

2007 Transport Monitoring Report

Solent Transport Strategy



Transport for South Hampshire

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Partnership Working

South Hampshire, from Southampton to the West Sussex boundary, has been identified by the government as a 'growth area'. The Councils in the sub-region are co-ordinating the delivery of this growth through the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH).

The Solent Transport Strategy has been approved and adopted as the transport strategy for the area. It formed part of Hampshire County Council's (HCC), Portsmouth City Council's (PCC) and Southampton City Council's (SCC) second Local Transport Plans. The Strategy recognises that meeting the future transport needs of some one million people is a shared responsibility for the Councils that serve them.

In 2007 the three councils responsible for transport in the area established Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) as the framework to direct the funding and development of the sub-region. TfSH has been empowered to make representations and take decisions on behalf of all three authorities. It is fundamental to the Solent Transport Strategy that the councils, transport providers and government departments work together to provide a transport network that can deliver economic growth and improved quality of life. This partnership is the delivery mechanism for PUSH.

South East Plan

The Solent Transport Partnership was invited to be represented at the Examination in Public (EiP) for the South East Plan held in Chichester on the 15 – 18th January 2007. Richard Soper, Regional Director, First Group attended on behalf of the Partnership and gave a statement to the EiP on behalf of the key private stakeholders.

It was stated that the Solent Transport Partnership recognised and supported the work that had gone into preparing an implementation plan for the sub-region, although it was felt that South Hampshire had not been well served with transport investment in recent years. The Partnership would support and assist the delivery of the South-East Plan in South Hampshire on the basis of the Reduce – Manage – Invest principle with one proviso: that the Implementation Plan must be

accompanied by a commitment to provide the necessary investment to deliver the plan, thereby ensuring a satisfactory quality of life for existing communities and preventing damage to the local and national economy.

Evidence was then presented in respect of three queries posed by the EiP Panel:

1. A question on infrastructure requirements for growth proposals.
2. Are Implementation Plan proposals clear, justified and well related to the spatial strategy – what are the priorities?
3. Effectiveness of implementation proposals – should a tariff-based approach be applied to all new development in the sub-region?

The Partnership offered a robust response on these three points and Mr Soper's presence as representing neither a public body or narrow interest group was welcomed by the Inspector.

Growth Points Funding

During 2006 – 2007, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced the creation of a new fund intended to promote economic development and facilitate the construction of new residential areas that might not otherwise be implemented because of a lack of suitable funding streams. This 'Growth Points Fund', was particularly targeted at Growth Areas such as South Hampshire. A number of bids were submitted by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire. Several of these were successful in being allocated funding.

The total volume of the agreed bids for South Hampshire was some £3.554 million of which £2.675 million was capital and £879,000 revenue. The approved schemes ranged from major town centre improvements at Fareham and Havant to feasibility studies and outline designs for junction improvement schemes in Southampton. The schemes are all programmed for delivery during 2007 – 2008. A further round of scheme bids is currently being produced in the expectation that another allocation will be forthcoming in the current financial year.

South Hampshire Strategic Transport Studies

On behalf of Transport for South Hampshire, Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council are undertaking three major transport studies in the Solent area. The studies, which are being substantially funded by SEERA, DCLG and the DfT, will demonstrate the deliverability of schemes and proposals to be submitted to the Regional Assembly in summer 2008. The results will help to shape the transport infrastructure in the area for many years to come.

The studies will identify and investigate congestion, safety, operational and environmental problems and demonstrate the effectiveness and deliverability of the measures proposed.

The first study will examine the case for major transport investment in the M3 / M27 Winchester – Southampton corridor, specifically sections of the M3 and M27 from junction 9 on the M3 to Junctions 2-8 on the M27.



The second study will address access to South East Hampshire. The main focus is on mass transit in South East Hampshire and access to Portsmouth. Part of this study will investigate improving access to Gosport. This will build on work already started to develop an affordable alternative to the South Hampshire Rapid Transit and include:

- consideration of improvement along the A32
- links to the rail network and ferries
- the western access to Gosport – including the Stubbington Bypass and access to M27 Junction 9 and
- access to the proposed North Fareham Strategic Development Area (SDA)

The third study will look at the key transport approaches to Southampton focussing on access to Southampton from the east and west. The eastern access to Southampton will include the role and operation of M27 Junctions 7-9, the proposed North Hedge End Strategic Development Area, Botley Bypass, Windhover Park & Ride and links into Southampton and the airport. The western access to Southampton will consider access from the Waterside and the New Forest as well as the case for the Lyndhurst Bypass.

These studies, which will report at the end of 2007, will also help inform the development of the planning authorities' Local Development Frameworks.

