

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Highways Operations
Date:	29 July 2021
Title:	Project Appraisal: Eastleigh Area Bus Infrastructure Works
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide detail and seek approval to implement the outlined programme of bus infrastructure works in and around Eastleigh.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Highways Operations approves the Project Appraisal for the Eastleigh Area Public Transport Infrastructure Works as outlined in this report subject to approval being granted to add the scheme to the Capital Programme.
3. That approval be given to spend and enter into contractual arrangements to implement the proposed improvements to the Eastleigh area public transport infrastructure as set out in this report, at an estimated cost of £415,742 to be funded from Section 106 funding, held by the County Council for this purpose, as set out in the finance section of the report.
4. That authority to make the arrangements to implement the scheme, including minor variations to the design, be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.

Executive Summary

5. This project appraisal proposes the allocation of £415,742 of Section 106 funding to be used to improve the infrastructure along several bus corridors in the wider Eastleigh area.
6. This is a pilot project utilising Section 106 funding on local bus infrastructure. Once completed, this project will be evaluated with a view to similar infrastructure schemes being rolled out around the County where Section 106 funding is available.

7. The proposed works will focus on delivering accessibility improvements, better access to information, and improved passenger waiting facilities. These are all key elements in achieving the vision set out in the Government's National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better. The Government has asked Local Transport Authorities to "consider the impact of roadside infrastructure (e.g., bus stops and shelters) on passenger safety, security and accessibility" within their Bus Service Improvement Plans.
8. This package of works has been designed to deliver infrastructure improvements that have low lifetime maintenance costs whilst being targeted to promote passenger growth.
9. There are proven links between investment in infrastructure and bus patronage and revenue growth. A contemporary national survey conducted by the TAS Partnership revealed that 23.1% of respondents viewed improvements in information provision as being necessary to encourage bus usage.
10. In addition to the above, there are clear links between a perceived safe waiting environment and a willingness to travel using public transport.

Contextual Information

11. Over recent years, Hampshire County Council has played a key role in providing high quality infrastructure across Hampshire to promote bus service provision and growth.
12. Where funding has been available or through initiatives such as Quality Bus Partnerships, Hampshire has benefited from improvements to much of its bus infrastructure resulting in a better offer for passengers.
13. The County Council holds Section 106 funding from developments around the county specifically to mitigate the impact of development on the local area for example through funding for transport related improvement schemes.
14. As a result, the Council has developed a project; Eastleigh Area Bus Infrastructure works which brings together Section 106 funding from a number of sites and proposes their use on improving bus related infrastructure in accordance with the terms and conditions under which the Section 106 funding was collected.
15. This work would be carried out by Externiture through Hampshire County Council's bus stop and shelter infrastructure framework.
16. The proposed project is made up of five key elements; X6/X7 infrastructure improvements, Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) provision, accessibility of bus stops, bus shelter improvements and provision and improvements to general bus stop infrastructure.
17. Improvements to X6/X7 service bus stop infrastructure:

- the X6 and X7 bus services, operated by Xelabus provide a vital hourly link between Hiltingbury and Eastleigh centre, via Chandler's Ford. This service is part supported by Hampshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council and part operated on a commercial basis;
- the route through Chandler's Ford on Winchester Road has been upgraded over the past twenty years but little provision has been made through the central section of the service; and
- this project proposes to upgrade bus stop infrastructure, together with making accessibility improvements at up to 25 bus stops.

18. Real Time Passenger Information:

- 69 bus stops in the area have RTPI displays, concentrated mainly in Chandler's Ford, Bishopstoke, central Eastleigh and Hedge End;
- to date, bus stops in the south and east of Eastleigh Borough do not have RTPI displays;
- through consultation with bus operators, two geographical areas have been identified which would benefit from the provision of RTPI at key bus stops. These are the stops around Bursledon and Hamble and Horton Health to Botley; and
- bus stops on the Bluestar 1 and 2 routes were not considered as part of this programme because of the existing level of provision, and because these services may be improved as part of the Transforming Cities Fund programme.

19. Accessibility of Stops:

- no complete figures are available for accessibility at bus stops. However, a survey from 2015 by Eastleigh Borough Council produced recommendations for improvements on specific routes. Further work commissioned by the County Council and carried out by Externiture, has also identified sections of routes where accessibility improvements are required.

20. Bus Shelters Provision and Improvements:

- bus shelters are a vital part of the public transport offering. Shelter provision in Eastleigh is good, with around 30% (218) of bus stops having a shelter. This is higher than the county average. The locations of the shelters are not evenly distributed, and this project proposes to enhance passenger waiting facilities through the provision of new and improved shelters;
- the 218 shelters within the borough are owned by a mix of parish, borough, and private companies. Standards of shelters are mixed.

