

**LYONS LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING INQUIRY  
SUBMISSION BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT  
COUNCIL**

1. The Lyons Funding Inquiry has asked for ideas of the type of funding options that might prove attractive to local authorities for the future. This paper sets out one such issue which has been discussed on the Isle of Wight but which does not yet constitute Council policy. The thrust of this paper is that local authorities would welcome clear statutory authority to implement discretionary charging mechanisms where they were dictated by local circumstances.
2. Each year, the Isle of Wight receives approximately 2.5 million visitors. The vast majority of those visitors arrive by vehicle on the Island through one of the ferry ports. The most recent figures indicated that we receive an estimated 12,000 coaches, 130,000 commercial vehicles and 400,000 seasonal cars from the mainland.
3. This traffic is a significant contributor to the £160m backlog of repairs currently required to bring Island roads up to a sustainable standard. This condition is despite an annual maintenance spend which is 20% in excess of the Council's current formula funding share for highway maintenance.
4. The Council is also responsible for ensuring a high level of infrastructure in the vicinity of the ferry ports, to deal with the traffic that travels to and from the mainland. For a number of years, suggestions have been made that a small charge could be imposed on visiting vehicles, to assist with investment in improved infrastructure in the vicinity of the ferry ports or towards other "Green Travel" initiatives, to support visitors who arrive from the mainland. There is no statutory authority at present, to permit such a charge. By way of example, a levy of £20 per commercial vehicle and £1 per car charge at the point of entry to the Island would inject significant capital sums per annum (approximately £3 m) per annum towards such initiatives and would provide a significant opportunity for the local authority to improve the welcome for visitors to the Island without having a major impact on the ferry fares that are currently paid.
5. As the Council may wish to consider such a proposal in the future, it would be helpful for appropriate authority to implement such charges where they suited local circumstances. Arrival by ferry may well be a situation unique to the Isle of Wight within England and Wales, but many other areas receive considerable numbers of tourists under slightly different circumstances and may well wish to impose a similar local charge to support increased investment in their areas.

M J A Fisher  
Chief Executive Officer  
Isle of Wight Council