Bus Rapid Transit

Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council are investigating the opportunities for bus based Rapid Transit. Peter Brett Associates were appointed in May 2007 to investigate, as part of a wider study, the case for high quality vehicles to operate a network of limited stop services. These would be based on interchanges with local bus services and key destinations. There would be supporting measures to assure reliability of services such as bus lanes, priority at traffic signals and the use of on-vehicle real time location data to inform passenger information systems at bus stops and bus stations.

A3 Bus Priority Corridor

The Integrated A3 Bus Priority Corridor is a major public transport corridor scheme from Portsmouth City Centre north to Clanfield. This £32 million scheme is being part funded by the Department for Transport and delivered through a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Havant Borough and East Hampshire District Councils, Hampshire Constabulary and the bus operators First Hampshire and Dorset. Construction started in 2001 and is due to be substantially complete by March 2008. By improving service reliability and frequency and the quality of facilities bus travel will be better able to compete as a viable alternative to car travel.

The majority of the corridor is outside the City Centre along the route of the former A3 trunk road which passing through residential and retail areas. To limit the amount of disruption during construction the project has been implemented in phases. Waterlooville town centre, phase three of five along the route was completed in 2006 - 2007. A bus-only link along a route previously open to all vehicles has been created. This maintains passenger access to the heart of the town while removing the problems associated with through traffic. Significant pedestrian improvements have been included as part of the project as well as high quality environmental improvements in the southern end of the town. These works are helping to regenerate this area by extending the car-free environment enjoyed for decades in the north end of the town.

In Portsmouth, 2006 saw agreement reached with the local stakeholders of the North End (Portsmouth) shopping area to introduce a southbound bus lane area in London Road for a distance of approximately 350 metres, on the eastern side of the road. This is a further extension to a bus lane that has incrementally been introduced along this principal bus route in Portsmouth.

This bus lane has brought the benefit of not only improving bus journey times on the southern leg of the A3 route but also provides a safety buffer for pedestrians between the narrow footway and the main body of traffic. An additional advantage is that as the general traffic is travelling further away from the pedestrians, an improvement is experienced in air quality and the environment in general.

Significant consultation has been undertaken during the preparation of all phases of the route. In Hampshire particularly, this has been more demanding than expected and has taken longer to complete. In order to regain some programme slippage, both phases four and five north of Waterlooville have had extensive advanced works and statutory undertaker's diversions during 2006 - 2007. These are now being capitalised upon in 2007 - 2008 so that two areas of the corridor can be completed at the same time. The design for Cowplain, the last element of the route and the link between phases four and five, has now been completed. All significant road works should be finished by the end of March 2008.

The project remains on budget with a very high quality product being delivered. The partnership has developed shared ZIP branding. This is being used for bus livery, street furniture, marketing and advertising. ZIP has become a single, unified product for the public. Real Time Passenger Information will be installed along the route later this year, closed circuit television surveillance is already helping to deter vandalism and improve the sense of security on the corridor. While the impact of the road works make it difficult to measure the true advantages and effectiveness of the corridor they should start to become apparent next year when all works have been completed and First have launched a new fleet of more frequent vehicles.



Solent Travelcard

The success of the Solent Travelcard multi-operator bus ticket, introduced in 2004, has encouraged dialogue with the rail operators with a view to expanding the scheme to offer rail travel across the sub-region. Following the award of the South Western Rail franchise to South West Trains (Stagecoach) it is hoped to make this new multi-modal ticket available from winter 2007.

In October 2006 the three transport authorities commissioned the MVA Consultancy to investigate the feasibility of developing Solent Travelcard to include coastal and Isle of Wight ferries. The longer term objective is to develop the Travelcard as a Smartcard. The consultants reported on a number of Smartcard schemes currently in use across the UK. These generally are related solely to multi-operator bus use. Technology and infrastructure is currently developing very rapidly and for the moment Transport for South Hampshire is taking a cautious approach to implementation across the sub-region. Southampton City Council has, however been developing a multi-function Smartcard as the platform for its concessionary fares scheme. The consultants view was that this could form the basis for an expanded Smartcard scheme in the future.

Concessionary Fares

A new free bus pass for both people over 60 and those with certain disabilities has replaced the previous half-fare pass. As a result there has been a significant increase in the take up of the pass. In 2006 - 2007 an increase of 60%, nearly 6,000 additional passes was recorded in Portsmouth with a 2.2% increase in bus patronage, equivalent to an extra quarter of a million bus journeys. In Southampton, there were an extra 925,000 journeys; representing a 5.3% increase in patronage with the increase in passes issued being 7.4%.

Solent Rail Group

The Solent Rail Group is a topic related working group of TfSH. This informal partnership comprises representatives of the local authorities in South Hampshire, Network Rail, the Train

and Freight Operating Companies and the Department for Transport. The Group's objective is to foster an integrated approach to the future development of the rail network in South Hampshire by aligning the respective strategies of the rail industry, and regional and local government.

