

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
Date:	8 June 2023
Title:	Solent Transport Plan and Other Regional Transport Issues
Report From:	Director of Hampshire 2050

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Solent Transport Business Plan for 2023-24 and to update the Executive Member on various regional transport issues.

Recommendations

2. That the Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves the Solent Transport Business Plan for 2023-24, as appended to this report.
3. That the Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services notes the issues that could impact on the future operation of Solent Transport.

Executive Summary

4. This paper seeks to
 - adopt the Solent Transport business plan for 2023-24;
 - highlight the changing regional and subregional context for strategic transport planning;
 - signify to the County Council's partners in Solent Transport and TfSE, Government, and local public transport operators that the County Council is ready to engage in conversation about the future of such partnerships in light of that changing context; and
 - highlight a potential future funding pressure relating to updating the Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM).

Contextual information

Solent Transport Business Plan

5. Solent Transport is a voluntary partnership funded by the four Highway Authorities within the Solent area – Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. An annual business plan is produced and agreed by the four authorities to set priorities and guide the work of Solent Transport. The Business Plan for 2023-24 was discussed and recommended for approval at the meeting of the Solent Transport Joint Committee on 6 March 2023. As the Joint Committee does not have decision making powers the Business Plan needs to be ratified by the constituent authorities and that is the purpose of this report.
6. The draft Business Plan is set out in Appendix A. It sets out the following priorities for the year –
 - Solent Transport Strategy;
 - Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM) maintenance and management;
 - Future Transport Zone delivery;
 - Solent Go; and
 - Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC.
7. The first of the priorities relates to the development of a transport strategy for the Solent area. The strategy will draw together the Regional Transport Strategy developed by Transport for the South East and the recently agreed Strategic Investment Plan with the more detailed plans contained in the authorities' respective Local Transport Plans. It will then present all the plans in a sub-regional context and programme. The work is already underway and transport consultancy ITP has been appointed to develop the draft strategy. Further updates will be provided as that work progresses.
8. The South Hampshire Sub Regional Transport Model (SRTM) is a multi-modal strategic transport model covering the Solent sub-region. It is used to test the impact of proposed major transport and land-use interventions. The model outputs are needed to support business cases in support of funding bids and are used in testing Local Plan allocations. The SRTM is due for a major update in the next few years. It needs to be up to date to retain 'WebTAG' compliance, which is a requirement of the Department for Transport (DfT) in assessing funding bids.
9. The model has been used to evidence many successful transport bids including the Transforming Cities Fund and multiple major schemes. Whilst it is important to have a robust evidence base to meet the future scheme development and bidding needs there is currently a gap in funding available to do so. The model does generate income through charges to developers and other users of the

model, and an element of this is retained for updates, but there remains a gap in the order of at least £1million for the update.

10. The work needed this year will be to determine the best option for updating the evidence base, to identify the costs of doing so and to identify how much it will cost each of the member authorities. To support this work, funding of £102,000 has been secured from Transport for the South East (TfSE) under its Capability Fund.
11. Measures included in the Solent Future Transport Zone (FTZ) will continue to be developed and delivered over the next year. Solent Transport has over recent years been focused on the delivery of the FTZ. This has tested a number of innovative future transport solutions like e-scooters and deliveries using drones and has resulted in many lessons of value being learnt. It has also developed new products like the Breeze app which is a new way for customers to purchase multiple transport services in a smart way using one e-ticket and could apply over a very large, if not national, geography.
12. The work on SolentGo (the current multi-user through-ticketing product) will also be important to the County Council. There will be a need to ensure that this work, including a potential transition to align it with the operation of the Breeze App (see details in this report) meets future needs in Hampshire.
13. The Solent rail connectivity study seeks to identify the priority investments for rail in the Solent area. The Solent has a low mode share of journey by rail when compared to similar sub regional areas. The study looks at the reasons for this and is identifying investment priorities that would increase it.

