

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	19 November 2020
Title:	Waterside Transport Update
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 an update on all the transport workstreams that are currently underway in the Waterside area of the New Forest, further to the Waterside Interim Transport Policy position from 2017. It provides detail on five separate workstreams and a draft Multi-Modal Waterside Transport Strategy that will ultimately tie all these together and update the Policy position from 2017. It also seeks approval to undertake a public consultation on the draft Strategy in spring 2021.

Recommendations

2. That in accordance with the approved interim Waterside Transport Strategy, the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment confirms a policy of seeking multi-modal capacity improvement along the A326, to include significant improvements for non-motorised users in line with changing national guidance, and on this basis approves the submission of a Strategic Outline Business Case for the A326 highway improvement scheme to the Department for Transport as outlined in the report.
3. That authority is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to continue to progress the design, development, and business case work for the A326 highway improvements, subject to the approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case submission to the DfT, to include the progression of all appropriate investigative, topographic and environmental survey works.
4. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the changing local population, economic and funding circumstances in the Waterside area, and therefore in accordance with the County Council's policy authorises further work to review and develop the business case for re-introducing passenger rail services on the Waterside Line.
5. That approval is given to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport for its further consideration as part of the 'Restoring your Railway' Ideas Fund subject to consideration of a number of potential

risks that will need to be assessed and addressed, as outlined within the report.

6. That approval is given to undertake a public consultation on the draft Waterside Transport Strategy, including details of all the different scheme components, in order to help identify a preferred multi-modal package of improvements and update the Waterside Interim Policy position from 2017.

Executive Summary

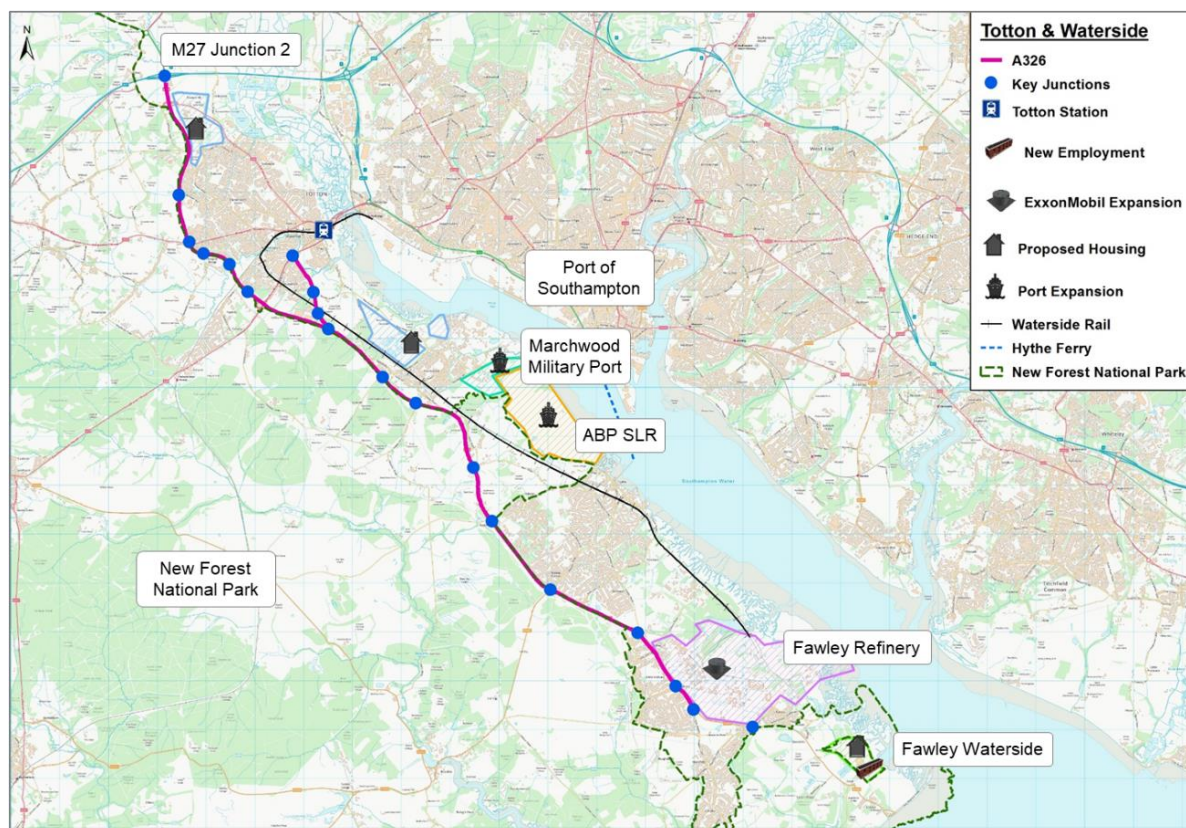
7. This paper seeks to:
 - provide background and information on the various transport workstreams underway in the Waterside area, including a draft Transport Strategy;
 - consider the key issues pertinent to this work;
 - consider the finance for the work; and
 - consider the next steps for the various workstreams.

