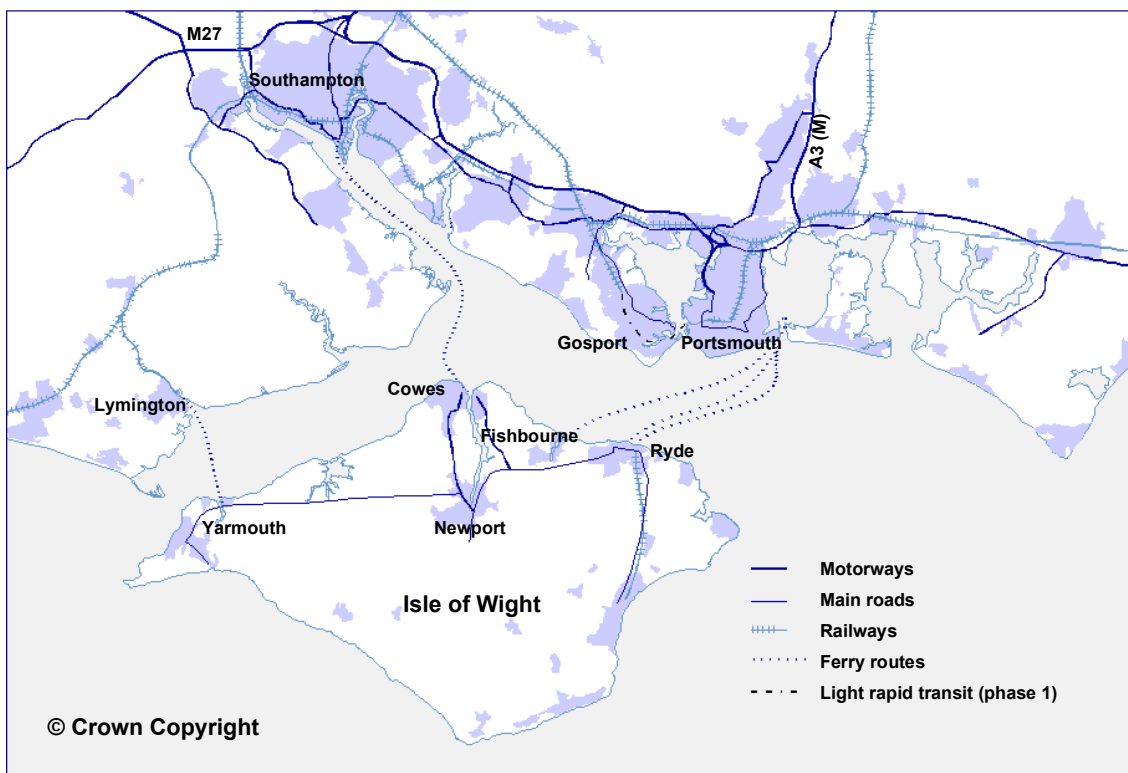


## TRANSPORTATION

Long-term aim: 'to seek an integrated approach to transportation activity which will support sustainable development within the Solent'.



### KEY FACTS:

- The Isle of Wight ferries carry around 7.5 million passengers a year, and 1.5 million vehicles.
- Over 3.5 million cross-channel passengers use the Solent each year.

### The Position

The Solent is a focus for intensive transportation activity. There is a substantial and heavily trafficked road network serving the region, rail links between most urban areas and vital ferry links to the Isle of Wight. The Solent itself is a major transport corridor for bulk freight shipping, and for international ferry links to France and Spain. Finally there is a regional airport nearby at Southampton.

The County and Unitary Councils are the authorities for highways and strategic planning and transportation issues on land, although the responsibility for motorways and trunk roads lies with the Department of Transport. The Hampshire and West Sussex County Structure Plans and Isle of Wight Unitary Development Plan, provide the mechanism for agreeing development proposals for most significant changes to the road network.

The provision of ferry services is generally undertaken within the private sector, although some services are financially supported by the local authorities. There are no statutory procedures governing the establishment of ferry services (although built facilities are subject to regulation through the planning system, and the services are subject to harbour authority control and to national safety regulations administered by the Department of Transport, Marine Safety Agency).

The fundamental trend in transportation within the twentieth century has been a progressive growth in the volume of transport demand, which has taken place in parallel with urban growth on the coast, and the increased mobility of the population resulting from mass car ownership. On land, the road network has been progressively expanded and improved, although demand continues to outstrip supply. It is no longer considered feasible or environmentally acceptable to accommodate unrestrained traffic growth by building new roads, and the policy approach now embraces the following broad objectives:

- to reduce the need for travel, especially by car;
- to make the best use of the existing transport infrastructure;
- to promote new transport initiatives which offer alternatives to the car, including improved public transport, cycling and walking;
- to guide development locations towards existing transport provision;
- to maintain and improve facilities which will encourage bulk transport by rail and sea. The Isle of Wight UDP also emphasises the importance of encouraging the improvement of cross-Solent ferry links.

