

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION,  
ECONOMY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT  
TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL  
ON WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Rural broadband**

The rural broadband project is now more than three quarters complete. Over the last few months, villages such as Godshill, Wootton, Yarmouth, Newbridge, Norton, Alverstone and Bembridge have been connected and can now access the fibre network bringing faster broadband speeds. Nearly 2,000 residents and businesses have already taken up the new services that are available to them since the first cabinet in Shorwell came on line on 27 August 2014. Work is continuing on the final phase of the project and the Island is still on track to be one of the best connected areas of the country. This investment in what is fast becoming a vital infrastructure will help us sustain and grow the local economy. A full summary of progress will be provided to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 September.

**SOREC**

The council-led Solent Offshore Renewable Energy Consortium (SOREC) continues to help grow local companies involved in the renewables sector. As an example, it has recently provided grant funding to Red Ensign (Cowes based training organisation specialising in the commercial maritime sector) which should lead to the creation of around 30 apprenticeship opportunities for our young people.

**Asset management**

Following the fire which completely destroyed the Island Learning Centre in Lake on the last day of term, a huge effort has been underway to get the school up and running on a new site over the school summer holidays. Staff from the council's property maintenance team, children's services and the school itself have been involved in the work to refurbish the former Hunnyhill school in Newport and it is a testament to their hard work over the last six weeks that the school is on schedule to open at its new location, on time, later this week.

**Island Line**

There would appear to be some degree of confusion over the government's intentions for Island Line when it lets the tender for the south west trains franchise to begin in 2017. The council has therefore commissioned a high level piece of work from Atkins engineering to identify the major opportunities and risks for the Island in any decisions the government may take about Island Line. The report is due to be received at the end of the week and will be presented to all Members shortly thereafter.

**Councillor Shirley Smart**  
**Executive Member for Regeneration, Economy and Public Transport**