

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
Date:	24 October 2024
Title:	Rail Update & Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan
Report From:	Director of Hampshire 2050

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan for Hampshire's forty-eight rail stations, to update the Executive Member on rail issues at both local and national levels and to highlight the progress being made to improve accessibility and interchange facilities for passengers at Hampshire's rail stations.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves the Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan as a supplementary policy document to Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), as appended to this report.
3. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services notes the updates provided on rail industry issues at both local and national levels.

Executive Summary

4. Better public transport is a cornerstone of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan. This paper updates members on the work taking place within the context of rail, and highlights some of the key investments that have been made over the last few years.
5. This paper seeks approval for the Hampshire Rail Station Interchange Plan, a document that has been developed with rail industry partners including Hampshire's predominant rail operator South Western Railway (SWR) and defines a series of improvements at each of Hampshire's rail stations. As a supporting document to LTP4, the plan will open up potential funding opportunities from a variety of sources including developer funding and rail industry funding streams such as Access for All.
6. The paper highlights a number of examples where the County Council has been successful alongside its partners in securing external funding to deliver

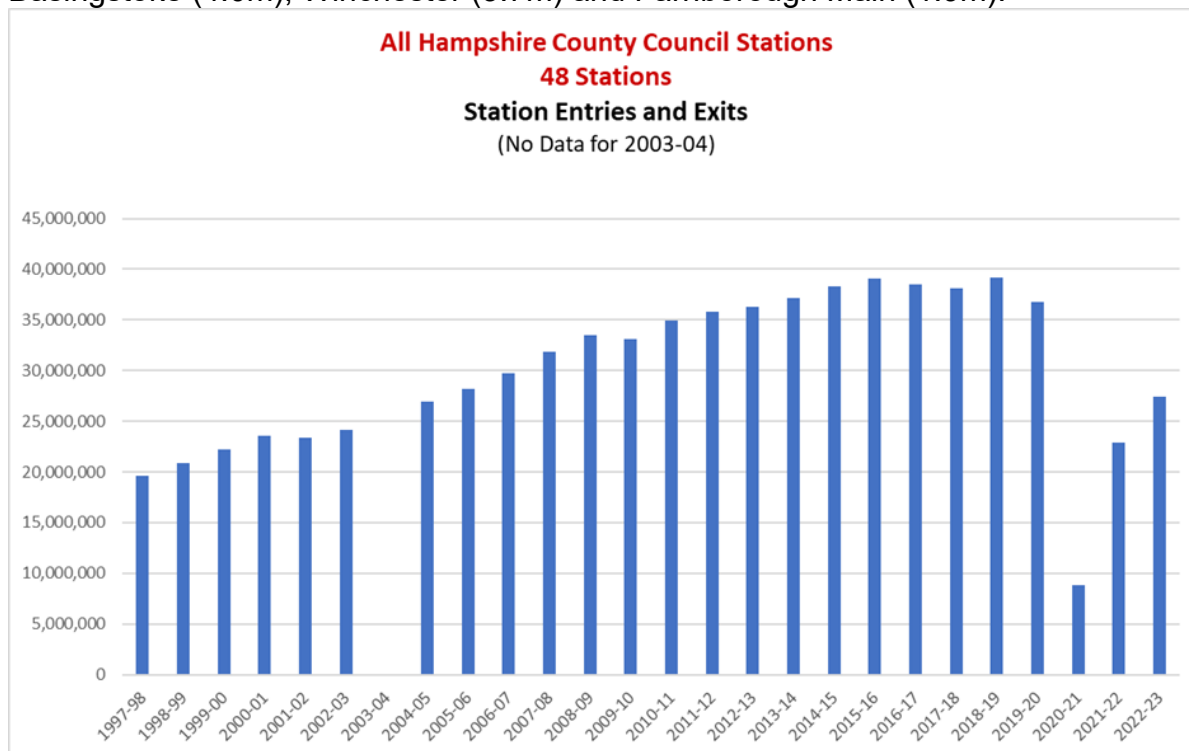
significant improvements to the county's public transport network, e.g. rail station access improvements and improvements to transport interchanges.