Contextual information

8. In November 2017 a County Council Executive Member for Environment and Transport Decision Report presented an Interim Waterside Transport Policy Position, which set out the emerging view on transport infrastructure requirements for the Waterside area of the New Forest in light of potential future growth aspirations, and to support the Local Planning Authorities in the New Forest in developing their Local Plans. It followed the production of the Waterside Transport Study, which provided a comprehensive review of the existing and forecast future transport issues in the Waterside. Several key recommendations were made in the November report including that:
 - the A326 to M27 Junction 2 is the preferred route to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) from Waterside and will need to be improved to accommodate future growth;
 - port expansion at ABP's Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) should be accessed directly from A326, by the shortest, least impactful route;
 - in the short to medium term, bus, walking and cycling improvements will be developed focusing on:
 - making bus services quicker and more reliable;
 - connecting waterside settlements (and the National Park) by improving the quality of the pedestrian environment for day to day trips; and
 - a direct cycle corridor; and
 - until further evidence is forthcoming, the current County Council Position on re-opening passenger rail services on the Waterside remains unchanged.
9. The 2017 Interim Transport Policy on rail referenced work undertaken in 2013 for Hampshire County Council by Halcrow and a subsequent Waterside Rail

Decision Day report in November 2013. Halcrow undertook a detailed assessment of the case for passenger rail and concluded that although relatively modest capital investment was required to develop passenger rail services, at that time there was insufficient demand in the area to support the service, resulting in a relatively poor Benefit Cost Ratio. The recommendation was that further work should only be undertaken if there were significant changes in either future funding arrangements for rail projects or local circumstances. The changing circumstances and funding arrangements now justify further work and are set out later in the report.

10. Since November 2017 a number of workstreams have commenced or been progressed in line with the above recommendations and the purpose of this report is to provide an update on these workstreams, and seek approval to consult on a draft Multi-Modal Transport Strategy for the Waterside area in spring 2021.
11. The following sections provide an update on all of the key workstreams that are currently underway in the Waterside area. All the workstreams outlined below will be drawn together by the Waterside Multi-Modal strategy that is currently being developed and is due for publication next year, following a planned public consultation exercise in Spring 2021. This will update the Waterside Interim Transport Policy position set out in November 2017 and more details are provided further below. The plan below provides an overview of the study area.



Draft Waterside Transport Strategy

12. The Draft Waterside Transport Strategy will identify current and future transport demands and issues, define a set of objectives, and identify a raft of multi-modal transport schemes. The schemes are being developed in a series of independent but fully aligned workstreams, which are described more fully in the report below.
13. The Strategy sets out the wider context and need for improvement and seeks to address the current and future transport challenges facing the area. It will set out an agreed list of priorities and transport improvements and will cover high level plans, costs and how these priorities may be met.
14. The Strategy is currently being developed with input from key stakeholders. Public consultation will take place on the Draft Strategy in Spring 2021, following which modifications will be made, where appropriate, to reflect comments made by the public. The Final Strategy document will then be subject to ratification by the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment.
15. The Strategy provides the framework for more detailed work that will take place on specific projects over coming years and it is likely that it will sit alongside the emerging Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP), as one of a series of subsidiary documents. The Policy status of the final Strategy is likely to be established through the LTP4 process and as such will be ratified by the Council in due course.
16. Having an approved Transport Strategy will enable the County Council to pro-actively plan ahead and will provide the ability to respond to development applications based upon a robust evidence base, helping to deliver policies and plans at a local level, as well as supporting the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). It is expected that the LPAs would fully reflect the provisions of the Strategy within their planning responsibilities for the area.
17. Another key consideration that will be addressed by the Waterside Transport Strategy, is how the different types of transport interventions currently being developed would impact on each other and their associated business case. For example, the re-opening of the Waterside rail line to passenger services may influence the benefits of the A326 highway scheme, in terms of removing vehicles from the highway; and similarly, the Waterside Rail scheme may influence the patronage levels on local bus services. There is therefore a need to consider the impact of the different schemes in combination at the right time (i.e. once sufficiently developed), as well as in their own right as per current work being undertaken.
18. Ultimately the purpose of the multi-modal Transport Strategy is to determine the optimum mix of interventions that solve the transport issues faced in the Waterside, both currently and forecast in the future. This may not include all the measures currently being investigated and outlined in this report.

