

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION,
ECONOMY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT
TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2015**

I attended two broadband meetings during the last two weeks and can report that the Rural Broadband Project has now provided access for 18,410 homes and businesses in the project intervention areas on the Island. This means that as a result of the earlier commercial roll together with the work of commercial providers, 97 per cent of the Island now has access to fibre broadband.

To date nearly 3,000 residents and businesses have taken up the new services that are available to them. BT continues to work on the more challenging areas of the project as the main delivery draws to a conclusion. At the time of writing approximately 1,500 premises still require activity to enable connection to these faster broadband speeds.

A short marketing campaign has commenced recently around the benefits of broadband connectivity and activities in this area include an advert in the 'Beacon' community magazine, adverts on Isle of Wight Radio and a number of bus shelters.

I met with the chief executive and chairman of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, Tourism and Industry to discuss our continuing working together. The latest Economic Development action plan will be presented to Executive Committee early next year.

One of my regular meetings with the rail and bus users' group took place last week. Matters discussed included voluntary donations to community buses. The group were concerned that the community routes were becoming disjointed as many were now being organised (funded) by town and parish councils. I undertook to take their concerns to the next meeting of IWALC.

As referred to at the last Full Council I can report that a meeting has taken place with a number of East Cowes businesses who are dependent on water access. A follow up meeting will be held when further information has been obtained. A meeting is also being arranged with a number of Cowes businesses who also have concerns.

Briefing meetings have been and are taking place regarding a number of items which will be coming to the Executive as shown on the forward plan.

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