7. The paper also provides information on recent developments in the rail industry at both local and national levels.

Contextual information

8. The rail network in Hampshire plays an important role in transporting both passengers and freight and has the potential to contribute significantly to the delivery of LTP4. Improved rail services can facilitate major housing developments, stimulate sustainable economic growth and help to meet climate change objectives.
9. Whilst the County Council has no direct role in specifying franchise commitments for the four rail franchises operating in Hampshire (South Western Railway, Cross-Country, Great Western Railway and Southern), its role is to influence such decisions and to integrate rail into the rest of the transport system. The council has a long history of successful partnership working with rail providers and Network Rail to enhance access to rail stations. Hampshire County Council has been involved in Access for All schemes at a number of stations, the most recent being Totton, with more in the pipeline for feasibility studies funded by Access for All at Hedge End and Swanwick stations.
10. **Rail Industry Structure.** Since the early 1990s, the operation of the majority of passenger services on the national network has been through a franchise process. As a result of the Covid- 19 pandemic and its impact on rail passenger numbers, the Department for Transport (DfT) has replaced franchises with National Rail Contracts. These contracts remunerate operators with their costs plus 2% but the DfT now retains all revenue from ticket sales.
11. It is anticipated that in due course a new body, Great British Railways (GBR) will oversee the ownership, operation and maintenance of all rail infrastructure and will take responsibility for planning the network, setting timetables and fares, retaining all ticket revenue and specifying and awarding Passenger Service Contracts. It is not yet clear whether Local Transport Authorities or wider regional bodies such as Transport for the South East (TfSE) will have a greater say in local service specifications.
12. There are forty-eight rail stations in Hampshire. Additionally, there are eight in Southampton and five in Portsmouth. The four rail franchises in Hampshire are
 - South Western Railway, the predominant operator
 - Great Western Railway, which runs services between Portsmouth & Cardiff, Basingstoke & Reading, between Reading, Guildford, Redhill & Gatwick
 - GTR Southern runs services from Southampton to Brighton, from Portsmouth to Brighton and from Portsmouth to London Victoria
 - Cross Country operates services from Bournemouth to Manchester through Southampton Airport Parkway, Winchester & Basingstoke.
13. Rail freight services operate on an entirely commercial basis and are not specified centrally. This is not expected to change under the proposed new GBR structure.

14. **Rail Passenger Use in Hampshire.** In 2022/23, 27.5 million passenger journeys were recorded across Hampshire stations, an increase of 20% over 2021/22. However, this still represents a reduction of 30% compared to 2018/19, the last full year before the pandemic. Detailed station figures are not yet available for 2023/24, but national data suggests that there has been a further increase of 16%. The three busiest stations in Hampshire are Basingstoke (4.0m), Winchester (3.7m) and Farnborough Main (1.9m).



15. Travel patterns have changed as a result of the pandemic. Whilst the number of passenger journeys has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, far fewer journeys are made using season tickets, yet off-peak leisure travel is now higher than before the pandemic. This is reflective of a change in working patterns with more people working remotely and what appears to be a rise in use of rail for leisure journeys.

