



# Plymouth Passenger Transport Strategy

## **Ferry Strategy**

**Plymouth City Council**

**Local Transport Plan 2**

**2006-2011**



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# 1. Introduction

## Setting the Scene

- 1.1 Throughout history Plymouth's development has been linked to its location next to the sea. Plymouth Sound is one of the best natural harbours in the world and the port has been among the UK's most important naval dockyards since 1691. Today the waterfront is one of Plymouth's most valuable assets, having the potential to play a significant role in the City's regeneration and future development by expanding the available transport choice and, in some cases, providing significantly shorter journey times than land-based modes.
- 1.2 This strategy recognises that water transport on Plymouth Sound could be a major tourist attractor and that the public transport industry should support such services for visitors. The strategy is also an opportunity to promote innovative measures to improve accessibility and travel opportunities in the City.

## Current Services

- 1.3 Currently there are three year-round local ferry services in Plymouth:
  - **Cremyll Ferry:** The ferry operates between Admirals Hard in Stonehouse and Cremyll near Millbrook in Cornwall. Access is also provided to Mount Edgcumbe Country Park. Tamar Cruising operates the service on behalf of the Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee. It is a pedestrian only service (although cycles are also carried) and operates throughout the year. The ferry ceases operation at around 18:00 hrs in the autumn and winter, thereby limiting the potential for commuter trips. Integrated public transport links exist on both sides. The service costs £1.20 per adult (half fare for children and bicycles) each way.
  - **Mountbatten Water Taxi:** The taxi operates between the Barbican and Mountbatten. The weekday service operates until 18:15 during the winter although hours are extended to 23:00 during the summer and on Friday and Saturday throughout the year – primarily to serve the Barbican. Fares are £1 each way, with discounts for children. Public transport links exist on both sides.
  - **Torpoint Ferry:** This is a vehicle chain ferry operating between Torpoint and Devonport on the lower Tamar River. The three ferries are owned and operated by a joint committee of Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Council. This body is also responsible for the Tamar Bridge and the revenue earned here is used to support the ferries. The current cost is 20 pence for motorcycles, £1 for cars and £2.90 for heavier vehicles. Multiple 'carnet' style tickets are also available, which offer a reduction on the standard fares. For the future, plans to introduce electronic ticketing using vehicle recognition techniques are advancing and will benefit local residents in particular. The ferry operates 24 hours per day with a 10-minute frequency (reducing to 30 minutes throughout the night). New, higher capacity boats

(approximately 50% larger than the previous vessels) have recently been introduced and work has just begun on renewing the slipways. The link is a vital part of the City's infrastructure.

- 1.4 Other services operate during the summer linking Plymouth to Kingsand, Cawsand, Saltash and Calstock on the upper Tamar River. They tend to be primarily aimed at tourists, although they may have a role to play in increasing the accessibility of some of the smaller settlements near Plymouth. A further service links Turnchapel, Hooe, Oreston and the Barbican.
- 1.5 In addition, Plymouth is linked to both France (Roscoff) and Spain (Santander) by services operated by Brittany Ferries. These services depart from the main harbour at Millbay, located to the southwest of the City Centre. Department for Transport statistics show that 100,000 passengers used these services in the fourth quarter of 2004 representing an increase over the same period of the previous year of approximately 10%. The Council acknowledges the contribution that Brittany Ferries makes to the local economy and supports these links and any future continental services that may be developed out of the City.
- 1.6 To produce the Ferry Strategy the Council has consulted at stakeholder panel hearings with the following organisations who have particular interests in water transport:
  - Associated British Ports
  - Cattedown Harbour Commission
  - Devonport Management Limited
  - Maritime Plymouth City Council
  - Plymouth Hoteliers
  - Sutton Harbour Holdings PLC
  - Sea and Water (written contribution)
  - Plymouth Tourism Services (written contribution)
- 1.7 Statistics relating to the patronage of ferries and water-borne transport are given in the accompanying document 'Transport in Plymouth: Facts and Figures'.

## 2. Review of Infrastructure

### Introduction

2.1 This chapter is a short review of the public access points to water-borne transport in Plymouth and on the river Tamar. This will inform the infrastructure audit recommended in Chapter 3 of this strategy.

