

Marketing and communications

**Solent Transport communications strategy 2014/15**

<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>Four organisations involved in the securing of funds for local transport projects are planning to merge into a single body, ‘Solent Transport’. They are seeking to promote their services and the advantage of collaboration to corporate audiences.</p> <p>A formal re-branding of the partnership, as Solent Transport, following the recent addition of the Isle of Wight to the partnership, aims to communicate that ST is <i>the</i> strategic transport organisation for the Solent area. As a first step in ‘telling the story’, this should be communicated to existing key stakeholders.</p> <p>The communications plan will emphasise the partnerships' unique strengths, including its appeal to all for local transport authorities; how it works with a wide range of agencies; its success at securing funding for Solent transport projects and its Sub-Regional Transport Model</p> <p>All marketing and communications will emphasise Solent Transport's connections with practical resources, such as online public transportation planning tools via the My Journey website, products such as the Solent Go travel card, and improvements to buses made through the Try a Bus campaign via the Better Bus Area Fund Hampshire.</p>
<p><b>SMART Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A target of at least one positive/balanced story recorded in media per month, whose approximate value is estimated in advertising value (media monitoring carried out by Portsmouth City Council, Marketing and Communications).</li> <li>• Based on a recent three-month average of homepage entrances (visitors) for the current TfSHIoW website (<a href="http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tfsh.htm">www3.hants.gov.uk/tfsh.htm</a>)-- target of a 100% increase on the current number of 172 monthly visitors An overall increase in local business membership in the partnership; increased attendance of &gt; 80 (at Portsmouth gala event vs prior event)</li> <li>• Quarterly newsletter issued to an increasing number of registered members in ST email list</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

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<b>Action Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and deliver a media and website forward plan of activity for 2014/15, which includes opportunities for proactive media outreach based on milestone dates provided by ST.</li> <li>• Represent ST with all trade and general media, pro-actively and reactively. PCC will write press releases for ST to review &amp; approve, then share with local authority of ST chair (HCC) to secure sign-off on chair quote , signed off by other board council communications contacts at HCC, SCC and IOW.</li> <li>• Establish a targeted ST media list--including relevant local media, such as transport correspondents and trade publication reporters--which will then be shared with ST in a spread sheet format.</li> <li>• Provide a new Solent Transport website, including design and initial content; Content Management System will be managed by Solent Transport, so that regular content updates may be made by ST. The site will also promote My Journey, Solent Go travel card, and BBAF             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Procurement of web design firm scheduled for completion by 30 May.</li> <li>○ Conduct focused market research with business community to better inform dynamics of website</li> <li>○ Website expected to go live by end of August</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assist ST in selecting software (such as Mail Chimp or Campaign Monitor) for a contact database integrated with the website that will support and enhance its ability to communicate effectively with target stakeholders/site visitors, through communications tools such as a quarterly newsletter. It is essential that ST revise its current database to complete and correct missing details in order for this software to be effective from the moment the site launches.</li> <li>• Plan and promote one regional business event in September to be hosted in Portsmouth, around transport and commerce issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Officers/ Communications/ lead</b>	<p>Phil Marshall, Principal Transport Planner, Solent Transport</p> <p>Stephen Gee, Project Officer, Solent Transport</p> <p>John Showalter, Communications Officer</p>

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	<p>Mark Maguire, Design Manager</p> <p>Web build/design firm TBD</p>
<p><b>Context</b></p>	<p>Since 2007-- when it was founded by the Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council (later joined by the Isle of Wight Council) --Transport for South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (TfSHIoW) has played a vital role as a strategic transport body for the Solent area. Work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidding for, securing funds and co-ordinating delivery for a range of transport projects, which improve accessibility across the region ;</li> <li>• Developing a comprehensive transport evidence base for the Solent area through the Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM), which has been used to secure external funding and is used as a tool by other authorities and developers;</li> <li>• Developing good partnership working with other transport agencies and key stakeholders; and</li> <li>• Working closely in partnership with local agencies and stakeholders, including the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Partnership for Urban South Hampshire and South Hampshire Bus Operators Association.</li> </ul> <p>The organisation is seen as an important funding partner for transport planning by local authorities in Hampshire and it has solidified partnerships with the Department for Transport, Highways Agency and Network Rail, among others, over the past six years.</p> <p>TfSHIoW is merging with partner organisations in the Solent Local Transport Body (LTB) to form Solent Transport. TfSHIoW has already been re-branded as 'Solent Transport' at the Joint Committee on the 27 February 2014 and from an external stakeholder perspective, effectively acts on the same basis as the proposed body. Among the most important goals of the consolidated organisation is to find a broader base of support among key local employers.</p>
<p><b>Potential issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation and coordination with partner organisations over identity and branding, including any amendments to existing branding and logo;</li> <li>• ST must revise its current database to complete and correct missing details for all stakeholder communications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Channels of communication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique (bespoke) Solent Transport website (linked to council websites) covering functional Joint Committee decision making elements</li> <li>• Online e-brochure for Hampshire business community</li> <li>• Solent Transport social media (Twitter and possibly LinkedIn)</li> <li>• Local, regional and trade earned media: business and</li> </ul>

