

Chairman's Announcements
Thursday 27th February 2014



Solent Transport

At the previous meeting in October, approval was given to merge this Joint Committee with the Solent Local Transport Body Board to provide a single strategic transport partnership for this area, called 'Solent Transport'. However, legislation does not currently permit Local Enterprise Partnerships to vote on a decision making Local Government committee. Therefore, until the necessary primary legislative changes are made to address this issue, we have decided to retain the separate Transport for South Hampshire Joint Committee and Solent Local Transport Body Board. However, in anticipation of the eventual creation of the single strategic transport partnership, we have decided to rename the Joint Committee 'Solent Transport', which we are able to do, after taking advice from our monitoring officer.

Transport Awards Success

I am pleased to announce some significant success for the Solent area at the National Transport Awards, which were held last Autumn. Southampton City Council won the Transport City of the Year, which recognises the significant work to deliver modal shift from private car to sustainable modes of travel. This includes significant increases in the number of children cycling to school, delivering a wide range of bus improvements as well as creating a number of effective partnerships, the most innovative of which is with the University and Sustrans. The city has also secured a large amount of funding which they have earmarked for an ambitious transport vision for 2030. Hampshire County Council was successful in jointly winning the Transport Team / Partnership of the Year with First Hampshire and Dorset for the Eclipse Bus Rapid Transit Project. Southampton was also Highly Commended in the Frontline Employee of the Year, for Jess Eden and her work on Independent Travel Training and Children with Special Educational Needs.

Southampton City Council has had further awards success. This includes winning the Information Design for Navigation Award at the International Sign Design Awards 2013 for the Southampton Legible Transport Network, in partnership with Maynards Design Consultancy and Martina Stepien won Outstanding Young Communicator of the Year at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Wessex Awards 2013, for her work on the Southampton LSTF project. The My Journey travel awareness campaign has also been highly commended at both the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) Awards 2013 and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Wessex Awards 2013.

Progress with Portsmouth Major Schemes

I'm pleased to announce good progress with the two major transport schemes in Portsmouth. The Northern Road Bridge scheme is nearing completion. The main bridge works were completed before Christmas and the new road layout, including a southbound bus lane, a cycle lane and 3 upgraded toucan crossings were completed last week. All works are anticipated to be completed within the next couple of weeks.

The M275 new junction and high quality Park & Ride facility at Tipner is also reaching completion. With a 665 space car park and dedicated bus priority into the city, this service

will provide a convenient and easy way to park in Portsmouth. The Park & Ride facility will be launched early in April 2014.

Impact of Poor Weather Conditions

The work of the Joint Committee is primarily about looking forward to address future strategic transport issues. However, the last few months have highlighted the importance of ensuring that transport networks have the necessary resilience to deal with poor weather conditions, so they can remain open and continue their important role, supporting the local economy.

The Solent area has been affected quite significantly by the recent weather conditions. High winds have brought trees down, causing disruption on both the road and rail networks and combined with high tides, have caused some coastal flooding problems. However, it is the impact of high levels of rainfall over many weeks, which has created the most significant medium to longer term problems. Over the Christmas period, the main railway line from London to Portsmouth was closed for around two weeks due to a landslip near Petersfield. The Eastleigh to Fareham railway line has been closed since early February due to a major landslip near Botley and is not likely to reopen until mid March. On the Isle of Wight, subsidence has occurred in the Undercliff area, west of the coastal resort town of Ventnor, severing Undercliff Drive (A3055) and rendering a number of properties in the area uninhabitable. The Island Line railway has been closed for extended periods due to landslips, flooding and wave damage. In addition, there have been a number of more localised flooding problems across the area and the poor weather is likely to have had a negative impact on the overall condition of the road and rail networks. Local authorities have also had to divert staff resources to deal with the short term impacts of flooding and other weather related incidents, which could have an impact on the delivery of other programmes.

Once conditions improve, there is a need to take stock of the situation, particularly as the scientific evidence is that these extreme weather events are likely to become more, rather than less, frequent. Additional investment will be needed to address both the damage caused to the networks and to provide additional resilience. Where investment in new transport infrastructure is being made, it is important that appropriate levels of resilience are included within the design. This Joint Committee and its constituent authorities are keen to work with Government and other relevant agencies, to ensure that the appropriate levels of investment are forthcoming to provide a good level of resilience to the transport networks across the Solent area.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund Opportunity

I welcome the Government announcement last December, confirming that there will be a further £78.5m of Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) monies available during the 2015/16 financial year. As we'll hear today, the ongoing £31m *A Better Connected South Hampshire* LSTF programme is progressing well with strong programme delivery and is funding a wide range of interventions to encourage a greater proportion of journeys by sustainable modes of transport.

In areas like the Solent, where significant levels of economic growth are planned, projects like this are an essential component of the overall transport investment programme. Therefore, I am sure we are well placed to bid for a proportion of the £78.5m in order to continue the excellent work into 2015/16. Officers from the four transport authorities are currently working on a Solent wide bid, which will be submitted to the Department for Transport by the end of March.

Working with the Highways Agency and Network Rail

We'll hear today about this Joint Committee's response to the Government's National (Road and Rail) Networks National Policy Statement. National networks have an extremely important function in the Solent area, providing essential connectivity both within the area and to other parts of the country, including London, the Midlands and the North. These links outside the area are particularly important to the International Gateways, including the two ports.

Both the Highways Agency and Network Rail are currently working on the development of longer term investment strategies for their respective networks. TfSHIoW has a good working relationship with both these agencies and is continuing work closely on this ongoing work, to ensure that appropriate investment is secured for the networks serving the Solent area. In particular, our Sub Regional Transport Model provides an excellent evidence base that both agencies can use to determine and assess their proposed investment programmes.