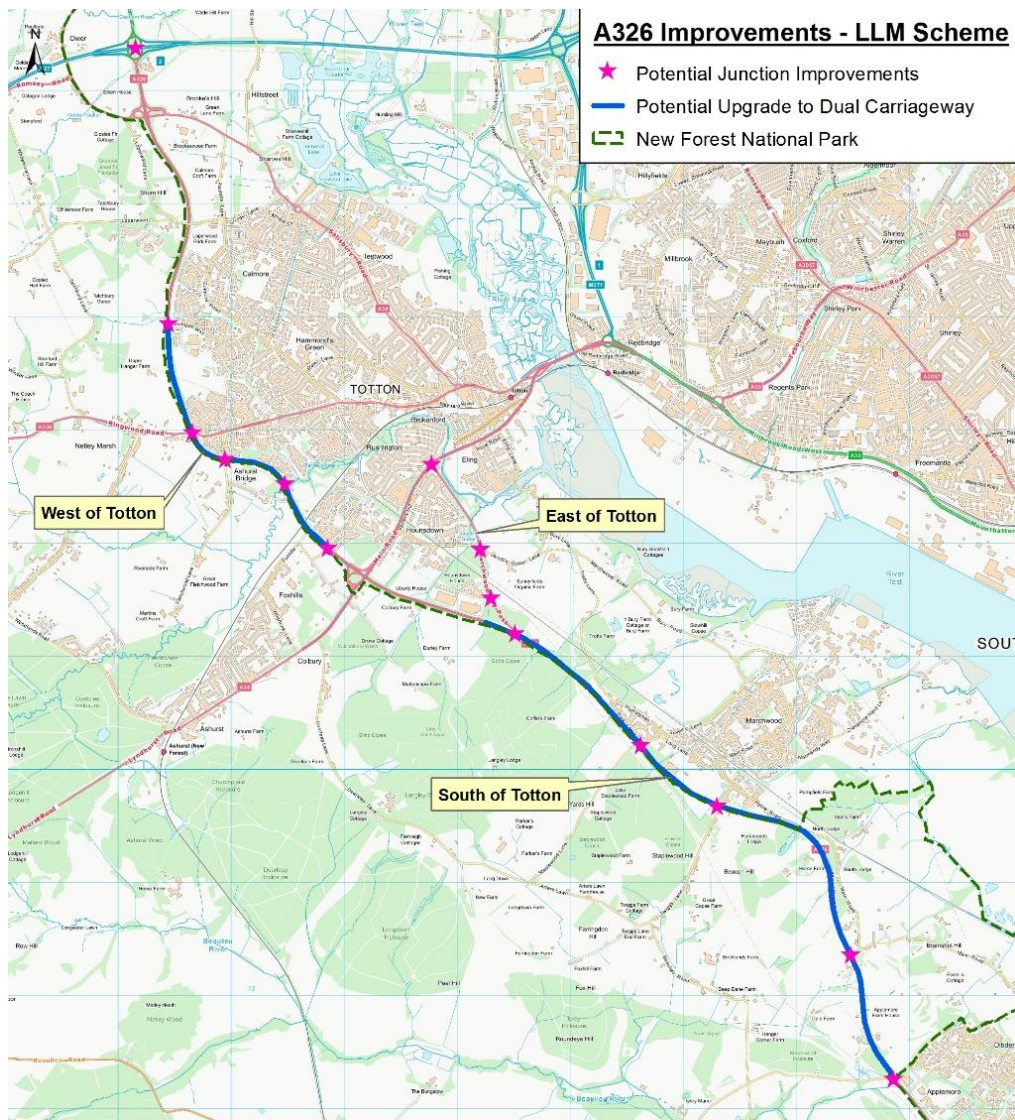
A326 Highway Improvements – Large Local Major Scheme

