

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION,
ECONOMY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT
TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2016**

Rural Broadband

I attended this month's Rural Broadband Board where it was confirmed that the Rural Broadband Project is now in its last delivery quarter.

Change request activity is underway to account for an extension to the project delivery period and the project should complete all contracted structures by the end of March. The number of premises in the Project Intervention Area enabled by the project are currently 19,494 and in order to complete the project BT needs to provide access to a total number of premises amounting to 19,917.

There are a small number of already stood cabinets that need to go through the final activities to make them ready for service. These cabinets make up the bulk of the remaining premises to be delivered to. In addition to this, there are a small number of new cabinets that have been planned as a result of a value for money review and this represents a change from the original proposal of delivering Fibre to the Premises to the cheaper Fibre to the Cabinet solution.

Fibre to the Premises is being delivered to a number of locations where Fibre to the Cabinet is not a suitable solution. Work will be underway shortly to work through project closure activities with both BT and BDUK.

Transport

I attended the Wightlink Customer Forum at Yarmouth which due to weather conditions was not well attended. Mention was made of turn round times at Fishbourne which would be quicker when improvements are made both at Fishbourne and at Portsmouth.

Also attended quarterly meeting with Wightlink who confirmed trading overall for year is slightly up, however, foot passengers are 0.5 per cent down and freight is down, mainly due to Wootton Bridge repairs. The quarterly meeting with Red Funnel confirmed year round night service would continue and their third refurbishment of ferries to take place in 2017.

On 16 January I attended the rail and bus users' meeting at which Matt Kitchen (Southern Vectis) confirmed that their summer timetable would commence on 20 March and run to the end of September. A number of improvements were due to take place on a number of routes, details on which would be online in early March and timetables would be in tourist information outlets also from early March. Ten new double decker buses were due to go into service March/April with a further 12 in 2016/17.

DBID

Consultations are continuing and it is hoped that the vote will now be taken in September. I will be attending a consultation meeting on 21 January prior to attending the Visit Isle of Wight board meeting.

On a personal note I would like to sincerely thank our fire brigade (not sure of the watch) who, when my car caught fire – I was driving – on 30 December arrived in very quick time and put the fire out.

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