Regional Transport Planning Context and long-term view on future of Solent Transport

14. Whilst the business plan sets the plan for the following year, there is also a need for Hampshire to consider what it needs from regional and sub regional partnerships over the medium to longer term, in light of changing needs. The regional and national policy context is changing and this is likely to have an impact on what core services partnerships need to perform, be they Solent Transport, Transport for the South East or other.
15. The Government's policy focus is on buses, active travel and decarbonising transport. This is evidenced by the requirements upon Local Transport Authorities to deliver against their Bus Service Improvement Plans, Local Cycling and Walking Plans and on developing Electric Vehicle Charging strategies and plans. The geographic area over which Hampshire County Council requires such plans to be developed is larger than the Solent area and needs to cover a Pan Hampshire geography or wider.

16. There is a changing need related to the evidence base (strategic transport models used to make the case for transport schemes) needs of local transport authorities. It is essential that the County Council has access to a strategic evidence base for testing local plan development allocations and the full range of schemes it delivers, including large road schemes like the A326 Large Local Majors proposal. The SRTM has been instrumental in securing Government and LEP funding for major strategic schemes across a number of years. Any model will need to meet specified technical requirements (WebTAG compliance – see paragraph 8 above) if it is going to allow the Council and partners to access future funding opportunities, although any future modelling capacity will need to respond to the changing funding environment, where more funding is likely to be directed to different types of scheme (i.e. public transport, walking and cycling packages, placemaking, etc). Future modelling capacity would need to reflect and respond to this changing need.
17. At present Hampshire has a sub-regional strategic transport model for the North of the County and Solent Transport operate one for the South. Whilst they have proved to be good value for money and have so far offered a high level of return on investment, there is a need to review their cost effectiveness against potential alternatives, including wider regional models (covering larger geographies such as the whole South East) which are managed by others and may be a more cost effective evidence base. The County Council will therefore continue to review what strategic modelling can meet its needs effectively and it may be that it is no longer in a position to be able to afford to operate multiple sub regional strategic models. If this were the outcome of a review, then it could have implications for one of the core roles currently performed by Solent Transport.
18. A decision is not required immediately on this, as the current models are anticipated to have two or more years of life remaining. Nevertheless, it is important that the Council and the Solent Transport partners are planning for the time at which model updates are required and are planning for putting appropriate funding in place. Value for money will always be at the heart of any future decision making on this.
19. The County Council is also in the process of exploring the opportunities with Government for a Pan-Hampshire County Deal, incorporating a wider regional geography across the County Council, plus the Unitary Authority areas of Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. The proposal makes reference to opportunities to further develop and enhance the current joined up strategic transport work with the respective Unitary Authorities, and the implications for Solent Transport and regional partnership working in general will be kept under review as proposals emerge.

Chairmanship of Solent Transport

20. As noted above, Solent Transport is a partnership of Highway Authorities. Since its setting up the Chairmanship of Solent Transport has rotated between

the four constituent authorities. The current Chairmanship is with Portsmouth City Council and this is due to change after the next meeting in the Summer. It is the County Council's turn to become Chair next and it is anticipated that the Hampshire representative will take on the role. It should be highlighted that the Chairmanship also comes with a requirement to provide administrative support, including provision of Committee support. Discussions are currently underway to ensure that there is capacity for the County Council's Committee Services to take this work on, and for this to be funded from the existing Solent Transport contributions. A formal decision will be taken in due course to confirm the County Council's chairmanship and the associated resource implications.

Finance

21. The County Council currently commits £90,000 pa contribution to Solent Transport, which represents 47% of the total Solent Transport budget. This is determined on a per capita basis.
22. In the event that the South Hampshire Model is to be updated and made compliant with national modelling standards (WebTAG), and funding is not forthcoming elsewhere, then Hampshire County Council will need to make budgetary provision for its contribution to the shortfall in funding. At present this is a potential pressure and is not currently funded. The total funding requirement is likely to be in excess of £1million and this would need to be shared between the four Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) (and potentially other funding partners).
23. The resource and financial implications of taking on the Chairmanship of Solent Transport are currently being assessed and a final decision on taking on the role will need to be taken once these are known.