19. The A326 is a primary route of significant regional importance and provides a critical connection between the Strategic Road Network (SRN) at M27 Junction 2 to the north and the communities and businesses located in the Waterside

including Totton, Marchwood, Hythe, Dibden, Holbury and Fawley to the south. Currently, there are significant issues with congestion, and subsequent queuing and delays, and these are set to worsen over time.

20. There are a number of key employment and development sites along the A326 corridor which depend on the road for access, including the Fawley Refinery and Chemicals facility, and Marchwood Military Port. Further development is also planned in the area including the redevelopment of the former Fawley Power Station site into a mixed-use residential and employment area, housing developments in Totton and Marchwood, and the Solent Gateway development at the Military Port. The ABP Port of Southampton Strategic Land Reserve at Dibden Bay would also be directly reliant on the A326 for highway access.
21. Delays associated with existing travel demand will be compounded by delays associated with additional travel demand from planned new development and will create the need for additional road capacity along the A326 corridor, in order to facilitate and accommodate the growth. However, alongside the road capacity improvements significant enhancements are also needed for non-motorised users such as pedestrians and cyclists, both to help provide for more sustainable local journeys (in line with the latest Government Guidance) and to ensure that the A326 does not present a barrier to movement to and from the New Forest. In accordance with this, the A326 scheme objectives have been slightly adjusted since the submission of the SOBC to more closely reflect the updated guidance, as follows:
 - Objective 1: Enhance accessibility for all users of the transport network including non-motorised users;
 - Objective 2: Address congestion along the corridor;
 - Objective 3: Facilitate economic development along the corridor;
 - Objective 4: Minimise the impact on the New Forest; and
 - Objective 5: Complement other investment in the area to deliver wider benefits for local communities, businesses and visitors.
22. An initial pre-Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) was submitted to Transport for the South-East (TfSE) in August 2019 for between £115-140 million from the DfT Large Local Majors (LLM) fund, to improve the A326 corridor in the Waterside area. The bid was subsequently prioritised by TfSE and submitted to the DfT in September 2019. Notification was received in the March 2020 Government Budget announcement that the County Council was invited to proceed to submission of a full SOBC.
23. Work has now started on the SOBC and it will be informed by transport modelling, early feasibility design/constraints work, and environmental workstreams that are currently being undertaken. The primary aim of the SOBC is to outline the strategic case for the scheme; discuss all the options that have been considered; outline the methodology undertaken in order to arrive at a preferred set of scheme options; and to provide an early assessment of the economic case (costs and benefits) for the preferred scheme options.

24. The final preferred improvement scheme is yet to be decided (it will be informed by the SOBC process), but it is likely to involve a series of link and junction capacity improvements along the more northerly part of the A326, between the Strategic Road Network at M27 Junction 2 to the north and the junction with Sizer Way at Applemore (Dibden) to the south – a distance of over 12km. The introduction of dual carriageway is being considered on two main sections - to the West of Totton between Michigan Way and Cocklydown Lane; and to the south-east of Totton between Hounslow Business Park and Dibden
25. There will also be significant improvements for non-motorised users to encourage more sustainable local journeys, as well as improving connectivity across the A326 for journeys between the Waterside communities and the New Forest National Park (reducing the severance caused by the road).
26. Final submission of the SOBC to the DfT is currently programmed for early 2021, and the intention is then to work up initial feasibility designs for the preferred option package emerging from SOBC during winter 20/21. The scheme will then be consulted upon in the spring, as part of the planned consultation on the multi-modal transport strategy outlined below. Looking forward a Planning Application for the scheme is then planned for autumn 2021.
27. As part of the SOBC work the County Council is working with relevant stakeholders and developers in the area to ensure that trip generation estimates included in the transport modelling are robust and will continue to do so during the development of the SOBC.
28. The development of the SOBC is following DfT WebTAG guidance and involves the production of an Options Appraisal Report , which draws on a combination of transport modelling, design, environment, social and other criteria to inform the high-level options shortlisted. As well as highway link and junction improvements, the ability of other modes to address the scheme objectives and forecast issues is also being considered.
29. High-level highway design and constraints work has been completed for three sections of the A326 that form the main focus of the LLM scheme, as outlined below and shown on the plan overleaf:
 - West of Totton (between Michigan Way & Cocklydown Ln);
 - South of Totton (between Hounslow Business Park & Sizer Way); and
 - East of Totton (between A35 Rushington Roundabout & Hounslow Business Park).
30. Three different packages of highway measures will be subject to further detailed assessment in the SOBC, which comprises the option packages: Low/Medium/High (in terms of scope and cost). The Low package will include a series of Junction improvements only; while the High package will include junction improvements and full dualling of the sections west and south of Totton; and the Medium package lies somewhere between the two.
31. Survey work is currently underway or due to commence soon to inform the emerging designs; including ecology surveys for all protected species; topographical survey; and arboriculture survey.



