just for peaks which will ensure that new services truly add to the ferry service to the Island and that they compete on equitable grounds with existing services.

6.8 The issue of trailer storage other than when assembled for immediate embarkation takes capacity at existing terminals but remote storage requires additional handling and costs. Options suggested include a centralised trailer handling facility for the Island at a single depot/location or to encourage the dispersion of trailer handling and storage in relation to each terminal and at

customer/haulier locations until travel is required.

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT – IMPACT x LIKELIHOOD**

For details of risk scoring and matrix, see Appendix 2.

Recommendation in paragraph 2.2 - Failure to secure co-operation of service providers could result in the need for additional expenditure from the Council to deal with highway and infrastructure capacity. **Risk Score 2 x 2 = 5**

Recommendation in paragraph 2.9 - Risk of inaccurate information on variable message signing or web sites, safety, highway compliance, capital and revenue costs and cost of operation of system. **Risk Score 2 x 3 = 8**

The rest of the recommendations represent a low risk, and are not likely to represent a financial risk to the Council.

## **8. EVIDENCE/BACKGROUND PAPERS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Documents available on request.

### **External**

- Department for Transport. *Ports Policy – your views invited*. May 2006
- MVA. *Cross Solent Movement Study*. June 2006
- Letter from Mr and Mrs Marston. 3 September 2006
- Isle of Wight Economic Partnership. *Island Ports Sustainability Study – Summary Response*. 13 September 2007
- Letter from Mr Class. 22 September 2006
- Cowes Harbour Commission. *Briefing paper*. 25 September 2006
- Letter from Andrew Turner MP. 26 September 2006
- Email from Gurnard Parish Council. 13 December 2007
- Email from Calbourne Parish Council. 28 December 2006
- Ryde Town Management Committee. *Notes of Community Plan Review and Funding Working Group*. 22 January 2007
- Letter from Isle of Wight AONB Partnership. 29 January 2007
- Letter from Havenstreet and Asheys Parish Council. 30 January 2007
- Letter from Mr Lansley. 23 February 2007
- Letter from Sandown Town Council. 27 February 2007

- Letter from Mr Lowe. 27 February 2007

#### **Internal**

- IWC. *Notes of evidence and presentation from MVA - Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration & Transport.* 12 July 2006
- IWC. *Ports sustainability study stakeholder meeting – Andrew Willson (Chief Executive, Wightlink), and John Burrows (Operations General Manager, Wightlink).* 14 July 2006
- IWC. *Ports sustainability study stakeholder meeting – Tom Docherty (Managing Director, Red Funnel), Colin Hetherington (Commercial Director, Red Funnel) and Richard Scott (Finance Director, Red Funnel).* 25 July 2006
- IWC. *Ports sustainability study stakeholder meeting – Richard Box (Chief Executive, Hovertravel).* 23 August 2006
- IWC. *Notes of evidence and presentation by the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, Tourism and Industry - Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration & Transport.* 13 September 2006
- IWC. *Notes of evidence and presentation by Steve Porter of the Steve Porter Transport Group - Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration & Transport.* 11 October 2006
- IWC. *Ports sustainability study stakeholder meeting – Chris Lisher (Yarmouth Harbour Master/Chief Executive).* 31 October 2006
- IWC. *Ports sustainability study stakeholder meeting – Tony Cosgrove (Government Team, Natural England) and Chris Pirie (Local Team, Natural England).* 1 November 2006
- IWC. *Notes of evidence - Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration & Transport.* 14 February 2007
- IWC. *Ports sustainability study stakeholder meeting – Pete Brunskill (Transport Policy Team Leader, Southampton City Council), Peter Murnaghan (Transport Policy, Hampshire County Council), and Captain Rupert Taylor (Harbour Master, Portsmouth Commercial Port).* 19 February 2007
- IWC. *Notes of evidence and presentation from Norman Arnold, Chairman of the Isle of Wight Branch of the Federation of Small Businesses - Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration & Transport.* 14 March 2007

- IWC. *Notes of evidence of public consultation findings and presentation by Cllr Hancock - Policy Commission for Economy, Tourism, Regeneration & Transport.* 4 April 2007
- IWC. *Isle of Wight Local Transport Plan.* 2006-2011

Prepared by: Cllr Charles Hancock, Lead Member; Mr Dave Moore, Planning Projects Team Leader; Miss April West, Overview & Scrutiny Team