Past road development has had a significant effect on the coast - perhaps most notably with the building of the M275 within Portsmouth Harbour. However, many of the land-based transportation issues on the Solent coast are no different to those facing urbanised areas throughout the country. The main coast-specific activities which generate strategic transport issues are port and ferry activity, where significant volumes of goods and people transfer to and from land-based transportation. The possible development of Dibden Bay would bring a requirement for improved transportation arrangements on the west of Southampton Water.

The coast has a particular attraction for recreational visitors, and generates travel demand accordingly. This can lead to congestion on some rural roads at 'honeypot sites', notably within the New Forest and on the Isle of Wight. There is interest in the promotion of alternatives to car transport for recreational trip-making. On the Solent coast, a significant proposal is for the provision of a number of coastal cycle routes including, elements of the National Cycle Network promoted by the cycling charity, Sustrans, and a Portsmouth Harbour Cycle Route.

There has been progressive growth of major ferry services. Three main categories can be recognised:

1. Cross-channel/European, four services to France and two to Spain operating from Portsmouth. The ferry market is highly competitive, and in a state of flux following the opening of the Channel Tunnel. The recent trend has been for investment in facilities and in highly-appointed large ferries. There is growth in the use of high-speed ferries, although no services from the Solent use this type of craft at present.
2. Isle of Wight, there are three major vehicle crossings and three regular passenger crossings, all of which are of vital strategic importance to the economy of the Isle of Wight. Recent investment has taken place in a new fleet of ferries for the Southampton - Cowes route, and improvements to the

Town Quay terminal. Proposals for larger ferries on the Lymington -Yarmouth route were brought forward in 1992, but have been withdrawn at present following strong local opposition.

- Local services, the ferries from Hayling Island - Portsmouth, Portsmouth - Gosport, Hamble - Warsash, Hythe - Southampton and East Cowes - West Cowes are important local links, whilst Keyhaven - Hurst Spit provides a service for visitors.

There are proposals to provide a Light Rapid Transit (LRT) tram service for the Gosport peninsula, linked via a tunnel to Portsmouth, with potential further extensions in South East Hampshire and links with the transport network westward to Southampton. Investigations of the first phase of the route are well advanced, and it is hoped to begin implementation before 2000. LRT will provide an important mechanism in reducing congestion within Gosport and contributing to a sustainable transport network.

## What do we need to do?

### 1. Continue to develop integrated transport solutions for the Solent region, which seek to reduce travel demand and the dependence on the car in particular

Transportation activities within the Solent need to be integrated within wider transport policies and are most effectively dealt with through existing statutory mechanisms. Principles of integrated transport are becoming well established, but turning them into practice poses significant challenges for both investment in solutions and changes in public perception. In terms of Solent-specific issues, transport policies need to recognise the following points:

- the importance of bulk transport by rail and sea, with transfer facilities in the ports, in achieving sustainable transport policies, and how to support appropriate improvements;
- the impact of recreational car traffic on the coast, and reduction of congestion where this occurs, including the potential for an increased role for public transport;
- the feasibility of increased pedestrian and cycle access to the coastline where environmentally acceptable, and the integration of proposals with rights of way management and environmental improvements;

**LEAD ROLE:** Local authorities (Highways and Planning), DETR and Ports companies.



**SOLENT FORUM ACTION:** The Solent Environment and Access Initiative (Flagship Project 2) will consider the scope for pedestrian and cycle access to the coast, and links to public transport.

### 2. Ensure the impacts of new transport initiatives within the Solent are acceptable

There are possible changes to the types of transportation activity within the Solent, particularly to the type of craft used for ferry transport - with the prospect of larger and/or faster ferries being introduced on some routes. There will be a need to understand and manage the impacts of significant changes in current patterns, and for effective consultation with the various interests to understand concerns and reduce possible conflicts.

**LEAD ROLE:** Port and harbour authorities.

#### KEY ORGANISATIONS: TRANSPORTATION

##### Lead organisations

Department of the Environment Transport and Regions  
Hampshire County Council  
Southampton City Council

Portsmouth City Council  
Isle of Wight Council  
Associated British Ports  
Portsmouth Commercial Port  
Queen's Harbour Master  
Lymington Harbour Commissioners  
Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners  
Cowes Harbour Commissioners

**Other key organisations**

New Forest District Council  
Eastleigh Borough Council

Fareham Borough Council  
Gosport Borough Council  
Ferry Companies (particularly Red Funnel, Wightlink, and cross-channel operators)  
British Industrial Freight Association  
Private Sector Companies.  
Bus Companies  
Havant Borough Council  
Chichester District Council  
Langstone Harbour Board  
Chichester Harbour Conservancy  
Beaulieu River Management  
Bembridge Harbour  
Railway Companies (particularly South West Trains)