A326 Highway Improvements – Fawley Waterside

32. The County Council is working with the developers of the Fawley Waterside (FW) site to design and deliver an £8.13million package of junction improvements on the more southerly part of the A326 between Main Road (north of Dibden) and the B3053 at Church Lane (Fawley), for which around £5.68million of Solent LEP funding has been secured. The scheme will be delivered by the County Council but funded entirely by third parties, as the remainder of the funding (£2.45million) will be provided by the Fawley Waterside developer. The improvements are required as mitigation for the Fawley Waterside site, as part of the recently approved planning application for the mixed-use housing and employment development. Delivery of the improvements is planned to commence towards the end of 2020 and continue to Autumn 2021.
33. This scheme has been the subject of a separate report to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment dated 10 March 2020,

which provides full details of the scheme and the Project Appraisal prior to start of works.

Waterside Rail

34. Over the last ten years, a number of studies have examined the feasibility of re-introducing passenger services on the Waterside line. These studies concluded that there was a poor business case and that a scheme was not justified at that time. As a result, in 2013 the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment recommended that “the County Council will not at the present time commit further funding or other resources to this project but will review this position if there are significant changes in either future funding arrangements for rail projects or other local circumstances...” The 2013 Decision Day report also concluded that the business case may improve as a result of an increase in local population or economic which may require the business case to be reassessed.
35. Since then a number of changes in local circumstances have happened including allocations in the new Forest District Local Plan for a number of new major development proposals. The District Council, in partnership with others, has developed a Waterside Vision document identifying significant employment growth potential. Taking these into account it was considered timely to reassess the business case.
36. In 2019 Hampshire County Council commissioned consultants to carry out a feasibility study that reviewed the evidence base for re-opening the railway line which would investigate if it was operationally feasible, and set out the costs and benefits to transport users of re-introducing passenger services on the Waterside line. This work is now largely complete and is showing an improved business case. It indicates that it would be operationally feasible (in rail terms) to re-introduce passenger services, and there is now a more robust economic and strategic case for further development of this scheme. The improved business case needs to be balanced against other local issues and concerns and further work will be needed going forward to consider the wider case.
37. Following the County Council’s successful bid for funding earlier this year from the DfT’s Restoring Your Railway Fund, work is currently underway with Network Rail and DfT to prepare a draft SOBC for submission in November this year. The DfT is providing a grant of £50,000 towards the cost of technical feasibility work that supports this business case. The government has pledged £500m to the Restoring Your Railway Fund.
38. In light of the government future funding opportunities and the changing local circumstances, including an increased local population, local employment and economic activity, conditions have now been met for the council to review and develop the business case for re-introducing passenger services on the Waterside Line. The purpose of this business case is to set out the updated capital and operational costs of re-opening alongside information about expected demand, based on forecast use by existing residents, and residents of planned development, and use this to assess whether or not the scheme represents value for money.
39. It should be noted that business cases move forward in a staged process and have to progress through gateways to move through the stages. The work

done to date suggests there is merit in progressing to the next stage. Greater detail and scope is required at the next stage, which will need to include consideration of the wider local issues not fully assessed in early stages including those listed below.

40. The proposal being assessed is the re-introduction of passenger rail services on the existing freight-only Fawley branch line. At present the line is used by a small number of freight services going to Marchwood Military Port on an ad-hoc basis. Commercial services to the refinery ceased in 2016. Passenger services on the line ceased in 1966.
41. The proposal assessed involves new stations at Hythe Town, and Hythe and Fawley Parkway, with the existing station at Marchwood upgraded, as shown on the plan below.