### Results of Audit

2.2 The Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum carried out an audit of the majority of public access points in 1998. At this time the only publicly available rise and fall landing stages existed at Calstock and North Corner. Both were at the time found to be unsuitable for the less mobile due to steps and the steepness of the ramps.

2.3 Since that date a further three access points have been added and the landing stage at Calstock has been renewed:

- **Saltash.** The access point was primarily designed to provide a landing stage and mooring for yachts but could also accommodate small ferryboats. It was not designed to accommodate the larger ferry vessels that operate in Plymouth waters. The landing stage has a ramp suitable for use by disabled people at all states of the tide, a facility that was built for Caradon District Council.
- **The Barbican.** The operator of the Mount Batten Water Taxi installed this private landing stage. Although access to vessels is possible at all states of the tide, the access ramp is too steep and narrow for use by disabled people during low water.
- **Mount Batten.** This new landing stage was procured by the (then) Plymouth Development Corporation as part of their package of regeneration works for the Mount Batten Peninsula. The landing stage was designed to be fully accessible by disabled people at all states of the tide. Access is possible for the large ferryboats that operate in the Sound, again at all states of the tide. The complete installation cost was in the region of £600k in 1998.
- **Calstock.** The new landing stage, completed in Spring 2000, was designed to accommodate the small Tamar passenger ferry at one level and larger ferryboats at an upper level. Disabled access is possible to the upper level at times when there is sufficient water for these vessels to berth. The £100k design would be suitable for sheltered estuarial waters elsewhere in the study area, although the potential limitations on disabled access must be remembered.

2.4 Private landing stage facilities exist at:

- Jupiter Point (MoD)
- Mayflower Marina
- Queen Anne's Battery

- Yacht Haven Marina
- Saltash Passage (Plymouth)
- Trevol (HMS Raleigh, Torpoint)
- South Yard (HM Dockyard for Museum)
- Royal William Yard
- Millbay, Trinity Pier and others (ABP)

2.5 Slipways, jetties and walls with public access likely to have full tidal range exist at:

- Spaniards Inn, Cargreen
- St Germans Quay
- Mutton Cove (outer wall)
- Admirals Hard (Stonehouse)
- West Hoe (outer harbour wall)
- Pebbleside Pier (the Hoe)
- Boatman's Jetty (the Hoe)
- Phoenix Wharf (the Barbican)
- Mayflower Steps (the Barbican)

2.6 The majority of these facilities are not currently suitable for passenger use and could need considerable upgrading. There is reason to consider them as potential berthing areas for future boat services.

2.7 In July 2005 work commenced on renewing the slipways on both sides of the river Tamar for the new larger Torpoint Ferries. The project was completed in January 2006.

## 3. The Ferry Strategy

### Objectives

- 3.1 Three guiding objectives have been developed for ferries and other forms of water-borne passenger transport for the Council to take forward over the period of LTP2 and beyond. They are:
- To improve the quality and quantity of water-borne transport services in the City;
  - To improve the appeal and safety of water-borne passenger transport by upgrading the infrastructure; and
  - To better integrate ferries into the transport network.

### Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Water Transport Study

- 3.2 The Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Water Transport Study (Scott Wilson, 2003) investigated the demand for water transport and how it could be fully integrated within the City's public transport network, both now and in the future. The study concluded that potential does exist within Plymouth and the surrounding areas for an increase in water transport services. This is mainly due to:
- The redevelopment of many waterfront sites, leading to an increase in the number of residential dwellings;
  - The establishment of new visitor attractions adjacent to the waterfront;
  - Tourism trends suggesting an increase in the number of visitors to the region;
  - Widespread and increasing support (both nationally and locally) for the increase in non-car based transport; and
  - A wider appreciation of quality of life, and the importance of leisure time, linked with a growing interest in the natural and historical environment.
- 3.3 It is currently difficult to provide accurate predictions of future demand because many of the waterfront areas are still subject to feasibility studies. It is clear, however, that only by fully utilising and promoting the waterfront, will Plymouth be able to implement its ambitious regeneration proposals.
- 3.4 Despite the Vision there are constraints operating on water transport in Plymouth. The climate can make travelling on the water unattractive if vessels do not offer full protection. Tides, currents and channel depths limit the times of travel and restrict the location and direction that boats can travel in. In addition, priority in the harbour area is always given to naval vessels.
- 3.5 Many of the proposals outlined in the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Water Transport Study, which the Council wishes to bring forward, are described below.

