



# Committee report

Committee	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION</b>
Date	<b>5 JANUARY 2023</b>
Title	<b>UPDATE ON THE FLOATING BRIDGE SAVED CARD HOLDER SURVEY</b>
Report of	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, HIGHWAYS PFI AND TRANSPORT</b>

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## SUMMARY

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the survey of Floating Bridge Saver Card holders which was undertaken during summer 2022. It sets out the process, key findings, and an action plan to drive improvements to the service.

## BACKGROUND

2. The Saver Card is aimed at residents and regular users of the floating bridge and enable them to save money and time; the cards operate in a similar way to the London Transport Oyster Cards. Cash credit is stored in the cardholders central online account and each time they travel the relevant fee is deducted. Cardholders benefit from a discounted rate as both foot passengers and vehicle drivers.
3. A floating bridge user group was established in 2018 with the first meeting taking place on 24 September – the membership consisted of council staff, local members, Cabinet member, representatives from Cowes and East Cowes Town Councils and a randomly selected sample of Saver Card holders that used the service on a regular basis. The group was established to examine how the service could be improved, the main aim being how to improve user experience.
4. The group met on a quarterly basis until March 2020 when it was temporarily suspended due to Covid-19; a Teams meeting was held in July 2021 although only one Saver Card holder was present. Staff have since attempted to reinstate the group on a face-to-face basis although regrettably the Saver Card holders that have been approached have been reluctant to attend. Accordingly, it was agreed to undertake an online survey to obtain the views of regular users.
5. The online survey was produced by staff within Commercial Services and the Communications team; it was agreed to email a link to the survey to all Saver Card holders that had used the service since 1 July 2021, and this equated to 5,127 card holders.

6. The survey went live on 25 July; a covering email was issued to the 5,127 card holders and a media statement was issued to increase awareness and response rates. The survey closed on 7 September 2022, at which point 1,188 responses had been received; this equated to 23.17% of the card holders.

## KEY FINDINGS

7. A PDF showing graphical responses to each question is attached as appendix A to the report; this also includes details of the total responses to each question as some were skipped.
8. The key findings relating to frequency and types of use from the quantitative questions are as follows: -
  - 43.98% of card holders use the service at least once a week
  - 79.43% of people make return journeys
  - The top three reasons for using the service are leisure – 56.9%, shopping - 38.38% and commuting – 31.14%
  - In terms of type of use, the two main methods are as foot passengers – 57.52% and as a car driver/passenger – 68.58%
  - 70.4% of users are between 45 and 74 years old
9. When looking at all of the responses regarding prices between 59.53% and 71.33% of respondents felt the prices were about right, whilst between 22.47% and 39.05% felt they were too much. The highest percentage of those saying that the prices were not enough (between 10.14% and 10.54%) related to those for cyclists.
10. In terms of the card holders' views on the service, staff, and information the key points to note are:
  - The service was rated above average or better by 24.27% of respondents; whilst 49.91% rated it below average or poor
  - By contrast 94.2% of respondents rated the staff average or above
  - The two principal ways Saver Card holders obtain information regarding the status of the service is Variable Messaging Signs – 39.13%, and the Floating Bridge website – 46.2%
  - 88.86% of saver card holders responding to the survey were aware of the floating bridge website
11. Question 7 asked whether respondents felt any groups of people should be offered free travel concessions; a wide number of differing responses were received and are listed below: -
  - Families on benefits
  - Senior Citizens
  - Disabled
  - Students
  - Blue badge holders
  - Those attending medical appointments
  - Those on low wages
  - Bus pass holders
  - All foot passengers should travel free

12. By contrast respondents also stated that the Saver Card makes it cheap enough for users and some stated that no one should have free travel.
13. The survey asked card holders what would help them when planning their journey; the most frequently occurring responses are below: -
  - Text/email updates on service status
  - Operate to a timetable
  - Introduce a floating bridge app
  - Advise Red Funnel if the service is suspended so that they can advise their ferry users
  - Ensure webcam of the website is functioning and live
  - Operate a reliable service
  - Speed up the operation
14. In addition to looking at the key findings from the quantitative questions staff analysed the free text responses to question 15; the key comments have been collated and form Appendix 2 to the report.

### NEXT STEPS

15. Using the key points and comments from the survey an action plan has been developed and this forms Appendix 3 to the report. This will be implemented in accordance with the timescales set out in the action plan.
16. It is intended to repeat the survey of saver card holders in summer 2023 and compare the results with the 2022 survey – this will enable the effectiveness of the action plan to be measured and where necessary identify additional actions to further improve the service and customer satisfaction.

### APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – Floating Bridge saver card survey – whole report summary data  
Appendix 2 – Floating Bridge user survey – key comments  
Appendix 3 – Floating Bridge action plan

Contact Point: Sean Newton, Strategic Manager Commercial Services  
821000 e-mail: [sean.newton@iow.gov.uk](mailto:sean.newton@iow.gov.uk)

**COLIN ROWLAND**  
*Director of Neighbourhoods*

**PHIL JORDAN (CLLR)**  
*Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Highways PFI,  
and Transport*