Consultation and Equalities

24. The Solent Transport Business Plan has not been subject to public consultation because it relates to workload priorities rather than schemes for implementation.
25. Potentially, initiatives arising from the work, particularly the Transport Strategy, are likely to involve public engagement at some point in the future and that will be subject to standard reporting processes as the proposals emerge.
26. As this is a procedural report about governance arrangements, and specific equalities impacts arising from any schemes will be assessed as part of future decision making, no equalities impacts have been identified in relation to the recommendations.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

27. The measures brought forward under the Business Plan and, in particular, within the Transport Strategy, are expected to have a beneficial impact on Carbon generation and on climate change, although it is not possible to quantify the projected impact until the detailed mix of interventions is identified. Detailed impact assessments will be undertaken in the future for the strategy and for individual schemes as they come forward.

Climate Change Adaptation

28. There are no specific schemes to assess for climate change adaptation and, as above, this will be assessed as more detailed proposals come forward.

Carbon Mitigation

29. There are no specific schemes to assess for carbon mitigation and, as above, this will be assessed as more detailed proposals come forward.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND 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>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

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	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- 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.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

As this is a procedural report about governance arrangements, and specific equalities impacts arising from any schemes will be assessed as part of future decision making, no equalities impacts have been identified in relation to the recommendations.

Appendix A – Draft Solent Transport Business Plan

Background and summary of activity over previous year

1. During 2022/23 Solent Transport and its member authority officer teams have overseen the continued delivery of the FTZ programme, including rental e-scooter trials and initial launch of the shared bike and e-bike trial schemes in the cities and the Isle of Wight and the initial launch of the first version of the Breeze Mobility as a Service (MaaS) app. The profile of Solent Transport and its member authorities have been boosted at a national level through these projects and associated research, evaluation and communication around these projects, the highlight of which was the Future Transport Forum Conference held in Portsmouth in January 2023. A of the consultant to operate the SRTM model has reduced the fee costs for operation of the model by around 20%.
2. Alongside the highway authorities Solent Transport officers have worked closely with Transport for the South East (TfSE) to influence the draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) so it reflects the needs of the Solent sub-region. The final SIP forms a regional policy and evidence base from which to now develop a more detailed Solent Transport Strategy.
3. This 2023/24 business plan activities reflect the resources available. Members contributions will remain unchanged as they have done since 2013. This leaves a budget that covers the present staffing levels with a minimal allowance for operational activities related to Solent Go.

Summary of progress against 2022/23 Business Plan

4. Headline objectives of the 2022/23 Business Plan included:
 - Continuing successful delivery of the DfT-funded Future Transport Zone (FTZ) programme.
 - Working with our Member LTAs to progress development of a longer term, high level transport strategy and action plan for the Solent area
 - To support Network Rail in further development of proposals for improved rail connectivity for the Solent
 - Complete a large-scale procurement for the operation of the Sub Regional Transport Model (SRTM) and carry out maintenance and update work to provide an interim solution to maintaining the model's viability
 - Activities to market and promote to the public the innovative transport services delivered via the FTZ programme and to leverage these to increase the profile of Solent Transport and its LTAs in the transport sector