Surveys of shelters indicate that whilst a significant proportion are categorised as being in an acceptable to excellent condition, the remainder are below average. There are a small number of shelters that may require replacement; and

- in addition, there are up to 10 shelters identified by the County Council that are now off-route and require reinstallation at alternative locations.

21. Improvements to general bus stop infrastructure:

- bus stop infrastructure, including posts, flags and cases are owned and maintained by Hampshire County Council;
- there are 693 bus stops in the Eastleigh borough. 275 of these stops have been upgraded to premium integrated bus stop posts which have higher standards of information and space availability, many of which were installed as part of a previous Quality Bus Partnership;
- the programme for bus stop infrastructure proposes to focus on the installation of high quality integrated bus stop posts with aluminium cases and flags for longevity and low maintenance costs. The provision of timetable cases would expand the opportunity for bus operators to provide printed timetable information for passengers. Information provision has been identified by the Government as a key area for improvement through the National Bus Strategy;
- the programme of works proposes to include the provision of QR code signs that would allow passengers to access Real Time Information for the bus stop on a mobile device; and
- to date, the QR code programme in Hampshire has over 3,000 bus stops with QR codes. Since 2014, over 187,000 hits have been recorded, of which 38,229 were from the 168 bus stops in the Eastleigh area with QR codes. It is anticipated that QR usage will grow as passengers return to public transport because QR code benefits have now become understood.

Finance

22. In total, this project proposes a spend of £415,742.

23. Information on how this funding will be utilised can be found in the scheme details below.

Estimates	£'000	% of Total	Funds Available	£'000
Final design & delivery	416	100%	Developer Contribution	416

Total 416 100% 416

24.	<u>Maintenance Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	1	0.001%
	Capital Charge	40	0.025%

Programme

25. The table below sets out the proposed programme of works.

Date	Action
Approval – end of August	Mobilisation
September – end of October	Remaining detailed design and utilities checks
November – end of December*	Works carried out

* dependent on external factors such as the weather and demand on the highway.

Scheme Details

26. X6/X7 Route Infrastructure upgrades:

- the allocated spend for these upgrades is £38,000;
- it is proposed that a full survey of the accessibility of the infrastructure will be undertaken prior to works commencing; and
- it is anticipated that following this survey, there will be approximately 50 sites identified where works are required. These works would consist of targeted accessibility improvements in addition to wider stop and information improvements.

27. Real Time Passenger Information

- the allocated spend for the upgrade of RTPI is £83,000. This sum would allow for the provision, installation, and maintenance of fifteen battery powered RTPI displays. These would be mounted on a mix of posts and shelters. Existing infrastructure will be used for the displays where possible to minimise capital expenditure; and
- battery-operated RTPI displays would be fitted. The displays are cost-efficient as they do not require electrical connections and are designed

to retrofit existing posts and shelters in Hampshire to reduce installation costs.

28. Accessibility

- the allocated spend for the upgrade is £142,017. This will allow for a wide range of accessibility improvements including up to 40 bus stops to be provisioned with accessible kerbs and improved waiting areas;
- if the project is approved, existing survey data will be updated to examine access from the footway to the bus, access to the footway, and access to suitable crossing points;
- this survey data would then be cross referenced against accessibility improvements which have been identified by bus operators. Whilst specific locations cannot be agreed until the survey data is updated, the key locations for improvement are anticipated to be along the X9/Bluestar 3 routes through Boorley Green and Horton Heath, as well as high visibility accessibility improvements at The Square, Hamble, which is a heavily used stop and has very low kerb access; and
- individual schemes such as The Square, Hamble, would require detailed design and costing separately. It is anticipated that there will be sufficient funding available within the £142,017 to deliver these schemes. If, upon design and costing this proves not to be the case alternative funding sources will be explored.

29. Bus Shelter Improvements

- the allocated spend for the upgrade is £88,025. The cost per individual shelter depends on the specification per location. This sum would allow for the provision of 15-20 shelters as detailed below;
- the shelter installation package would require a final detailed survey of existing shelters and potential locations to finalise the list of sites where work will be undertaken. Shelters that are repairable would be costed to maximise the usage of existing infrastructure;
- it is estimated that this project would replace around 5% of the 20% of shelters that have been graded as being in below average or poor condition. These would be prioritised based on passenger usage;
- if approved, an additional 15 to 20 shelters may also be provided to improve access to covered waiting facilities;
- shelters would only be installed in locations where agreement on ownership with Eastleigh Borough or the local Parish Council could be reached;

- prior to new shelters being installed, or improvements being made to existing shelters, an agreement would be put in place between the County Council and the shelter owner e.g. Borough or Parish Council to confirm that the responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the shelter rests with the owner; and
- new shelters would have an integrated maintenance package included. The shelters would be fabricated from aluminium and have a twenty-year guarantee to protect owners from liabilities.

