

**News Release**

**For immediate release**

**18th July 2016**

**Marine industries let down by transport plans, says business network**

Gosport Marine Scene (GMS), the non-profit network that engages the 160+ marine businesses in the Gosport Peninsula and surrounding area, has severely criticised the transport plans for the Solent area published by the Local Enterprise Partnership and Hampshire County Council.

‘Have they forgotten that Gosport exists?’ GMS asks in response to the LEP’s infrastructure plan and the proposals for the Stubbington Bypass. The plans emphasise the importance of connectivity. Although the plans acknowledge the continuing problems of the A32, the unfinished Bus Rapid Transport scheme and the inadequate rail connections, there are no proposals to deal with any of these.

GMS welcomes the proposed investment in the east-west routes via the M27/A27 and the Portsmouth to Southampton rail connections. But the network points out that they could actually make the situation worse by attracting business and workers out of the Gosport peninsula, at a time when it is poised for further development. Although the long-awaited Stubbington Bypass will be an asset to the area, it will mainly benefit new business in the Enterprise Zone and Daedalus. But GMS points out that it too will stop several miles short of the eastern sector of Gosport, where most of the marine businesses are located.

Haslar Hospital, the Gosport Waterfront and the MOD’s last derelict site at Royal Clarence Yard are ready for development now. ‘Decent transport connections are essential to all these’ says Mark Bowden, Director of Marina Projects, one of the successful international businesses based in Gosport whose staff face the daily grind of the A32. ‘Without them, congestion on the existing inadequate routes will simply get worse. Gosport has some great assets for the marine industries and we must make them accessible.’

One of the aims of GMS is to make Gosport an attractive destination for competitive and leisure yachtsmen, and for marine tourism. ‘Gosport has everything for boaters’ says Mike Shepherd, MD of the Gosport-based Marine Advertising Agency ‘We need to make it easy for them to get here. The plans say nothing about transport to-and-through Gosport.’ Mike goes on ‘One the simplest steps would be to rebrand Portsmouth Harbour station as Portsmouth and Gosport, to emphasise that it is our local station and is reliably served by the Gosport Ferry.’

In summary, Gosport Marine Scene believes the Stubbington Bypass Transport Business Case and the LEP’s Solent Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan both fail the test they set themselves, of a comprehensive and joined-up approach to improving transport and its connectivity. It is not acceptable that investment should be entirely concentrated on new development while continuing to neglect the transport needs and potential of an important and established marine business cluster.

**ENDS**

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Further information is available from Peter Cardy, Secretary to Gosport Marine Scene 07785 393 593 secretary@gosportmarinescene.com

**Notes for Editors**

About Gosport Marine Scene and Gosport:

Organiser of Gosport's: Marine Business Network, Gosport Marine Festival June 2015, Talent & Career Programme

Gosport Peninsula is a centre of excellence in ocean racing, sail training, marine tourism and trade.

Gosport is the home of: Alex Thomson Racing & Hugo Boss, Clipper Round the World Race, Global Ocean Race, Sail Training International, ASTO, Ocean Youth Trust South, Lee-on-Solent RYA Onboard, Toe in the Water . . . just for starters