The group seeks to formulate a shared set of objectives and outcomes for future investment to meet the needs of the South Hampshire sub-region by engaging key players from the respective industries. Prioritised schemes will be developed and pursued by joint technical studies to the point at which they can be developed as business cases for implementation.

The Solent Rail Group will support the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and the Transport for South Hampshire Executive as the key means for capturing a strategic overview from all sides of the rail industry with a view to delivering the objectives of the South East Plan.

South West Trains Franchise Renewal

The South Western Franchise combines the previous South West Trains and Island Line franchises, and runs services from London Waterloo to Woking, Basingstoke, Southampton, Portsmouth, Exeter, Reading, Bournemouth, Weymouth, Guildford, and Salisbury with the Island Line operating between Ryde Pierhead and Shanklin. The new franchise will look to deliver a comprehensive package of train, station and security investment, further improved performance, increased capacity, state of the art ticketing options and a range of other customer benefits.

Key areas include a significant increase in capacity with 21% more mainline peak seats and a 20% increase in peak suburban capacity. A rolling stock cascade throughout the South West Trains network will achieve this.

There will be investment in major station refurbishment at 14 large stations (including Southampton Central) and £40m investment in core station improvements, including subways, lighting, waiting rooms, booking halls, toilets, shelters and seats at all 185 stations.

Other areas of improvements include additional ticketing facilities, automatic gates, CCTV on all trains and at all stations, 2000 extra car park spaces plus an extension of the number of secure station status to cover 80% of all passenger movements.

South West Trains has developed a very positive working relationship with Southampton City Council and as a result, improvements have been undertaken at Southampton Central station; a better forecourt, a new London-bound waiting room and a new entrance canopy. This station has also benefited from new street lighting and banners on the approach from the city centre. Other improvements include additional cycle storage facilities.

Major improvements at Swaythling Station have been possible through bringing a range of other partners on board. Ongoing discussions for other Southampton area stations, have identified possible future opportunities.

Rail Gauge Enhancement

TfSH has continued to lobby for early implementation for the gauge enhancement of the rail route from Southampton to the West Midlands. This is required to enable the larger 9' 6"



Photo: Phil Marshall

standard containers to be carried on existing rail vehicles, thus increasing the capacity of individual trains and maximising the proportion of container traffic that can be carried by rail.

Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council are both members of the project group tasked with bringing this to fruition. Current indications are that the proposed scheme is highly likely to attract funding from the DfT's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) enabling works to start on site in 2008.

Rail Freight (Portsmouth)

A potential alternative to road transportation for some freight passing through the Ferry Port has been identified. The Port's freight development strategy now includes the introduction of an intermodal (rail / road) freight service between Portsmouth and the North West of England and, and from there, a possible multimodal route to Scotland. Two miles south east of the Port land at Fratton Goods Yard has been protected for future rail freight use since the privatisation of the Railways in the 1980's.

Until recently the site had been considered to be too small to run a train of a commercially feasible length and was too constrained to allow further expansion in the future. However an opportunity was identified to switch some freight to / from the Port from road to rail. The Fratton site is currently being upgraded using EU money from ERDF through Interreg IIIb. This is being match funded by Portsmouth City Council; the first train is due to run in late 2007.

International Gateways

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) identifies three locations in South Hampshire as 'International Gateways': these are Southampton International Airport and the Ports of Portsmouth and Southampton. The Eddington Report identified the importance to the UK as a whole of these Gateways and outlined the need to ensure that sufficient investment is available to enable them to function effectively.

Southampton International Airport continues to grow both in absolute passenger numbers and the range of destinations served. Developing improved links between the airport and the wider transport network will be an important task for TfSH.

The Port of Southampton is pursuing an ambitious growth strategy with freight (especially containers) and cruise liner (nearing a million passengers per annum with a fifth terminal scheduled to open by the end of 2008) businesses expected to reach record levels over the next few years. As a result, particular pressures are likely to be experienced at Dock Gate 4 (for Eastern Docks access) and Dock Gate 20 (main vehicle access to Southampton Container Terminals). Engineering studies are currently being progressed for improvements at both these locations (the Dock Gate 4 access study is funded by DCLG Growth Point monies) and major improvements will need to be undertaken over the next four – ten years.

The Port of Portsmouth continues to provide a wide range of passenger and freight ferry services to continental Europe and the Channel Islands. Brittany Ferries has regular services to Caen, Cherbourg and St Malo. The newly arrived operator LD Lines provides a service to Le Havre. The Channel Islands continue to be served by Condor Ferries. P&O Ferries maintain a presence in Portsmouth with a service to Bilbao.