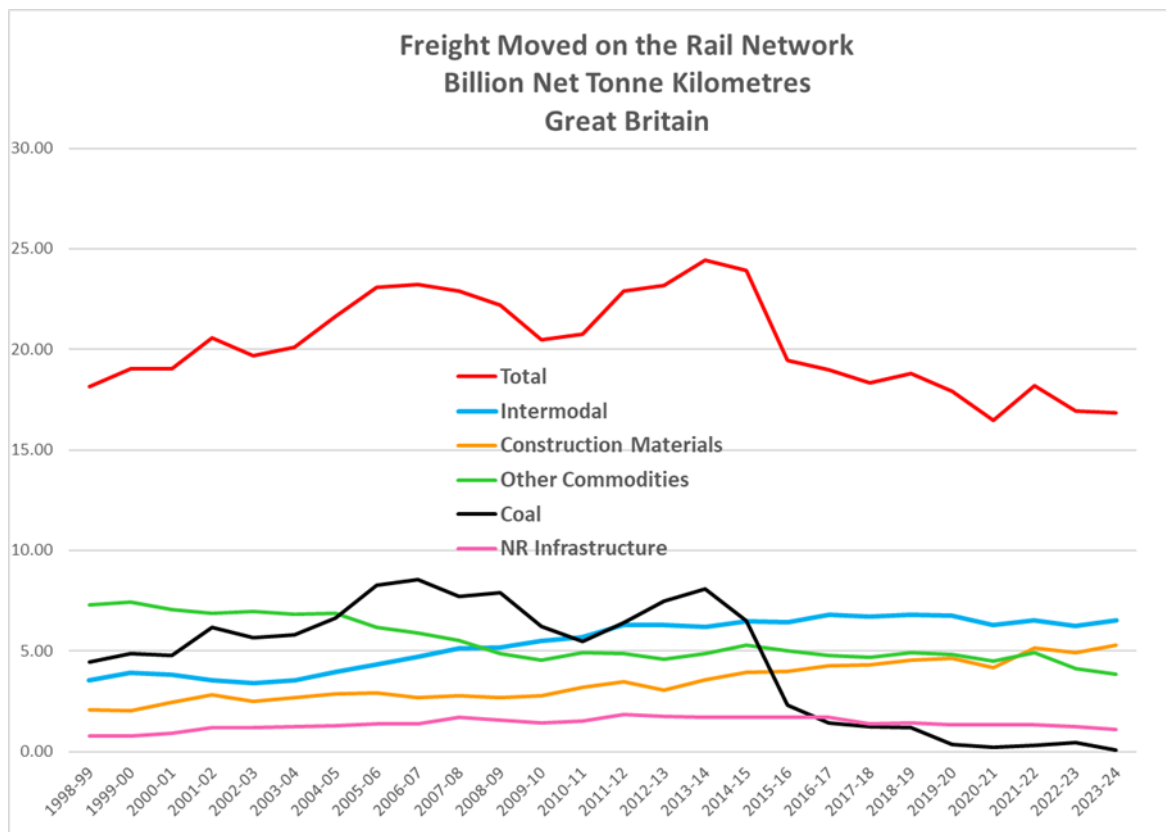
All Hampshire Stations (48)					
Usage By Ticket Type					
Ticket Type	Entries and Exits		Entries and Exits		% Change 18/19 to 22/23
	2018-2019	% of Total	2022-2023	% of Total	
Season	14,932,682	38.08%	5,099,106	18.59%	-65.85%
Full	9,473,290	24.16%	6,632,368	24.18%	-29.99%
Reduced	14,807,750	37.76%	15,700,304	57.23%	6.03%
Total:	39,213,722	100%	27,431,778	100%	-30.05%

16. As a result of the pandemic and reduced passenger loadings, a number of timetable reductions were implemented at Hampshire stations, including withdrawal of the 2-hourly Cross Country service that previously ran between Southampton & Newcastle and withdrawal of SWR's hourly stopping service between Poole & London Waterloo, which was replaced by a service between Bournemouth & Winchester only. The County Council will press for these services to be reinstated as passenger numbers return to pre-pandemic levels.

