

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	14 November 2017
Title:	Waterside Interim Transport Policy
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek endorsement of an interim transport policy which sets out the County Council's emerging view on transport infrastructure requirements for the Waterside area of South Hampshire in light of potential future growth.
- 1.2. An interim policy is needed to support the Local Planning Authorities in the New Forest in developing their Local Plans and to aid planning for strong and sustainable economic and housing growth.
- 1.3. It will also provide clear guidance on the scale and type of transport infrastructure developers may be expected to provide should development proposals come forward in the meantime.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The need for an interim transport policy arises from the potential for large developments to come forward quickly along the Waterside and a need to understand what this would mean in terms of the performance of the transport network and the need for new infrastructure. Potential growth includes housing within Totton, Marchwood, and Fawley of up to 4,000 new homes and the longer term potential expansion of port activity at Marchwood Military Port and on land owned by the Association of British Ports (ABP).
- 2.2. The New Forest District Council is consulting on possible development sites in the New Forest, which includes several sites on the Waterside. Total housing numbers could be in excess of 3,500 homes. The New Forest National Park has lower level housing numbers.
- 2.3. The former Fawley power station site is currently being considered for development including potential for 1,500 homes and 2,000 jobs. A planning application is expected to be submitted in the near future.
- 2.4. Port intensification plans are potentially coming forward for Solent Gateway (the intensification of Marchwood military port) and expansion on the ABP

strategic land reserve. ABP has confirmed in its recent Port Masterplan consultation that capacity in the port of Southampton is full and that it is considering the business case for expanding operations on the Waterside.

- 2.5. There is much the County Council and even the promoters do not know about the exact nature of the potential housing and port growth plans. As such the policy promoted in this paper is interim pending further clarity on some key issues. Such issues include considerations like the nature of port growth. This is important because the impact on transport infrastructure for containers is very different to those generated by bulk goods, energy generation or car export uses. In due course and as issues like this become clearer the County Council will seek to include these in a Waterside transport strategy.
- 2.6. In a regional context there are infrastructure schemes outside of the Waterside area that would be required to maximise the economic benefits of port intensification and expansion. For highways they include investment in the M27, M3 Junction 9 and A34 (to motorway standard). For railways, similar supported investments of strategic importance are the Woking Flyover, rail freight bypasses at Basingstoke, capacity improvements generally, and the electrification of tactically important rail freight corridors (Basingstoke to Reading).
- 2.7. It will also be important to ensure that when the planning authorities consider the environmental and amenity impacts of developments, there is clarity on the transport requirements, so that these can also be factored into consideration of the impacts, in what is a highly sensitive landscape and natural environment, with significant national and international conservation designations.

3. Transport Evidence Base

- 3.1. In order to understand the transport infrastructure requirements of the potential growth proposals in the Waterside, the County Council has undertaken data collection and a range of traffic assessments. The data and assessment form a robust technical evidence base on which to develop an interim policy. The findings from the evidence work are:

3.2. Highways

- 3.2.1 The Waterside is served by the A326 which is the main highway access to and from the strategic road network. The peninsular nature of the Waterside means there are no reasonable alternatives. As a result, the Waterside settlements are dependent on the A326 working effectively.
- 3.2.2 Following collection of traffic data and capacity analysis, it is clear that the A326 is already at its theoretical capacity at many of its junctions and some of its links. This applies more so to the junctions and links north of Applemore and Dibden. With further growth, traffic modelling shows that without physical intervention these problems will worsen.
- 3.2.3 There are likely to be Environmental issues associated with increasing the capacity of the A326. If development comes forward then these will need to be investigated in detail, and considered carefully alongside the environmental and amenity impacts of the developments themselves.

3.3. Movement

3.3.1 The evidence base includes telephone surveys with over 500 residents (asking about travel attitudes and behaviours), analysis of Census travel to work journeys and traffic count data. From this it is clear that the car remains the dominant mode choice for all journey types and that alternative options are not considered convenient by many residents. However, there is a great deal of movement contained within the Waterside area suggesting that local improvements to public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure could have some benefits. Census data shows there are small numbers currently using active travel modes but telephone surveys revealed that 7% of those surveyed said that better pavements would encourage greater walking within the local area and 22% said that more cycle lanes and paths may encourage them to cycle.

3.4. Buses

3.4.1 Data collected included journey time reliability data. There are currently no dedicated bus priority facilities along the A326 Waterside corridor. As a result buses are subject to the same journey time delays as general traffic. Total bus use for journeys to work is around 4% of Waterside residents. Some 19% of residents stated in telephone interviews that more frequent services would encourage them to use the bus and 15% said that shorter journey times would also help. Of those travelling to Southampton there is a 10% mode share by bus. Together these data sources suggest that an improved bus offer would have some benefits.

3.5. Ferry and New Passenger Rail

3.5.1 Data from surveys and census showed that the current Hythe Ferry has a limited catchment area and is primarily used for leisure activities. Passenger numbers are low compared to bus.

3.5.2 A previous rail study conducted by Hampshire County Council indicated a very poor business case for the re-introduction of passenger rail on the Waterside due to the lack of demand. As a result, the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment formally agreed on 21 January 2014 “not to commit further funding or resources” to the project unless “there are **significant** changes in either future funding arrangements for rail projects or local circumstances.” A new proposal and business case for a passenger rail service is being undertaken by the Fawley Waterside developer but has not yet fully concluded so at this time there is no evidence to suggest a viable business case can be made for passenger rail.

4. **Interim Transport Policy**

4.1 In light of the above robust evidence base, the following interim policy is proposed:

- The A326 to J2 M27 is the preferred route to the strategic road network from the Waterside and will need to be improved to accommodate future growth;
- If port expansion plans utilising ABP’s strategic land reserve come forward they should be accessed directly from the A326 by the shortest, least

environmentally impactful route, and not involve traffic routing through residential areas;

- Future port expansion proposals should include comprehensive freight routing, enforcement and management strategies and lead to a high mode share of freight on rail;
- Future transport proposals will need to consider impact on the Clear Air Zone designation on the Western Approach to Southampton;
- In the short to medium term, appropriate and proportionate bus, walking and cycling improvements will be developed and secured through the development control process. These should focus on making bus services quicker and more reliable, connecting waterside settlements (and the National Park) by improving the quality of the pedestrian environment for day to day trips and a direct cycle corridor; and
- Until further evidence is forthcoming, the current County Council Position on reopening passenger rail services on the Waterside remains unchanged.

5 Finance

- 5.1 The transport evidence base report was funded in 2016/17 and so there are no further financial implications in this respect.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the interim transport policy outlined in paragraph 4.1 be approved.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Waterside Rail	21/01/2014

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1 The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2 Equalities Impact Assessment:

It is considered that there will be neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics. This is primarily a progress report concerning activities and tasks to develop a transport strategy. Delivery of any major transport scheme that arises from the strategy will be subject to an individual equality impact assessment.

2 Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1 No impact.

3 Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Recommendations in this report relate to the development of a transport strategy and early investigation of schemes, rather than delivery, and therefore have no direct impact on climate change. The impacts of specific schemes will be assessed as part of project development.