## Opportunities for New Services

### *Services for Residents*

3.6 The Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Water Transport Study outlined a number of potential water based services to address demand. Developing these services is a medium (5 to 10 year) or long term (10+ year) project that is largely reliant upon the local economy. The study concluded that the following services might be viable for residents travelling within the study area.

- A service linking Turnchapel, Hooe and Oreston with the Barbican. The introduction of a regular service between these locations would open up the opportunity to use water transport for a number of walking and cycling passengers, this has been successfully implemented;
- A service from Millbay to locations in the Western Sound and Hamoaze. There may be sufficient future demand for a seasonal / weekend service for residents. In the reverse direction Millbay would be a point of arrival for journeys into the City centre;
- A service from Mutton Cove and North Corner to Cremyll. Again there may be sufficient demand for a seasonal / weekend service for residents; and
- A service on a circular route serving Millbay, Cremyll, Royal William Yard and Mutton Cove as an alternative to the previous two services.

### *Services for Visitors and Recreation*

3.7 There are several other services that could also be viable purely for recreational and tourist trips. It is likely that these will be most viable during the summer and at weekends. This could be problematic for the operators in terms of crew and vessel utilisation and could discourage the operators from introducing new services.

- The development of opportunities in the Tamar Valley. These would benefit from immediate attention, with latent demand realised through a programme of marketing, further ticket and service coordination, facilities development and packaging of travel and activities. Round-robin ticketing arrangements in the Tamar Valley would capitalise on walking opportunities. Limited cross ticketing options already exist between the boat operators, local attractions and Wessex trains, and these provide a useful base for any future initiatives.
- An enhanced service from the Barbican to the Upper Tamar. This is a possible short-term option, depending upon demand.
- An improved link from the Barbican to Mount Edgcumbe. This is currently constrained by the limited berthing facilities at Cremyll. As plans to develop the landing facilities at Cremyll are already in hand, this is a short to medium term project.

- Links from the Barbican to Millbay, Royal William Yard, the Devonport Flagship Project and the Naval Base Visitors Centre. This is a medium to long-term prospect dependent upon the progress made on the development of the various visitor attractions.
- Services from and to a regenerated Hoe Foreshore. A medium to long-term initiative dependent upon the regeneration of the Hoe foreshore.
- Services from the proposed Centre of Marine Excellence at Coxside to various locations in the Sound and Tamar Estuary. Details of the proposals are limited at present. There is the potential danger that the services could operate in competition with services from the Barbican adversely affecting the viability of the latter.
- An occasional service linking Antony, Mount Edgcumbe and Cothele.

### ***Park and Sail***

- 3.8 There are two existing bus based Park and Ride schemes running in the City; at Milehouse (Central Park) and a second site at Coypool in the east of the City at Plympton. The Regional Transport Strategy includes the provision of three new peripheral bus based Park and Ride sites and increased opportunities for rail based Park and Ride. The first of these peripheral bus based Park and Ride sites at the George Junction on the A386 Northern Corridor is scheduled to open in November 2005.
- 3.9 The City Council is committed to this increase in the number of park and ride sites serving the Plymouth travel to work area. The site at Milehouse (already constrained due to its proximity to the centre and the inability to use it on football match days) is under pressure for re-development, which would further reduce Plymouth's parking provision.
- 3.10 A new site west of the Tamar Bridge is being explored. This site would relieve some of the problems associated with Milehouse. On the Eastern Corridor a Park and Ride site is planned in conjunction with the Sherford New Community development proposals.
- 3.11 One of the ideas examined in the Water Transport Study is 'Park and Sail'. This concept replaces the bus element of the journey with a boat, and will increase the attractiveness of the service to potential users. Despite previous studies recognising its potential, no sites have been safeguarded, and the opportunities now available are more limited.

### ***Potential Sites***

- 3.12 This type of service can only operate to and from specific sites and in Plymouth, the Barbican is the most likely drop off point. This would limit the number of people who could potentially use the service, as the City Centre would not be directly served. It is therefore expected that Park and Sail would most likely be a service for visitors and tourists operating seasonally the potential hours of operation making it unsuitable for commuters. The Study identified two sites that would be suitable for such an innovative service; the Embankment or Breakwater Road, both located off the A379.

