

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL – LSTF PROJECT SUMMARY 'Sustainable Transport Access to Tourism'

The Government Transport White Paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon' established the 'Local Sustainable Transport Fund' (LSTF) – a £560m initiative to help build stronger local economies and address the challenges of climate change. The LSTF is open to all local transport authorities in England (outside London) who can submit bids either individually or in partnership with other neighbouring authorities.

In February 2012 the Isle of Wight Council submitted a tranche 2 small bid focussing on '**Sustainable Transport Access to Tourism**'. The bid successfully received £3.95million government grant funding for the delivery of associated schemes and initiatives between November 2012 and March 2015.

ISLE OF WIGHT BID

Tourism plays a major role in the Island's economy with over 2.6 million annual visitors and one in four Island jobs directly or indirectly linked to the industry. In 2009/10 it was estimated that tourism brought in over £400m to the local economy. In recent years the Island has experienced an increased popularity as a 'green' tourism destination due to our outstanding countryside and coast; extensive walking and cycling network and internationally acclaimed festivals. The Island already benefits from good public transport links from London and the South East offering a real opportunity to encourage visitors to travel to and/or around the Island car free. By growing this sector of our tourism market we can increase visitor numbers without having a detrimental effect on peak vehicle ferry capacity, ferry terminal accessibility and network congestion.

COMPONENTS

The DfT recognises the importance of developing projects which include a package of mutually beneficial measures and therefore the bid identified a number of transport related schemes to upgrade, improve and promote our sustainable transport network. These schemes, supported by related initiatives, have been designed to increase visitor numbers and establish the Island as a leading green tourism destination. Although the bid specifically focuses on increasing tourism, improvements will also benefit local residents by improving access to employment, education, health and leisure and offering opportunities to increase physical activity.

Integrated Transport Hubs

It is proposed to establish seven strategic Island transport hubs located at key tourist arrival/departure/interchange points (ie Cowes, Ryde, East Cowes, Yarmouth, Sandown, Shanklin and Newport). These hubs will assist with sustainable transport interchange and offer travel choice by providing appropriate infrastructure and access to key information. Each location will include some/all of the following facilities:

- **Interactive display kiosks** - providing up-to-date travel and tourist information (including public transport RTI – see below). This information will give travellers the opportunity to make informed decisions on destinations, travel options and arrival time. It is proposed to provide the facility at all seven Island hubs with the

potential to provide additional display boards at mainland passenger ferry terminals. Opportunities are also being investigated to locate kiosks at mainland ferry passenger terminals.

- **Signage** - showing walking and cycling directions to local facilities (eg town centre, seafront, National Cycle Network).
- **Improvements to transport infrastructure** - to increase and improve interchange accessibility.
- **Cycle hire** - facilities to enable visitors to collect a pre booked cycle and return it to the same or other Island (or potentially mainland) facility at any time during their stay.
- **Cycle shelters and racks** - to allow travellers to leave cycles safely and securely and facilitate convenient onward travel.
- **CCTV** - coverage at all hubs to promote safety. Facilities could also be provided at other 'secondary' hubs (eg Brading, Freshwater) and/or at tourism accommodation and attractions.

Public Transport Information and Support

This package seeks to improve public transport facilities by providing bus, train and ferry Real Time Information (RTI) and new and improved tourism related bus services. The knowledge of what time a bus/train/ferry will actually arrive can help inform choice and improve journey experience.

- **Rail RTI** – provision of RTI at the five main Island rail stations (St Johns, Brading, Sandown, Lake and Shanklin) with links to the existing systems at Ryde Esplanade and Pier Head. Information will also be made available at interactive Island/mainland display boards (see above), via the web and new mobile phone app (see below).
- **Bus RTI** – installation of RTI infrastructure on all Island buses with information provided at interactive Island/mainland display boards, via the web and mobile phone app.
- **Ferry RTI** – utilisation of Solent website information to enable approximate ferry times to be included within the new information system.
- **App development** – compilation of mobile phone app (two versions for use on android and iPhone platforms) comprising of three elements: public transport RTI, walking and cycling routes (location, information and interpretation) and tourist information (linking into app currently being developed by Isle of Wight Tourism).
- **New bike/bus** - introduction of adapted 'bike buses' on the 'Island Coaster' route from Ryde to Alum Bay, with 3 additional daily return journeys during the peak summer season.

Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

This element seeks to deliver a high quality walking and cycling infrastructure to encourage tourists to visit the Island for walking and cycling breaks with focus on:

- **Infrastructure** – new and enhanced walking and cycling routes.
- **Accessibility** - improving access to tourist and leisure destinations including the countryside and coast. Creation of ‘circular’ and graded routes (eg child friendly to challenging).
- **Public transport** - access to/from routes via public transport.
- **Mobility impaired** - increasing access for mobility impaired.
- **Information** – route mapping, signage and interpretation boards (including making use of new ‘QR code’ technology). Development of mobile phone app showing routes, destinations, facilities, public transport links and general information.
- **Safe storage** - provision of cycle racks at key destinations.

Marketing, Promotion and ‘Hearts and Minds’

The overall success of the project also requires an appropriate marketing campaign encouraging tourists to choose the Island as a ‘green’ holiday destination by promoting our sustainable transport opportunities (including walking and cycling routes), encouraging visitors to travel to/around the Island car free and improving our green tourism offer.

This element comprises of several components:

- **Promotion** – partnership with Visit Isle of Wight Ltd to encourage tourists to visit the Island by promoting the accessibility and quality of our green transport infrastructure. Utilisation of new marketing techniques (eg social media) for promotion.
- **Internet development** – the development of a website (either stand alone with links or as part of the Visit Isle of Wight/GoWight/other existing sites) with access to public transport information (including RTI), walking and cycling routes, information on ‘walker and cyclists welcome’ and ‘baggage transfer’ schemes (see below) and initiatives to encourage car-free visitors.
- **Sustainable Travel Coordinator (Tourism)** – the establishment of a new external post hosted by Visit Isle of Wight and working with Sustrans to promote and encourage car-free visits. Coordinator to work with tourism accommodation providers and attractions to welcome and offer incentives to those travelling sustainably (eg discounted accommodation/entrance fees, combined travel/entrance ticket, inclusion of public transport/walking/cycling information within promotional literature, cycle storage). The post will also seek to recruit and train site ‘Champions’ to ensure long term sustainability of incentives.

- **‘Walkers and cyclists welcome’** – roll out of initiative similar to Visit Scotland scheme, recognizing operators who provide appropriate facilities eg drying rooms, cycle racks, walking/cycling/public transport information, laundry facilities, packed lunches, late/early meals. Information on participating operators will be included within the website giving visitors the confidence that they are welcome and assurance that their accommodation will cater for their specific needs.
- **Luggage transfer scheme** – scheme to enable visitors arriving by foot or cycle to forward their luggage to participating accommodation providers.

PARTNERS

The council have developed the project in discussions with a number of other partners including:

- Cycle Wight
- Hovertravel
- Island Line and SW Trains
- Isle of Wight AONB Partnership
- Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce
- IW Community Rail Partnership
- IW Cycle Forum
- Natural Enterprises
- Ramblers
- Red Funnel
- Southern Vectis
- Sustrans
- Visit Isle of Wight
- Wightlink

FINANCE AND DELIVERY

As part of the bid, the council have agreed to provide £1.25m match funding. The following shows the bid financial profile (figures is 000s):

Source	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		Total	
	Rev	Cap	Rev	Cap	Rev	Cap	Rev	Cap
LSTF	283	216	1,164	1,468	710	109	2,157	1,793
IWC Matched Funding	0	315	0	617	0	318	0	1,250
TOTAL	283	531	1,164	2,085	710	427	2,157	3,043
	814		3,249		1,137		5,200	

Rev = Revenue funding Cap = Capital funding

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information on the project, including the council's Expression of Interest and Full bid can be found [by clicking here](#).