5. A full summary of the activity undertaken by Solent Transport during the year is provided in Appendix 1. Some key outputs (including those directly linking to 2022/23 Business Plan objectives) include:
6. Implementation of the FTZ programme, details of which are included in Item 6 but which notably include:
 - the development and low-key launch of the “Breeze” Mobility as a Service app.
 - Launch of “Beryl Bikes by Breeze” shared bikes/ e-bikes in Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth
7. Solent Transport Strategy: the procurement of a consultant (ITP) to commence the strategy development from March 23 onwards.
8. SRTM Model: Re-procurement of the Solent Regional Transport Model with a c.20% saving on consultant costs. In progress is an update to the model’s reference cases which will result in a validation for the 2019 base model thereby extending the life of the model and somewhat delaying the need for full replacement.
9. Solent Rail Connectivity: Working with Network Rail and the highway authorities to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case has commenced from January 2023. but is a lower priority for Network Rail than completion of the Waterside Rail final business case.
10. Marketing, promotion and profile-raising: A wide range of activities undertaken connected to the FTZ programme which has resulted in a significantly higher online/ professional media/ social media profile for the programme and for Solent Transport and its partners.

Work Plan for 2023/ 24

11. Solent Transport’s proposed work programme for 2023/24 is outlined on the following pages. A table of the proposed average weekly time allocations to key activities is provided [below paragraph 45]. There are five major priorities:
 1. Solent Transport Strategy
 2. SRTM maintenance and management
 3. FTZ delivery
 4. Solent Go
 5. Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC
12. Development of Solent Transport strategic vision/ high level strategy 12. This is a significant piece of work which will be resourced via a consultancy contract to provide the capacity to move this work forward. As of March 2023, the appointed consultant (ITP) is starting to initiate their work on the project and an inception meeting has taken place. The project is planned to be delivered across a 12-month period with the aim that a completed strategy is

available for LTAs to adopt by March 2024. The consultancy contract to deliver this work is funded from income from recharges to projects delivered in the 2022-23 financial year by Solent Transport's core staff and carried over.

13. The Solent Transport Strategy will be an important sub-regional document which consolidates the national, regional and local transport plans (published by the LTAs) in one document. It will set a shared vision and approach for transport improvements in the Solent region over the next 20/30 years.
14. Achieving decarbonisation of the transport network is a high priority. All four of our LTAs have declared climate emergencies and carbon neutrality goals (and transport emissions are the highest individual source of CO2 emissions). The strategy will consider which measures have the greatest impact on decarbonising the transport system. This approach should also support the LTAs in addressing emerging Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on carbon emissions for new LTPs.
15. Outputs will consist of a high-level strategy, and a set of "action plans".
16. The brief and consultant contract has been developed to allow the Solent LTAs to commission a potential add-on study looking at future development in the Solent area and how the strategy and land use plans of the district and unitary authorities could be integrated. Discussion with the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) is ongoing and are being led directly by officers in the LTAs.
17. The Solent Transport strategy and action plan will not be proposing or developing any entirely new interventions. It will bring together the various strategies and investment plans setting out joint strategic priorities and will undertake a strategic prioritisation and "packaging" up of measures to ensure highest potential impact.
18. It is planned for the Solent Transport Strategy to be completed by March 2024 for LTAs to take through their adoption procedures following development with the local transport authorities, in engagement with members and key stakeholders.
19. The Strategy work is proposed to include an SRTM or other model run to evidence the benefits (economic, carbon saving, transport network performance) of the strategy. This is likely to be a second stage of work but at the moment it is currently unfunded and will require the Member LTAs to confirm funding in due course. Member authorities are requested to budget accordingly if they see value in this work.
20. An officer working group is being set up and will require substantial time inputs from LTA officer and Solent Transport staff across the 2023/24. Member authorities should note the need to commit to this in order to get the most from the strategy work.