- 3.13 The Embankment site was once occupied by Blagdon Boatyard and covers an area of around 8,600m<sup>2</sup>. The local plan (1995 – 2011) considers this a prime development site and states that permission would be granted for marine uses falling within use classes B1, B2 and B8. Concerns over this site include the amount of dredging required and the limited headroom under Laira Bridge (4.9m) that may require a specially constructed vessel. On the plus side the close proximity to the highway network makes the site ideal for coach and bus access.
- 3.14 The plans would therefore conform to the Local Plan designations and would have limited impact on the surrounding area - as well as being much less controversial than other schemes. There would also be potential to use the site as a more traditional, bus based park and ride, although to make this work most efficiently a new junction would be required onto Embankment Road.
- 3.15 The Breakwater Road site was originally considered as a potential site for a commuter based Park and Sail system. It was not put forward into any plans as it was thought too close to the City Centre to offer the maximum traffic reduction benefits and too complicated to access. There are also potential conflicts with freight movements. If this site is considered for any future potential Park and Sail schemes, there are two possibilities: (i) a jetty already exists at Pomphlett and this could be modified to current standards. Various parking infrastructure already exists close to Pomphlett, giving this an advantage. (ii) The other option would be a new pontoon close to Oreston Dinghy Park. It is understood that there is a disused concrete reservoir of approximately 8000 m<sup>2</sup> which could serve as parking, and if the facilities were located here, the local Oreston community could also benefit. It should also be remembered that Plymstock is earmarked for a large increase in housing stock and a Park and Sail facility could help ease pressure on the local road network.
- 3.16 Of these two locations, the Embankment site close to Laira is favoured, and has the support of one of the harbour cruise operators, who would prefer an alternative to the Barbican which has limited facilities and can become crowded.
- 3.17 While it is unlikely that the wider use of water transport is going to lead to a significant reduction in congestion, the introduction of Park and Sail, if proved feasible, could reduce the need for visitors having to go into the City Centre to find parking. This would certainly help reduce seasonal pressures, especially in and around the Barbican.

#### *Funding Park and Sail*

- 3.18 To fund the implementation of a Park and Sail service, the Council will look to submit either a Major Scheme Submission or a Transport Innovation Fund bid. It is considered that this would occur during the second half of the LTP2 period. However, prior to any submission, the Authority will conduct a detailed feasibility study to examine the likely costs and benefits of a large scale Park and Sail project. This study will assess the level of reduction in traffic congestion that may result from any proposed scheme.

## Opportunities for Service Improvements

### *Partnership*

3.19 The Council is seeking to better engage with ferry operators during the LTP2 period. Initially, the Council will conduct twice yearly meetings with operators to ensure that issues and problems impacting upon the industry are effectively addressed. These meetings will eventually form the foundation for a quality partnership arrangement with operators. Issues which will be covered during these structured and formalised meetings will include:

- The location of future boarding and access points;
- Ways in which the Council can help market ferry services more effectively;
- Infrastructure problems and issues within the City; and
- Possible new ferry commuter routes.

### *Promotion*

3.20 Ferry services are currently marketed more as tourist operations than as transport services. Increased public awareness and backing by the Council are needed to turn them into viable commuting options.

### *Integration*

3.21 Some services have connecting bus links, many of which could be formalised and improved. As new services are introduced measures will be taken to ensure that connections by other modes are fully integrated into the timetables.

3.22 The introduction of intermodal ticketing, linked with the above better marketing, will make services more attractive. It is acknowledged, however, that this will be difficult to achieve with private companies and without a Passenger Transport Executive or similar body.

### *Ticketing*

3.23 It is the Council's intention to increase the availability, interconnectivity and ease of ferry ticketing in Plymouth during the LTP2 period through a number of initiatives which will include:

- **Ticket availability:** The Council will seek to introduce a project to sell ferry tickets 'off boat'. This will begin with ticket sales at the Council offices, but may be rolled out in other locations in the City in the coming years. The Council will make 'off boat' tickets available for sale at sites which will also sell 'off bus' tickets<sup>1</sup>.
- **Interconnectivity:** The Council will work with our partners in the bus and coach industries to investigate inter-modal ticketing which will include ferries.
- **Smartcards:** Smartcards are currently being rolled out across Plymouth's bus network. The Council will be investigating the possibility of extending this provision to include ferries.