Date

# APPENDIX 1

## CROSS SOLENT MOVEMENT STUDY (2006 UPDATE)

**Updated Table 2.2 Annual Two-way Cross Solent Passenger Traffic (2006)**

Route	Passengers (in millions)							
	By Foot		Car		Coach		Total	
Portsmouth – Ryde (Hovertravel)	0.79	19%	-	-	-	-	0.79	9%
Portsmouth – Ryde (Fastcat)	1.44	34%	-	-	-	-	1.44	16%
Portsmouth – Fishbourne	0.12	3%	2.07	45%	0.43	84%	2.62	28%
Southampton – East Cowes (Red Funnel)	0.23	6%	1.62	35%	-	-	1.85	20%
Southampton – West Cowes (RedJet)	1.23	29	-	-	-	-	1.23	13%
Lymington – Yarmouth	0.38	9%	0.89	19%	0.08	16%	1.35	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	4.19		4.58		0.51		9.28	

**Updated Table 2.3 Annual Two-way Cross Solent Vehicular Traffic (2006)**

	Cars (millions)		Coach ('000)		Commercial Vehicles ('000)	
Southampton – E Cowes (Red Funnel)	0.55	32%	5.7	(24%)	96.4	(35%)
Portsmouth – Fishbourne (Wightlink)	0.83	48%	15.6	(65%)	141.1	(51%)
Lymington – Yarmouth Wightlink	0.36	21%	2.7	(12%)	39.8	(14%)
<b>Total Vehicles</b>	1.74		24.00		277.3	

## APPENDIX 2

### Risk Prioritisation Matrix

<b>Likelihood/Probability</b>	<b>4</b> V. Likely	<b>7</b> Medium	<b>11</b> Medium	<b>14</b> High	<b>16</b> <u>VERY HIGH</u>
	<b>3</b> Likely	<b>4</b> Low	<b>8</b> Medium	<b>12</b> High	<b>15</b> <u>VERY HIGH</u>
	<b>2</b> Unlikely	<b>2</b> Low	<b>5</b> Low	<b>9</b> Medium	<b>13</b> High
	<b>1</b> Remote	<b>1</b> Low	<b>3</b> Low	<b>6</b> Low	<b>10</b> Medium
	<b>Scale</b>	<b>1</b> Low	<b>2</b> Medium	<b>3</b> High	<b>4</b> Major
<b>Impact/Severity</b>					

15 - 16	Red	V. high risk
12 - 14	Red	High risk
7 - 11	Amber	Medium risk
1 - 6	Green	Low risk

### Likelihood/Probability Criteria

FACTOR	SCALE	THREATS - DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS
Very likely	4	More than 75% chance of occurrence	Regular occurrence Circumstances frequently encountered - daily/weekly/monthly
Likely	3	40% - 75% chance of occurrence	Likely to happen at some point within the next 1-2 years Circumstances occasionally encountered (few times a year)
Unlikely	2	10% - 40% chance of occurrence	Only likely to happen 3 or more years
Remote	1	Less than 10% chance of occurrence	Has happened rarely/never before

## Impact/Severity Criteria

Factor	Scale	Effect on Service	Embarrassment/reputation	Personal Safety	Personal privacy infringement	Failure to provide statutory duties/meet legal obligations	Financial	Effect on Project Objectives/ Schedule Deadlines
Major	4	Major loss of service, including several important areas of service and /or protracted period. Service Disruption 5+ Days	Adverse and persistent national media coverage Adverse central government response, involving (threat of) removal of delegated powers Officer(s) and/or Members forced to resign	Death of an individual or several people	All personal details compromised/ revealed	Litigation/claims/fines from Departmental £250k + Corporate £500k +	Costing over £500,000 Up to 75% of Budget	Complete failure of project/ extreme delay – 3 months or more
High	3	Complete loss of an important service area for a short period Major effect to services in one or more areas for a period of weeks Service Disruption 3-5 Days	Adverse publicity in professional/municipal press, affecting perception/standing in professional/local government community Adverse local publicity of a major and persistent nature	Major injury to an individual or several people	Many individual personal details compromised/ revealed	Litigation/claims/fines from Departmental £50k to £125k Corporate £100k to £250k	Costing between £50,000 and £500,000 Up to 50% of Budget	Significant impact on project or most of expected benefits fail/ major delay – 2-3 months
Medium	2	Major effect to an important service area for a short period Adverse effect to services in one or more areas for a period of weeks Service Disruption 2-3 Days	Adverse local publicity /local public opinion aware Statutory prosecution of a non-serious nature	Severe injury to an individual or several people	Some individual personal details compromised/ revealed	Litigation/claims/fines from Departmental £25k to £50k Corporate £50k to £100k	Costing between £5,000 and £50,000 Up to 25% of Budget	Adverse effect on project/ significant slippage – 3 weeks–2 months
Low	1	Brief disruption of important service area Significant effect to non-crucial service area Service Disruption 1Day	Contained within section/Unit or Directorate Complaint from individual/small group, of arguable merit	Minor injury or discomfort to an individual or several people	Isolated individual personal detail compromised/ revealed	Litigation/claims/fines from Departmental £12k to £25k Corporate £25k to £50k	Costing less than £5,000 Up to 10% of Budget	Minimal impact to project/ slight delay less than 2 weeks