



## Report to Solent Transport

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**Subject:** Isle of Wight Infrastructure Task Force

### Purpose of the Report

This reports brings Members up to date with the work of the Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Task Force and seeks approval to continue to support the work of the Task Force during 2017-18.

### Recommendations

- 1. That the Joint Committee notes the progress made by the Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Task Force and agrees to continue to support the work of the group during 2017-18.**
- 2. Introduction and Background**
  - 2.1 The Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Task Force was established in July 2016 under the independent chairmanship of Christopher Garnett OBE. Organisations represented on the group include the Department for Transport (DfT), Solent Transport, Solent LEP, Isle of Wight Council, Isle of Wight business stakeholders, IoW Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and the IoW tourism industry.
  - 2.2 The Task Force was in gestation during a time when the Island rail line was being considered by DfT as part of the South Western Franchise renewal process. DfT were keen to work with local stakeholders to seek a financially more sustainable operating model for the Island Line as it deemed that the current operating losses were too great. After much consultation, the decision was made by DfT to include the line in the next franchise award, with a requirement that a

viable operating model can be developed with IoW Council during the life of the next franchise, likely to be approximately seven years.

### **3. Task Force Terms of Reference and Mode of Operation**

3.1 The Task Force's vision is for a multi-modal transport system for the Isle of Wight that is safe, secure, accessible and affordable, and which promotes economic development and underpins the social and environmental wellbeing of the Island.

3.2 A main objective of the Task Force is to assist the IoW Council in preparing an integrated Island-wide Transport Infrastructure & Services Development Plan that will optimise the Island's transport network, both on, and to and from the Island.

3.3 The scope of the work undertaken by the Task Force includes:

- An assessment of the current and historical provision of cross-Solent travel, to analyse challenges and identify opportunities
- Analyse current plans and growth patterns in cross-Solent travel and the likely impact on the Island community
- Assess the impact of the Island Line on the Island's economy and examine the scope for extending the service
- Consider the role played by buses in the transport system and identify challenges and opportunities
- Assess the current demands on the highway network, identify pinch points, identify times when the network is operating at over capacity and consider the impact of road works. Consider interventions to improve capacity such as Park & Ride
- Identify the gaps in planned investment in transport infrastructure and services
- Identify funding streams and business models that could be used to support development of the network. Quantify the economic benefits that could be generated by investments
- Ensure that proposed changes to infrastructure positively impact the visual environment and maximise the opportunity to improve the Island's carbon footprint

3.4 The Task Force is led by the independent Chair who has selected the members to ensure a strong balance of skills and experience. The Isle of Wight Council is providing on-going administrative support. The Task Force meets approximately once a month and generally holds evidence hearings with stakeholders weekly.

- 3.5 The mainland Highway & Transport authorities (Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council) have attended one Task Force meeting each in order to understand the work of the group. As the work of the Task Force progresses, it will be important that these authorities have further opportunity to work with the group in more detail, particularly given the importance of cross-Solent travel to the Island economy.

#### **4. Funding**

- 4.1 The group has to date received a small amount of funding from IoW Council for consultancy support which is being used to collate the evidence from the hearings and prepare a draft report.
- 4.2 The Solent LEP has committed £20,000 to commissioning a potentially linked, but separate piece of consultancy work using funding it secured from the DfT's Transport Delivery Excellence fund. This will be an Island Infrastructure Plan focusing on economic growth initiatives which may include transport infrastructure.

#### **5. Progress to date**

- 5.1 The Task Force has met regularly since May 2016 and continues to do so. A significant portion of the work to date has involved individual hearings with stakeholders. Approximately forty organisations have given evidence, including ferry and Hovercraft operators, bus operators, IoW Council, supermarkets, major businesses and employers, cycle groups, NHS, tourism representatives, Pro-link fixed link campaign, Island Roads, Visit Isle of Wight and the IoW Quality Transport Partnership amongst many others.
- 5.2 In addition to the evidence from the hearings, the Task Force is also gathering significant amounts of background data to be able to compare the current transport offer with that of previous years, in order to establish trends in transport supply, use and costs of travel. Data is also being collected on the current offers of discounted travel available from all transport operators, so that a baseline for assessment can be set.

#### **6. Next Steps**

- 6.1 As the hearings come to an end during March 2017, the next steps are for all the evidence to be collated along with the historical travel cost and supply data, passenger flows and other relevant transport and economic statistics. In turn this will lead to the preparation of a draft report during the Spring of 2017 which will identify the initial findings of the Task Force, along with recommendations.

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background papers

**The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.**

NB the list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

TITLE

LOCATION

None