Sub-Regional Transport Model: Priorities for 2023

21. The since 2017 the SRTM has helped evidence the need for £269m of investment to the region. The model continues to play a key role in providing evidence underpinning major transport scheme/ programme business cases to DfT from the 5 www.portsmouth.gov.uk LTAs and is an essential tool required by Local Planning Authorities and PFSH to undertake transport assessment work for Local Plans.
22. The top priorities for SRTM in 2023/24 are proposed to be:
 - Continuing effective client management and operation of the model, support for clients, and undertaking activities to raise awareness of and use of the model amongst user groups such as developers
 - Completion of the 2019 (base) model year journey time validation exercise and reference case updates, as soon as possible (subject to resolution of concerns with DfT TEMPRO/ NTEM 8 data).
 - Agree a sustainable way to run and fund the model in future years and identifying a way to meet the circa £1m funding gap required for a rebuild within the next two years.
 - Progressing activities which will determine the longer-term future of the model and/or add value to the model in the medium term.
23. The SRTM model is based on data which was collected prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (in 2019, 2015 and in some cases as far back as 2010) and the model therefore does not fully represent post-Covid travel patterns and behaviours. The cost of a major upgrade to fully account for these changes (which would be required now even if the Covid-19 pandemic had not occurred) is in the region of £1.5m.
24. The model reserve currently total approximately £500,000 leaving a shortfall of around £1m. Charge out rates have had to have regard to market rates. Whilst this has covered the operational and maintenance costs, it has not secured enough to cover the end of life rebuild. Work has been undertaken to drive down operational costs but, on its own, it is not sufficient to cover the gap and funding pressure.
25. A key activity over the next six months will be to identify if and how the model will be updated and to develop a sustainable long-term solution to the historic 'whole life shortfall'. A number of options (which are likely to be blended) are available which will be developed with the LTA officers for agreement at a future joint committee. They include:
 - Not updating the model and not having an evidence base

- Seeking contributions from others with a vested interest – notably DfT, TfSE, PfSH and the Solent LPAs (the SRTM is a vital tool used in the evidence base for Local Plan transport assessments)
- Charging higher rates and removing discounts for the LTAs and strategic partners to access the model
- Exploring the concept of a success fee – LTA members will need to take a view as to if this is practical and financially acceptable under CIPFA rules and funding conditions
- Member authorities paying for the upgrade directly. This is a last resort but if they value the SRTM as a tool LTAs should start to factor this option into their budget setting as a backup

26. If no funding options are identified, Solent Transport will start developing a detailed plan for shutting down the SRTM model (without replacement) most likely during the 2024/25 year to avoid the risks associated with continuing to promote an obsolete model. In its absence the LTAs could find themselves at a strategic disadvantage when developing and competing for Government funds for transport schemes. Local Planning Authorities would not have access to the model which would make undertaking Local Plan transport assessments problematic.

Continued successful delivery of FTZ programme:

27. As Solent Transport's current flagship area of work with most immediate benefit to the Solent area and our partners, continuing the good progress made to date on FTZ is a key priority. The FTZ is a high profile, national innovation scheme and will inform central government future decisions around transport innovations, and investment. The FTZ programme is delivering a number of major projects and initiatives which are identified in member authority Local Transport Plans and as such directly and significantly contributes to achievement of our member LTA's policy and strategy objectives. Its successful delivery will boost the area's credibility with DfT and other funders when bidding for future funding opportunities as well as enhancing the Solent area's reputation as a hub for innovation-supporting key local employers in the education & research sector.
28. The FTZ programme has its own funding (provided through Department for Transport Grant) and delivery team, however significant input from the core Solent Transport team (who, in conjunction with our Member LTAs, devised the programme and projects within) is also required on an ongoing basis. Two days per week of core staff time is dedicated to FTZ as match funding for the DfT grant funding allocation. Any time spent by the two core Solent Transport staff above this match funding level is recharged to the FTZ capital budget as income to Solent Transport.
29. We also recognise that the FTZ programme places additional pressure on our member LTAs to deliver some elements "on the ground". Solent Transport will

continue to provide support (staff resource) to assist our members to deliver and gain maximum value from the opportunities presented. Details of the work will be highlighted in the reports for the FTZ Steering Group meeting that forms part of this Joint Committee meeting.