30. Bus Stop Infrastructure

- the allocated spend for the upgrade is £64,700;
- The package would allow for the removal of older steel posts and replacement of approximately 80 modern, low-maintenance integrated post units. Case sizes would be standardised, and the size of cases expanded. Standardisation would reduce operator costs for generating timetables; and
- as part of the proposed upgrade, it is anticipated that 280 more QR signs would be fitted and added to the QR system.

Departures from Standards

31. None.

Consultation and Equalities

32. Direct consultation has been carried out with local bus operators in the area.
33. The views of disability groups, understood through research carried out by Eastleigh Borough Council, have been considered in the preparation of the package of works which sit within the project.
34. This project will provide better access to public transport for all. Survey data tells us that public bus services are predominately used by people with the following protected characteristics; older people, young people, women, people with a disability, people living in poverty, people from a BAME background and those isolated through rurality. Information at bus stops, waiting facilities and access to bus stops have been identified as barriers to increasing public transport use. The proposed works will remove these barriers in the areas that works are implements, with the goal of generating more passenger journeys. This in turn could lead to bus operators investing in their fleet to provide better vehicles and an altogether more accessible public transport proposition. The works would therefore have a positive impact on people with these characteristics.

35. The impact has been assessed as being neutral for the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage/civil partnership because there is no evidence that suggests that people with these characteristics use public transport any more or less than the general population.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

36. 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.
37. The climate change adaptation project screening tool has been used for this project and has identified;
- a) Key vulnerabilities are exposure of infrastructure to extreme weather events. Continuity of service through emergency maintenance is provided for within the bus stop and bus shelter framework agreement resulting in a low impact to users of public transport services. In addition, careful consideration is given to the positioning of new infrastructure which minimises the potential impact of extreme weather events.
 - b) This decision links to the following Hampshire County Council strategic priorities:
 - i. Green Economic Growth and Prosperity;
 - ii. Improved Wellbeing and Health; and
 - iii. Community Inclusivity.
38. The climate change mitigation tool was not completed because emissions for this type of project are not included within the tool.

Statutory Procedures

39. Externiture will acquire the necessary permits to work on the highway prior to works being carried out.

Land Requirements

40. None.

Maintenance Implications

41. The maintenance costs on bus stop and RTPi infrastructure arising from these works will be low and met by the existing Bus Stop Infrastructure and RTPi revenue budgets.

LTP3 Priorities and Policy Objectives

3 Priorities

- To support economic growth by ensuring the safety, soundness and efficiency of the transport network in Hampshire
- Provide a safe, well maintained and more resilient road network in Hampshire
- Manage traffic to maximise the efficiency of existing network capacity, improving journey time reliability and reducing emissions, to support the efficient and sustainable movement of people and goods

14 Policy Objectives

- Improve road safety (through delivery of casualty reduction and speed management)
- Efficient management of parking provision (on and off street, including servicing)
- Support use of new transport technologies (e.g. Smartcards; RTI; electric vehicle charging points)
- Work with operators to grow bus travel and remove barriers to access
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- Support community transport provision to maintain 'safety net' of basic access to services
- Improve access to rail stations, and improve parking and station facilities
- Provide a home to school transport service that meets changing curriculum needs
- Improve co-ordination and integration between travel modes through interchange improvements
- Apply 'Manual for Streets' design principles to support a better balance between traffic and community life
- Improve air quality
- Reduce the need to travel, through technology and Smarter Choices measures

- Promote walking and cycling to provide a healthy alternative to the car for short local journeys to work, local services or school
- Develop Bus Rapid Transit and high quality public transport in South Hampshire, to reduce car dependence and improve journey time reliability
- Outline and implement a long term transport strategy to enable sustainable development in major growth areas

Other

- This scheme would contribute to the objectives as set out in Bus Back Better, the National Bus Strategy.

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

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 protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are 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 in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

2.1 This project will provide better access to public transport for all. Survey data tells us that public bus services are predominately used by people with the following protected characteristics; older people, young people, women, people with a disability, people living in poverty, people from a BAME background and those isolated through rurality. Information at bus stops, waiting facilities and access to bus stops have been identified as barriers to increasing public transport use. The proposed works will remove these barriers with the goal of generating more passenger journeys. This in turn could lead to bus operators investing in their fleet to provide better vehicles and an altogether more accessible public transport proposition. The works would therefore have a positive impact on people with these characteristics.

2.2 The impact has been assessed as being neutral for the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage/civil partnership because there is no evidence that suggests that people with these characteristics use public transport any more or less than the general population.