42. The feasibility study carried out comprised:
 - a review of previous studies and work looking at the feasibility and business case of rail services;
 - option development and shortlisting to identify potential new or extended services that could serve Waterside based on the 2019 Timetable (including a key stakeholder workshop);
 - a detailed operational assessment of shortlisted options, including timetable validation and identifying infrastructure requirements; and

- a value for money assessment based on modelling of the shortlisted options with our SRTM (Sub-regional transport model) and full costings on capital and operating costs.

43. The work identified a number of different options to either extend existing services that currently terminate at Southampton Central or introduce a new shuttle service between Southampton Central and Waterside. In all cases provision for existing and future freight services have been included. The table below summarises three shortlisted options which were developed to assess a range of services.

Option*¹	2036 Demand (Passengers / yr)	Capital Cost*²	Benefit / Cost Ratio (BCR)	BCR Range (sensitivities)
Low Cost Option: 1 train per hour (tph) Romsey via Eastleigh – Hythe & Fawley Parkway	541,000	£43m	0.8	0.5-0.8
High Connectivity Option: 1tph Romsey via Eastleigh – Hythe & Fawley Parkway + 1tph Victoria – Hythe & Fawley Parkway	820,000	£64m	1.3	0.8-1.5
High Frequency Option: 3tph Southampton – Hythe & Fawley Parkway shuttle	991,000	£50m	1.7	1.1-2.2

*1 tph = trains per hour

*2 Q2 20/21 prices, undiscounted, excluding Optimism Bias

44. The work to date has identified a number of potential risks which will need to be assessed and addressed if the DfT approves the scheme to progress to the next stage of development, this includes:

- the impact of passenger rail reintroduction on local bus and Hythe Ferry services: a large portion of the new rail demand is forecast to be abstracted from bus and ferry. This is likely to have an impact on the viability of running bus/ferry services at their present service frequency, including during evenings and weekends;
- the equalities impacts of people living in Waterside who use concessionary passes to undertake journeys by bus could see their travel opportunities reduced through knock on impacts on service levels or services being made more costly. This is because national rail does not accept concessionary pass users. It is also important to note that the majority of the journeys within the Waterside, particularly those undertaken by older members of the population are local to the Waterside. In general, these are short journeys with multiple origins and destination points;
- potential adverse impacts on journey times, congestion, air quality and community severance arising from increased downtime of level crossings,

including Junction Road in Totton and Marchwood, would need to be fully understood and mitigated;

- as a result of rail infrastructure having been mothballed for the last few years, there is a risk of increased construction costs which could result in delays to programme and budget exceedances;
- the impact of long-term changes in travel created by the current pandemic. Business case work to date has assumed pre-covid levels of public transport use although sensitivity tests have been undertaken with lower levels of rail demand. The future level of demand and use of public transport is currently very uncertain. New Government guidance on modelling, which is key to business case development, is expected in early 2021, which may advocate revised methodologies for testing the likely impact of the pandemic on longer-term travel demand. The biggest challenge to rail business cases in the future is likely to be the impact of reduced levels of rail commuting and greater homeworking should these behaviours stick; and
- the impact of rail infrastructure civil engineering work along the part of the route that passes through the New Forest National Park would need to be carefully managed.

45. Acceptance of the Strategic Outline Business Case by the DfT will allow Network Rail and DfT to prepare the Decision to Develop, to support the next stage of the Railway Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) process, the preparation of the Outline Business Case. It is proposed that Network Rail will take the lead in preparation of an Outline Business Case as scheme promoter, with DfT as project client and Hampshire County Council represented on the Project Board. However, progressing the scheme further towards delivery would need Hampshire County Council political support for the scheme, which is dependent on identifying effective solutions and mitigation to the key risks noted above as the scheme is developed.