17. **Rail Connectivity Study in the Solent area.** The County Council is working in partnership with Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, Network Rail and South Western Railway to develop a business case for investment in better local rail services in the Solent area. The ultimate aspiration is to provide a train every fifteen minutes at each of the stations in the Solent area.
18. The project will look initially at the scope for improving frequencies on the Fareham – Southampton via Swanwick line (the Netley line), and on the Fareham to Eastleigh line (Botley Line), as well as at stations in the Portsmouth area. Detailed assessment will be carried out of several workstreams, including
 - Timetabling analysis
 - Infrastructure requirements (signalling, new platforms etc.)
 - Additional rolling stock requirements
 - Economic analysis
 - Station platform constraints
 - Reliability impacts of additional trains on the network
 - Potential funding options e.g. Railway Network Enhancement Pipeline, TfSE, Section 106 from housing developments.
19. The Solent area has a poor local rail offer compared to some other similar areas such as Brighton where local train frequencies are higher and therefore attract a higher mode share for rail. More attractive rail services in the Solent will help to mitigate road congestion, facilitate new development, deliver sustainable economic growth and improve access to services for many residents. The potential outcomes of this work are consistent with LTP4 policy objectives.
20. **Station Accessibility.** Twenty-two of Hampshire's stations have full step-free access. A further twenty-three are partially accessible and three (Botley, Shawford and Micheldever) are inaccessible, i.e. access to platforms is only via steps.
21. Since 2006, Government has made circa £900million available through the Access for All fund to improve station accessibility. In the latest round of funding, SWR in partnership with the County Council were successful in bids for Hedge End and Swanwick stations, which would make both stations fully accessible with lifts and a pedestrian footbridge between platforms, as has been delivered at stations including Aldershot, Southampton Airport Parkway, Winchester and Alton. More minor access improvements have also been recently implemented at Totton station.
22. **Restoring Your Railway Fund** The County Council was successful with its rail industry partners in securing £7million from DfT's Restoring Your Railway Fund which was announced in 2021. The funding was for developing a business case to re-open the Totton to Fawley branch line (Waterside line) to passenger services. However, in September 2024, DfT announced that Government will not be providing any further Restoring Your Railway funding, and that the business case for the Waterside rail scheme was not strong enough to warrant further investment.
23. **Rail Connectivity to Airports.** Parts of Hampshire enjoy direct rail connections to airports at Southampton, Gatwick and Birmingham. There is no direct rail

access to Heathrow from Hampshire. Two schemes are proposed to address this: Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLTH) and Southern Access to Heathrow (SATH).

24. WRLTH was designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project by the National Infrastructure Commission and planning by Network Rail was well advanced. It would have provided a new stretch of rail line from Heathrow connecting into the Great Western Main Line, enabling services from Heathrow to Reading. However, the project is currently inactive, the applicant having withdrawn their application.
25. SATH is considerably less developed with no agreed plans in place. The proposed scheme is to provide a rail connection from Heathrow Terminal 5 to the existing line from Staines to Windsor, providing access to Waterloo. An additional new stretch of line at Staines would enable trains to access the South-West Main Line, facilitating services to Heathrow from Hampshire.
26. **Rail Freight in Hampshire.** Rail freight plays a significant role in Hampshire, removing hundreds of thousands of lorry movements from the road network every year, thereby easing congestion and improving air quality. A typical freight train removes seventy-six lorries from the road. Every tonne of freight transported by rail is estimated to reduce carbon emissions by 76% compared to road haulage.
27. Nationally, rail freight has declined since 2014 almost exclusively due to coal no longer being used to generate electricity. However, the two commodities relevant to Hampshire (Construction Materials & Intermodal) have been growing steadily over the last twenty-five years. Intermodal refers to container traffic to and from the Port of Southampton. Up to thirty trains a day currently operate to and from destinations in South Wales, Midlands, North-West and Yorkshire. Continued growth is expected, particularly should the owner of Southampton Port Associated British Ports (ABP) come forward with plans to expand its operations on The Waterside.



28. Historically, up to seven automotive trains a day served Southampton Eastern docks, conveying cars from Jaguar Land Rover and Mini, with the import of some BMW cars. Given the uncertainty around car production in the UK, the likely extent of future automotive rail traffic is not known.
29. **Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan.** The Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan has been prepared with partners and stakeholders to identify current problems at rail interchanges and target interventions that will deliver seamless and accessible multi modal transport. The Plan is available in Appendix 1.
30. All forty-eight rail stations in Hampshire have been assessed, and the Plan details current levels of accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, onward connections by other modes (bus, taxi), passenger numbers, major trip generators, information provision (e.g. real time bus departure screens), planned development in the area and provision for car and cycle parking.
31. Within the document, stations are categorised according to use, including the twelve busiest stations, high passenger use stations, medium passenger use stations, and low passenger use stations. This approach will assist in developing funding bids and prioritisation of investment.
32. The Plan makes recommendations for improvements that would make stations easier to access, more attractive for passengers and provide better interchange between train and other transport modes. Indicative costs are provided along with the organisation responsible for delivering each element. These interventions range from low-cost measures such as additional cycle parking, through to improved footways in the vicinity of stations and higher cost improvements such as new bus interchange facilities and passenger lifts between platforms.