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<sup>1</sup> See the council's Bus Strategy for more detailed information on plans for remote ticket sales.

### ***Upgrading the Infrastructure***

- 3.24 During the consultation process for developing this strategy, operators from Plymouth's ferry industry expressed concern about the condition of boarding points near the City.
- 3.25 The 'Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Water Transportation Study' recommended that the proposed location of the Barbican landing stage (originally Phoenix Wharf) should be reviewed, the preferred location being on Commercial Wharf, closer to the heart of the Barbican. Scott Wilson advised that the landing stage should be an all-purpose, state of the art facility, serving existing and potential water transport needs.
- 3.26 This proposal was confirmed in the more recent 'Plymouth Water Transportation study' (Davis Langdon, 2004), which looked in more detail at the operational requirements of a proposed regular ferry service between Saltash and the Barbican. There are considered to be significant linked benefits, in that the new landing stage will help attract new visitors to Commercial Wharf, provide an incentive for improvement of the quayside, and generate new commercial investment in the vicinity.
- 3.27 In developing the project, consideration also needs to be given to the provision of facilities such as a sheltered waiting area and operators' ticket offices and storage. Some of the empty stores under Madeira Road may offer short term potential.
- 3.28 Improvements to the waiting environments could help increase passenger numbers. It is necessary that landing stages are structurally sound, safe and fully accessible for disabled people. Early in the LTP2 period, the Council will assess the existing audits of the condition of boarding points to ensure that a clear picture is available of the existing facilities. From this an action plan for upgrades will be produced.
- 3.29 For this action plan the Council will be developing a hierarchy for improving the condition of boarding areas. The Council will identify a number of funding sources to pay for these improvements, ranging from LTP funds to developer contributions (especially for new developments in close relation to the shore).

### ***Signage***

- 3.30 It is recognised that street signage directing the public to the ferry terminals and boarding points should be improved. While it is expected that many of the current signage issues will be resolved through the recently completed Signage Strategy, the Council will work closely with operators to ensure that any outstanding issues are quickly and effectively resolved.

### ***Information Provision***

- 3.31 Tourism will undoubtedly be central to Plymouth's economic revitalisation. The City's waterfront and water based travel services are assets that will support the growth of tourism within the City. The Council will therefore work to better inform visitors (and residents) about the routes and timetabling of ferry services. This will be undertaken by:

- Supporting operators in developing timetable and route leaflets;
- Helping to identify and distribute information;
- Providing information on ferry information and routing on the Council's website;
- Ensuring that ferry information on the Council's website is up to date, accurate and easily available; and
- Ensuring that ferry information appears on third party websites, such as Transport Direct;
- Incorporating ferry information in electronic formats such as Real Time Passenger Information and SMS Text Messaging already being rolled out across the Plymouth bus network.

## 4. Conclusions

4.1 Table 4.1 summarises the Council's proposals for water transport during the LTP2 period.

**Table 4.1 Summary of Proposed Measures**

Measure type	Time scale*
Construct new Barbican landing stage at Commercial Wharf.	Short term
Improvement to signage in relation to ferry terminals.	Short term
Begin "off boat" sales of tickets.	Short term
Work to better inform visitors (and residents) about the routes and timetabling of ferry services.	Short term
Investigate inter-modal ticketing to include ferries.	Short term
Twice yearly meetings with ferry operators.	Short term
Improvement of ferry terminus at Cremyll (incorporating bus-ferry interchange and RTPI).	Short term
Incorporating RTPI onto vessels providing ferry services.	Short-Medium term
Feasibility Study for a Park and Sail scheme.	Short-Medium term
Construct new pontoon at Cremyll to increase berthing capacity.	Medium term
Timetable integration with other modes.	Short-Long term
An action plan for improvements to the condition of boarding points.	Short-Long term
Undertake uncompleted signage improvements.	Long term
Investigate Smartcard roll out in relation to ferries.	Long term
Park and Sail scheme.	Long term

\*See definitions in *Passenger Transport Strategy - Introduction*