Southampton City Region Transforming Cities Fund (TCF)

46. The Southampton City Region TCF Programme is the subject of a separate Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment report to the 19 November 2020 Decision Day, but a summary will be provided in this report, in so far as it relates to the Waterside area.
47. The Southampton TCF Programme seeks to deliver 45 individual but complementary schemes along three geographically focused radial corridors terminating in Southampton City Centre and starting in surrounding Hampshire districts (New Forest and Eastleigh). They aim to dramatically transform and improve the quality and availability of transport connections by focusing on enhancing connectivity on these radial corridors, to improve people's journey times and reliability and reduce congestion. Corridor 1 extends from Southampton City Centre westwards to Totton and along the Waterside towards Fawley.
48. The Southampton City Region was awarded £57million by the DfT in March 2020 and approximately £9million of this funding will be spent on schemes in

the Waterside area, as outlined further below. The funding from the DfT to support the TCF programme must be spent by March 2023. This means a rapid and focussed programme of delivery by both Highway Authorities.

49. This infrastructure will do much to support and enhance development along the Waterside and underpin the outcomes of Hampshire's emerging multi modal transport strategy for the Waterside.
50. Detailed design work for the following TCF schemes on the Waterside is now progressing as follows:
 - bus improvements – Bus priority improvements at three key locations/junctions in the Waterside area – one in central Totton; one at the A326/A35 Rushington roundabout; and one at the A326 fork south-east of Hounslow Business Park. The work also involves the creation of three new 'Super-stops' which are bus stops with enhanced infrastructure and real-time information – one in south Totton; one in Applemore; and one in Hythe. There will also be improvements at numerous other bus stops across the Waterside; and
 - cycle/pedestrian improvements – The creation of a continuous cycle facility between Eling and Fawley, which involves the creation of several new sections of shared-use cycleway and connects fragmented existing sections. Some of this route runs alongside the A326 and some routes along adjacent roads and through residential areas.
51. Design, tender and procurement of the TCF schemes will take place from now until around February 2022, with delivery taking place between March 2022 and March 2023, in line with the spend deadline for TCF funds.

Walking and Cycling

52. Walking and cycling improvements are key components of both the A326 Large Local Majors workstream and the Southampton City Region Transforming Cities Fund workstream. Of note for the A326 improvements is the recent new guidance produced by the Government in the form of Local Transport Note 1/20, which means that all highway improvement schemes will need to include a significant element of improved provision for walking and cycling in order to receive DfT funding, something that will be addressed as the scheme progresses.
53. In addition, initial discussions are now taking place with ExxonMobil (Fawley Refinery owners) regarding the potential to provide a new walk/cycle route utilising Refinery land on the eastern side of the A326. It is anticipated that a feasibility study will commence later this year to assess whether the scheme is possible and will begin to investigate some of the land and legal issues that would need to be overcome.
54. Improvements for walking and cycling will be fully aligned to those identified in the emerging Waterside Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which sets a strategic basis for proposals including a prioritised programme of improvements for the next ten years.

Totton Level Crossing

55. Initial work is underway to review the impact that the Totton Level Crossing has on the local highway network, particularly in light of the potential increase in downtime for the level crossing associated with the reopening of the Waterside Line to passenger services. As Junction Road is the only road connection across the rail line within Totton itself, the level crossing results in significant queuing and delays in the centre of Totton, especially during the AM and PM peak hours, when the level crossing is down for longer and road traffic is higher. As well as being an existing constraint on the road network this also results in constraints to future increases in rail services given that this would result in a longer downtime for the level crossing and therefore have a greater impact on traffic.
56. As such, a feasibility study is being undertaken to review the impact that the level crossing has on Junction Road and the surrounding road network as well as on non-car modes (there is a footbridge adjacent to the level crossing but this is not suitable for cyclists or those with mobility issues). Whilst a separate element of work to the Waterside Rail SOBC, the two pieces of work will complement each other, with the level crossing study using future scenarios of level crossing use that are set out in the SOBC and will in turn inform future work on Waterside Rail.
57. The future scenarios from the Waterside Rail SOBC will therefore be used to assess the impact of retaining the level crossing on the local highway network should additional rail services be running. The study will then consider and assess a series of options for the closure of the level crossing, including (but not limited to) a new road bridge in the vicinity of the existing bridge, a road crossing at another location in Totton, or providing a connection for non-car modes only. The study will be completed early in 2021 and the results will form part of the Waterside consultation in Spring 2021.