The Port continues to have an important role for freight between the UK and mainland Europe. In the year to 31 December 2005 283,735 freight units passed through the Continental Ferry Port.

Local Gateways - Improving Cross Solent links

Ports Inquiry

The Isle of Wight Council recognises the importance of maintaining and improving cross Solent connections for the movement of all imported and exported goods, personal travel and as a major factor on the socio – economic development and economic prosperity of the Island.

Concerns have been expressed that growth in this area has the potential to place undue pressure on the local transport infrastructure on both sides of the Solent and the Isle of Wight Council have recently carried out a Ports Inquiry so as to understand existing and potential usage and how this can be managed and accommodated in the future.

The Inquiry was carried out using extensive and wide ranging consultation which included Solent Transport partners as key stakeholders. Others involved included the transport operators, the Island's Quality Transport Partnership, Natural England, AONB colleagues and local harbour authorities.

The resulting conclusions have highlighted the importance of maintaining and improving the existing services and have identified a range of possible future options, including encouraging investment necessary to improve the efficiency of existing operations and opportunities for new routes and services.

The findings will be shared with partners in TfSHand used to inform the development of future plans and policies including the Island's Local Transport Plan and emerging Local Development Framework (Island Plan).



Ryde Interchange

Work on the £6.2m Ryde Interchange has progressed well this year. When completed this new building will improve interchange between a wide range of transport modes including, bus, rail, fast ferry and hovercraft. Tenders were received in January 2007 and after a period of value engineering a preferred contractor was selected.

The Isle of Wight Council was pleased to announce that Southampton based civil engineering and construction specialist Dyer and Butler have been selected as the principal contractor.

Subject to Final financial approval being granted by the DfT, the Council is hopeful to commence work on site in September 2007. The contact period will be for a period of 60 weeks and completion is anticipated by October 2008.

Further information can be found on the project's dedicated web site – www.rydeinterchange.com/

Hovertravel

Changes to be made to the landing apron at Portsmouth will enable the new BHT130 hovercraft to be brought into operation between Portsmouth and Ryde this summer. As well as increasing capacity from the present 90 to 130 seats, the larger craft will be able to operate in more adverse weather conditions improving reliability of the service, particularly in the winter.

Cycle Parking at Stations and Selected Key Destinations

Increasing levels of cycling in the Solent Transport area would bring a number of benefits. Substituting cycling for some short car journeys would help reduce congestion and improve air quality. Cycling is also an excellent form of exercise, easily integrated into a normal daily routine that can help to reduce obesity and heart disease.

All local transport authorities are required to submit to government an 'annualised index' of cycling trips, based on traffic counts. To supplement this and provide a Solent-wide indicator, the three Councils are also carrying out annual counts of cycle parking at key locations.

Cycle / rail integration has considerable potential to reduce unnecessary use of cars by extending the catchment of railway stations. Each May cycles parked at staffed stations across the sub-Region are counted to monitor changes in this multi-modal travel choice.

Cycle parking at Stations

	2005	2006	2007
Hampshire	146	173	176
Portsmouth	82	85	86
Southampton	93	102	138
Total	321	360	400

The Councils wish to see the vitality and prosperity of their traditional city and local centres maintained, ensuring easy access to a wide range of shops and services for everyone. Such centres enable people to travel less and by more sustainable modes. Counts of cycles in a sample of these centres each May provides information on changes in the numbers of cycles parked and helps identify where there is an unmet demand for secure cycle parking. This will enable resources to be directed to areas of greatest need, helping to reduce cycle crime which can deter some people from cycling.

Cycle parking at selected centres

	2005	2006	2007
Hampshire	369	401	389
Portsmouth	165	158	155
Southampton	126	131	90
Total	660	690	634

Safer Roads Partnership

2006 - 2007 saw the final year of the Safety Camera Partnership in its original guise. The Partnership was previously funded by the national process of cost-recovery and reimbursement by the Department for Transport through fine revenue. From the 1st April 2007, this was replaced by the provision of additional Local Transport Plan road safety allocations. The result of this change in funding has meant that the remit of the Partnership has expanded. It now has a greater role in the road safety education, hence the change in Partnership name from Safety Camera Partnership to the Safer Roads Partnership.

The Safer Roads Partnership and its increased remit presents a number of opportunities to help ensure that casualty reduction is sustained over the longer term. A wider range of methods and measures are now available, rather than solely through the use of cameras. This does not mean that safety cameras will no longer be a consideration rather that the approach used will become more flexible.



Conclusion

The South Hampshire authorities have continued to work together with their partners, the transport operators, and other bodies. The authorities are now eager to move towards delivering improvements using the TfSH mechanism, and will be looking to regional bodies and central government for support and funding approval to meet the significant challenge that will result from the South East Plan.