33. The Plan has been developed together with South Western Railway, and several stakeholder organisations have been consulted including Hampshire's other train operators, Community Rail Partnerships, district councils and National Park Authorities. South Western Railway have been particularly keen to work with the County Council to develop the Plan, as it represents the first countywide station investment plan of its kind that has been jointly-developed with the Local Transport Authority. SWR see this as an opportunity to replicate this joint approach with local authorities across the whole South Western franchise area.
34. It is important to stress that the Plan is a 'living' document and will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) as funding opportunities arise and schemes are delivered. It is also acknowledged that priorities may change, for example due to a significant new housing development or employment area being located close to a particular rail station where there may be opportunities to grow rail patronage.
35. **Track Record of Delivery.** The County Council has a very strong record of delivering public transport improvement schemes in partnership with both transport operators and neighbouring Local Transport Authorities. In addition to the station accessibility improvements identified at paragraph 21 above, further examples include the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) projects, a Government fund targeted at improving public transport links between city centres and their outlying areas. The County Council successfully partnered with Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight Councils to deliver a suite of transport improvements including interchange facilities at Gosport bus station (for Gosport ferry and Portsmouth Harbour rail station) and at Ryde interchange (Hovercraft, Wightlink FastCat, rail and bus).
36. A further success is the Solent Transport Future Transport Zone initiative, where the partners secured £28million of DfT funding to trial sustainable ways of transporting people and goods. This includes the Breeze 'Mobility as a Service' app which facilitates integrated public transport ticketing between bus and rail along with scooter and e-bike hire.

Finance

37. There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. The report sets out a series of measures to improve facilities at, and access to, all Hampshire's rail stations which if adopted as a supporting document to LTP4 will assist in securing funding to deliver these improvements.

Consultation and Equalities

38. Significant consultation with stakeholders has taken place through the development of Hampshire's draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4. Stakeholders and the public are clear that public transport should be a focus for the County Council's policies, supporting the principle of 'reducing dependence on the private car'.
39. The Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan has been developed together with South Western Railway, and several stakeholder organisations have been

consulted including Hampshire's other train operators, Community Rail Partnerships, district councils and National Park Authorities.

40. Accessibility and interchange improvements at rail stations will have a particularly positive outcome for those groups who are statistically more frequent users of public transport including younger and older people, women, those with the protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity and those on lower incomes. It is considered to have a neutral impact on those with other protected characteristics.
41. 18.9% of households in Hampshire have no access to a car or van. Considering this, there is a need to support the most socially excluded residents who are disproportionately represented as public transport users, through investing in improved access to public transport services.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

42. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
43. As this report does not deal specifically with approval to implement specific schemes, the climate change tools will be utilised as and when funding is available and individual schemes or packages of schemes come forward for Executive Member approval.

Carbon Mitigation

44. Through making the rail network more attractive and accessible, there is strong potential to increase the modal share of journeys made by public transport and decrease the number of private car journeys.

Conclusions

45. The recommendations within this report are consistent with the policy objectives of LTP4 and will contribute to Hampshire's Climate Change Strategy and the County Council's aims of promoting strong and resilient economic growth and enabling people to live safe, healthy, independent lives.
46. Adoption of the Rail Station Interchange Improvement Plan as a supporting document to LTP4 will formalise the partnership work that has been undertaken with the rail industry into a shared investment programme, for which funding can be sought to improve access to, and facilities at Hampshire's rail stations.

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:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
Adoption of Local Transport Plan 4-2024-02-06-Cabinet (hants.gov.uk)	<u>Date</u> 6 February 2024
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
	<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.)

Document

Location

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:

Accessibility and interchange improvements at rail stations will have a particularly positive outcome for those groups who are statistically more frequent users of public transport including younger and older people, women, those with the protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity and those on lower incomes. 18.9% of households in Hampshire have no access to a car or van. Considering this, there is a need to support the most socially excluded residents who are disproportionately represented as public transport users, through investing in improved access to public transport services.