Finance

58. Revenue funding to develop the A326 Large Local Majors scheme, Waterside Rail, Totton Level Crossing, and the Transport Strategy workstreams is currently being provided from existing resources.
59. Additional development funding (Revenue) for the Waterside rail SOBC work has been secured from the DfT, which will provide £50,000 from the Restoring Your Railway fund.
60. Capital funding for the schemes being developed as part of the Southampton Transforming Cities Fund is being provided by the DfT and is detailed in a separate report to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment, as noted above. Capital funding to develop the Fawley Waterside junction improvement schemes is being provided by a combination of the Solent LEP and the Fawley Waterside developer, as also noted at paragraph 32 above.
61. Capital funding to deliver any of the other schemes outlined in this report will be dependent upon the success of subsequent business cases in securing funding.

Governance

62. A cross-authority officer working group has been set-up to ensure that all the Waterside Authorities (the County Council, New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park) are joined up and aware of the transport workstreams taking place and that the work is progressing mindful of the wider economic and sensitive environmental context. This is termed the 'Totton and Waterside Strategic Board' and also ensures that any issues related to land use planning or other issues can be brought to the County Council's attention.
63. The Strategic Board has recently been responsible for the production of the 'Waterside Vision' document, which sets out a joint Vision to guide development in the area, with particular regard to the Environment, the Economy and Transport. The Vision document has been presented to and approved by the County Council's Cabinet, at a meeting on 29 September 2020.
64. In addition to the above there is a Waterside Key Stakeholder group, which meets on a regular basis and as well as the three Local Authorities includes representatives from key stakeholders such as local landowners, businesses, developers, transport providers, and includes Associated British Ports and Solent Gateway. This is also a forum for information sharing and ensures that all key parties are aware of all the work going on in the Waterside area.

Other Key Issues

65. Issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic have the potential to cause a significant impact on at least one of the Waterside workstreams, in terms of assessing a potential forecast transport and land use situation and also in terms of the overarching need for the schemes.
66. Some updated guidance around assessing the impact of Covid-19 is expected from the DfT in February 2021 and in the interim it has been agreed with the DfT that Covid-19 impact on the anticipated benefits for the A326 Large Local Majors scheme will be assessed by way of a sensitivity test, which will form part of the SOBC submission.
67. It is also worth noting that with Government budgets under significant pressure as a result of Covid-19, it is by no means certain that there will still be substantial funding available for large transport schemes in the short to medium term, such as the A326 Large Local Major scheme and Waterside Rail.

Consultation and Equalities

68. Public consultation on the Draft Waterside Transport Strategy and associated schemes is planned for Spring 2021. Consultation with key stakeholders has been taking place already, to keep them informed of the various workstreams as appropriate.
69. No equality impacts have been identified. A key focus of the various workstreams is to ensure that all user groups are catered for as part of the emerging transport proposals for the Waterside and that these are developed in a coherent manner that does not unduly prejudice one group over another.

Next Steps

70. A substantial amount of transport assessment work and feasibility design work is being progressed to inform the public consultation exercise and emerging Transport Strategy.
71. In order to meet specified funding bid deadlines associated with the A326 Large Local Majors bid and bid for funding for Waterside Rail, approval is sought to submit Strategic Outline Business Cases to the Department for Transport for both A326 highway improvements and the feasibility of re-opening the Waterside Rail line to passenger services in advance of the public consultation. This will still enable changes to be made following the public consultation, hence will not prejudice the engagement process.
72. The public consultation is planned for Spring 2021 and will present the draft Waterside Transport Strategy alongside the identified transport scheme proposals.
73. Following the public consultation, responses will be analysed and appropriate adjustments will be made to the strategy and schemes in order to identify the preferred way forward. A report will be drafted for the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment in order to seek approval for preferred schemes and also the final Strategy, which will ultimately update and supersede the Waterside Interim Transport Policy position set out in November 2017. It is anticipated that the Final Strategy document will be ratified through the LTP4 process and associated approvals.

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:	no

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Waterside Interim Transport Policy Position	<u>Date</u> November 2017
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:

No equality impacts have been identified and at this stage the impact on people with protected characteristics is assessed to be neutral for all groups. A key focus of the various workstreams is to ensure that all user groups are catered for as part of the emerging transport proposals for the Waterside and that these are developed in a coherent manner that does not unduly prejudice one group over another. When the public consultation exercise is undertaken every effort will be made to ensure that the consultation material is available to everyone, including those with protected characteristics.