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	<p>transport/planning reporters and producers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council social media (Facebook and Twitter)</li> <li>• Council website</li> <li>• Flagship and other councils' external/internal publications</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key target audiences and tools</b></p>	<p>Audiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department for Transport decision makers (<b>channels:</b> trade pubs, ST website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Passenger rail: South West Trains, First Great Western, Southern Rail, Network Rail, Rail Futures, The Island Line, etc. (rail trade pubs, website, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Freight industry: Rail Freight Group members; cargo shipping companies; freight trucking companies; air freight companies (freight trade pubs, website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Port of Southampton: ABP and others (freight/shipping trade pubs, website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Highways Agency (trade pubs, website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Large, regional business champions (e.g., IBM, BAE Systems) (trade pubs, CoC Business News, website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Transport Consultants (acting on behalf of clients)</li> <li>• Buses: SHBOA members (First, Stagecoach, Velvet, Southern Vectis, Go South Coast, Bluestar) (trade pubs, website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Hampshire Chamber of Commerce members (HCoC Business News, earned business media)</li> <li>• Business South members</li> <li>• Hospitals and universities: local NHS trusts, Univ of Southampton, Southampton Solent Univ, Univ of Portsmouth, Specialist Transportation Group (Internal university and NHS publications and websites, trade pubs, website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Southampton International Airport (air freight/travel trade pubs, ST website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> <li>• Local planning authorities / district councils: (internal comms/pubs of respective member council publications, ST website, e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails )</li> <li>• Walking/Cycling: Sustrans/CTC (cycling news sites/pubs;</li> </ul>

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	<p>transport trades; ST website; e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logistics experts and companies (logistic trade pubs/websites; e-brochure, earned business/transport media, targeted emails)</li> </ul> <p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ST and respective council websites: contract an outside firm to build and design a unique Solent Transport site</li> <li>• PDF of e-brochure for Hampshire businesses</li> <li>• ST (Twitter, possibly LinkedIn) and council social media (FB and Twitter)</li> <li>• Press release for earned media placements upon launch</li> <li>• Quarterly e-newsletter</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential timescale</b></p>	<p>April 2014 - April 2015</p>
<p><b>Key messages</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Solent area is historically underfunded when it comes to transport and the area economically underperforms compared to the rest of the south east.</li> <li>2. Solent Transport—a partnership which includes Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and the Isle of Wight Council—serves as a broader voice for local government and industry working in partnership with other agencies to achieve funding for strategic transport and infrastructure projects on the national road and rail networks. These projects improve accessibility and capacity to / from and within the Solent area, safeguarding the existing economy and support economic growth as a result.</li> <li>3. Solent Transport has a strong record of securing funding and co-ordinating the delivery of local transport projects and interventions within the Solent area, which keep businesses and goods moving, and enable economic growth.</li> <li>4. Solent Transport has developed a comprehensive transport evidence base for the Solent area. This software application is used to strategically identify the transport infrastructure and interventions that will be needed in the future to sustainably safeguard the Solent economy and support on-going economic growth</li> <li>5. In a challenging environment for local government and business, Solent Transport provides an effective and efficient method for pooling local resources to achieve transport planning funding success.</li> </ol>

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<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Estimate advertising value (EAV) of earned, monthly media</li><li>• Use Google Analytics to calculate monthly visitors to Solent Transport website</li><li>• Compare prior, TfSHIoW gala event attendee list against September 2014 event (quantitative and qualitative evaluation)</li><li>• Compare quarterly newsletter lists against prior quarters (qualitative and quantitative evaluation)</li></ul>
<b>Budget</b>	£25,000 for communications and marketing