Key challenges and planned FTZ programme activity for 2023/24

Challenges

- Recruitment remains difficult with the market demand outstripping supply and the innovative nature of the programme requiring specific skillsets. A further recruitment round commenced in December 2022 with seven FTZ posts going out to advert. We are actively working to fill remaining unfilled posts while planning strategically for appropriate resource for commencement of new projects and evolving programme requirements.
- Alignment with local authority partners to ensure FTZ programme activity compliments and aligns with other local and regional activity to deliver maximum benefit (TCFs, BSIPs etc)
- Budget management is challenging with such an innovative programme of activity and with current global factors creating uncertainty.
- Robust contract management is imperative given the programme timescales and reliance of certain projects on external partners, contractors and influences.
- Delivering an innovation project within the constraints of Local Authority partnership has resulted in challenges with procurement and governance tasks.
- On-boarding and testing of some Mobility Service Provider (MSP) integrations into Breeze is complex and often impacted by external dependencies.

Planned activity:

30. Dissemination of lessons learnt, approaches and sharing best practice remains a key priority of the Solent FTZ and will support greater recognition and raise the partnerships profile.
31. To continue with the development and implementation of a robust programme wide M&E strategy.

Theme 1 (Personal Mobility):

32. Breeze app development & integrations:
 - 'Active Trip' function developed, tested and rolled-out to provide users with step-by-step guidance throughout their planned trips.

- Full integration of remaining MSPs
 - Customer service, financial reconciliation, and voucher functions integrated
 - Breeze for Business project rolled out to key trip generating sites • Small-scale Mobility Credits trial accessed via Breeze launched in Havant area
 - Explore and exploit the commercialisation of Breeze to current and wider markets
33. Dynamic Demand Responsive Transit (DDRT) trial - commencement of phase 1 pilot following appointment of chosen back-office system provider, and development of plans for second phase of the project (wider trial).
 34. Further comprehensive roll out of the Beryl Bikes by Breeze across the region in summer 2023 and explore potential expansion into other areas.
 35. Continue to grow numbers of rental e-scooters (including parking locations) within current scheme trials throughout Solent region.

Theme 2 (sustainable logistics trials):

36. Macro-consolidation: Analyse the Southampton SDC performance to date, identify best practice and implement next steps for new trial projects/approaches.
37. Micro-consolidation: Finalise site selection for potential trials, refine trial deliverables and secure industry sector partners for delivery.
38. Medical delivery by drone for the NHS: Will undertake detailed research into the classification of different drone types, that are suitable could be utilised for this purpose. We will also trial temporary airspace options to allow further flying and testing of drones with differing capabilities, to best assess the most appropriate drones for logistics usage. This will also enable an airspace sensor network to be developed, allowing further data gathering.

SolentGo Ticketing and Fares

39. The usage of Solent Go has not fully recovered from drops in usage during the Covid-19 pandemic. Transaction costs per journey made using ITSO Smartcard Solent Go products is significantly worse than it was prior to 2020. There has been a fundamental shift for the worse in the economics of the Solent Go ITSO card system.
40. A key action relating to Solent Go in 2023 will therefore be to investigate options for more cost-effective replacement of ITSO Smartcards as a means of providing Solent Go Tickets via Breeze (using FTZ budget) - and to develop a plan for closing down the Solent Go ITSO system if a more cost effective and user-friendly replacement, such as QR Code tickets, can be identified.
41. Other actions for 2023 include:

- Development / launch of planned new Solent Go products as part of the FTZ programme
- A potential review of the range of Solent Go products more widely in response to changes in the bus market in Solent
- Implementation of Solent Go ticket price increases agreed by South Hampshire Bus Operators Association in spring 2023
- Work with Portsmouth City Council to explore the potential delivery of some of BSIP funded Portsmouth-specific ticketing products and fares via Breeze, potentially branded as Solent Go products.

Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC

42. Working jointly with Network Rail (who will lead this project) the next step in the Solent Connectivity project is creation of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) which will build upon the conclusions of the Solent Connectivity CMSP study (published May 2020) which is regarded as requiring only relatively moderate updates to function as a strategic case for the SOBC. The main activities for developing the SOBC will comprise:

- Updated timetable and economic modelling of a “long-list” of five interventions (based on an updated version of the five interventions assessed in more detail in the Solent Connectivity CMSP study) to identify timetable feasibility, infrastructure interventions, and the high level economic case for each intervention;
- Update order of magnitude cost estimates for interventions;
- SRTM model tests of a single preferred option selected from the “long list” assessment to provide a detailed economic case and detailed picture of where benefits and costs occur in order to set out a compliant economic case for interventions; and
- Consideration of matters required for the commercial, financial and management cases to a level required for an SOBC (eg rolling stock, traincrew, indicative procurement and financial strategy etc)

43. As well as Solent Transport’s core staff time allocations to resource our inputs to the development of this SOBC, the three mainland Solent LTAs have committed to jointly fund the SRTM model test(s) and support some marketing and communications activities for the publication of the SOBC.

Other areas of work

44. We will continue to work with DfT, National Highways, Network Rail, TfSE and other key partners to promote the Solent region’s best practice and lobby for better deals in transport funding.

45. Finally, we will continue to administer and co-ordinate the Solent Transport Joint Committee meetings, occasional Member briefings and Senior Management Board. There continues to be significant effort and resource being put in to driving down costs, income generation and meeting partners budgetary expectations, this will continue as discussed below.

Solent Transport staff approximate weekly allocation of days per week across projects

Estimated Average Resource Allocation in days per week	Solent Transport Core Staff Activity
1.7	Solent Transport high-level strategy development. This allocation is in addition to the additional resource (circa £85k) to procure consultancy support to provide dedicated capacity for this work.
1.0	SRTM ongoing Business As Usual client management, user advice/support & administration
0.5	<p>SRTM additional tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of funding options for required major upgrade (eg success fee) • Completion of journey time validation and reference case updates • Participation in HCC/TfSE future modelling study • Specification and preparation for procurement of major model update (in event of funding being secured)- or, activities in preparation for decommissioning SRTM without replacement in 2024 or 2025. <p>(SRTM total 1.5 days)</p>
3.0	Future Transport Zone time allocations from core staff- N.B: The FTZ programme budget is recharged for the cost of the additional resource above the match funding commitment.
1.4	Preparation of Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC (in partnership with Network Rail)

1.25	Solent Transport administration \ management time, including preparation for and actions associated with SMB and Joint Committee meetings
0.55	Time allowance to accommodate all other activities, in accordance with SMB priorities- includes: Solent Go and marketing (which will also receive FTZ support), liaison with stakeholders, Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Board, input to M27/M3 TDM project, Waterside Rail, TFSE engagement particularly in relation to Future Mobility and rail strategy, LEP, Freeport support etc.
0.6	Allowance for staff annual leave
10	TOTAL

The above time allocations do limit the resource that Solent Transport has available to undertake additional income generating activities in the coming year.

Financial/ budget implications

46. The present budget and contributions have remained fixed since 2013 at £190k reflecting the extended period of austerity faced by the Member Authorities. In real terms this represents a 47% reduction in budget since 2013. It is not proposed to increase contributions so they will remain as follows:
- Isle of Wight Council £20k
 - Hampshire County Council £90k
 - Portsmouth City Council £40k
 - Southampton City Council £40k
 - Total £190k
47. The Solent Transport core staff establishment stands at 2 FTE funded through the core budget. It should be noted that contributions now only make up enough to cover the staff budget only. This years costs for operational budgets for Solent Go, My Journey and for the Solent Transport Strategy commission are covered by the carried over balance from historic recovery of time recharges but these will be significantly reduced by the end of the business plan. Within the short to medium term it will be advisable to review the operating and financial model for Solent Transport and ensure it can operate on a sustainable financial basis beyond this business plan.