

Hampshire
2050

Chickenhall Lane Link Evidence Review

June 2025

Introduction

This note reviews the available evidence base for the Chickenhall Lane Link Road (CLLR).

The purpose of the review is:

- To understand if the CLLR should be included in the future transport strategy for the Eastleigh area
- To understand the potential costs and benefits of the CLLR
- To understand how deliverable the CLLR would be within the current policy, technical and financial context
- To understand what work may be needed to undertake a full business case for the CLLR
- To understand what business case the scheme has

Executive Summary:

The link road has been a policy goal of various authorities for decades, but it has been consistently undeliverable due to high levels of cost and lack of funding. To date there has been limited assessment work that shows inconclusive benefits and a lot of unknowns. The available funding frameworks have changed, the expected costs have increased, and it is unlikely to provide value for money whereby it would secure the level of funding needed to deliver it. Hampshire County Council will therefore not include this scheme in the Transport Strategy and prioritise schemes that will create modal shift and be deliverable.

Overall Chronology Slide

The link road has been a policy goal of various authorities for a few decades with Eastleigh Borough Council safeguarding the alignment in successive local plans since 1991.

It is difficult to determine an exact chronology of the work undertaken in those years due to staff changes and changing systems of data storage. More recently however the following work was undertaken:

- HCC commissioned a 2008 - 2010 design for a preferred option of the link road.(referred to in this design).
- 2015. Eastleigh Strategic study. Commissioned by EBC and undertaken by HCC and their consultants Systra to provide an evidence base for the then EBC local plan proposal to look at the mitigation required to support development. This included the CLLR in some of the scenarios tested.
- 2016. HCC's current policy was formed. The recommendations to the Exec Member of ETE is that it continues to value the objective of seeing a link road completed but accepts that it is only likely to come forward in a "flexible" and "phased way". (ETE Exec Member Report: [Report Link](#)).
- 2024. HCC adopted Local Transport Plan 4 with an emphasis on policies that support modal shift to meet the decarbonising goals. The policy represents a shift away from planning for road capacity improvements unless there is a strong economic and strategic case.
- 2025. HCC has looked at the available evidence and justification for including the link road as part of the Eastleigh Transport Strategy which builds on the principles set out in LTP4.

The Link Road

The link road has been proposed for decades to improve access to the wider highway network, including the motorway, across the Southampton to London railway line.

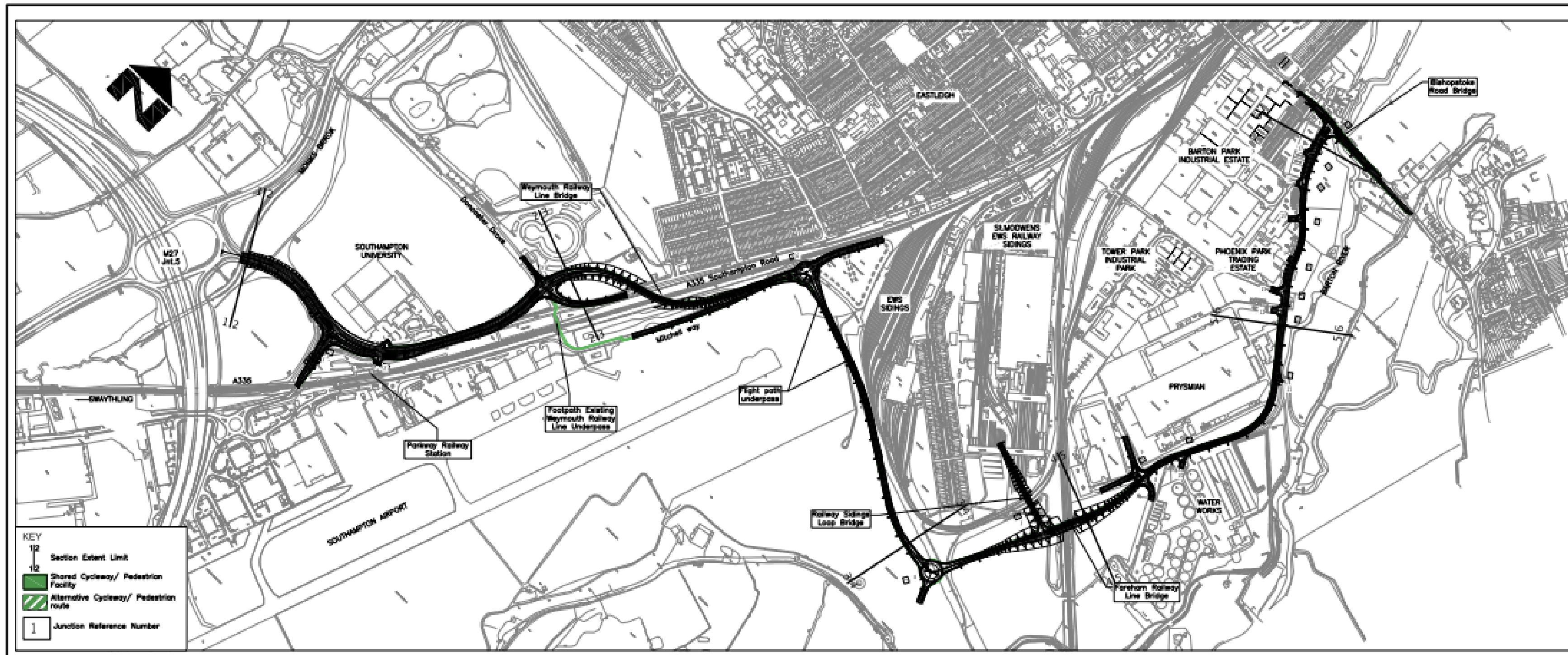
Benefits of the scheme were anticipated to be:

- Lower traffic levels in the Town Centre
- Improve air quality in the town centre as traffic from the east should use the link road to access the M27 and Southampton as opposed to going through the town centre.
- Reduce congestion on western end of Bishopstoke Road.
- Access for proposed development.

The land is safeguarded in successive Eastleigh Borough Council's (EBC) Local Plans.

The last full costing was conducted in 2012 and came to £122 million. Adjusted for inflation this would be at least £196 million in 2025. The initial designs have not been reviewed against current pricing or design standards since 2012, but it can be expected to have risen above the Construction Price Index and may now be closer to £250m.

Link Road Design



The most recent plan for the link road was developed in 2010. It involved:

- A new signal junction on Bishopstoke Road.
- Improvements to Chickenhall Lane and various accesses to bring it to adoptable standard.
- Bridge over the Eastleigh to Portsmouth Railway including access to possible development of railway sidings.
- A tunnel or cutting around the end of the Runway.
- A bridge over the Southampton to Waterloo Railway line.
- Associated tie in to Junctions on Wide Lane.

It is not known what considerations were made to the scheme's buildability. The proximity of building bridges near the airport's runway flight path and over mainline railways would require complex agreements with the relevant authorities, which would add time and cost.

Design standards have changed, particularly around active travel which would result in wider and therefore more expensive structures. While the alignment isn't obsolete a major re-design is likely to be needed at significant expense. There is also a new statutory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Hampshire County Council's Role

- HCC has taken on a role as scheme designer, as Highway Authority and incurred historic costs of doing so. No further design work is planned.
- HCC has supported the safeguarding of the scheme in previous Local Plans.
- HCC is not the scheme promoter. Its latest position is set out in the decision day report ([link below](#)), which states that it will support the delivery in a 'flexible and phased' approach. This approach reflects the affordability of the scheme and that the scheme is related to development which may be built out in phases.
- HCC has submitted bids to funding bodies, none of which have been successful.

[Decision Report - Improved Access to Southampton Airport Economic Gateway](#)

Previous Assessment Work - pre 2015

There has never been a quantified business case for the scheme. Due to the age of the proposal, it is evident that the CLLR concept has not been through a strategic optioneering process, which would investigate potential alternatives to the CLLR, along with the potential impacts of not delivering the scheme. Instead, a preferred scheme concept has progressed straight to design and safeguarding in the local plan.

Government appraisal tools and processes have evolved over the past decade and now require that a strategic optioneering phase must have taken place to compare the proposed solution against other alternatives. The scheme was generated as a concept and added to the Local Plan before such practices became the required standard. Without this strategic optioneering it is highly likely that a business case would be rejected, regardless of its Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR). To move a scheme forward, this work would now need to be retrospectively done with a meaningful and thorough consideration of alternative solutions.

Design work on the bypass stopped before 2015 as it became expensive and there was no foreseeable funding source.

Summary

Before 2015, no business case was established for the scheme and it is not known if it would present good value for money. Furthermore, no modelling had been done to test if it would achieve the desired outcomes.

What would a promoting authority need to know?

It is estimated that a typical cost of a business case needed to satisfy a funding body business case requirement would be 4-5% of final scheme costs (so a commitment of in excess of £10m may eventually be required from a promoting authority).

In the event that a funding opportunity arose the promoting authority would need to take all the financial risks of cost escalation or find a way of covering such risks. This is risky considering the size of the scheme, its costs and the technical complexity and the current financial situations faced by many local authorities including the County Council..

Funding horizons change over time but at present there is less opportunity for funding due to national funding constraints.

At present access to transport funding from central Government would ideally need the scheme to be on the defined Major Road Network (MRN). The CLLR is not on the MRN and therefore not likely to be eligible for national transport funding to develop or deliver it at this time. Other Government funding may be available related to housing or employment growth sites.

The transport benefits of the scheme have not been evidenced and from the desktop analysis which follows look questionable. Without a significant and proven transport case the highway authority would not be able to justify becoming a scheme promoter for such a scheme and would look to others.

Summary

Before 2015, no business case was established for the scheme and it is not known if it would present good value for money. Furthermore, no modelling had been done to test if it would achieve the desired transport outcomes and it would require a large amount of funding to investigate with no certainty of funding for the delivery of the scheme. It would be a risky scheme to promote.

Transport Modelling

In order to evaluate the potential impact of large highway schemes on traffic flows, including the Chickenhall Lane Link Road, Hampshire County Council uses transport models such as the Solent Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM). Transport models take existing data about population, employment, vehicle speed and volumes on the highway, public transport, etc, and uses it to represent how the highway network is used.

The SRTM itself has been developed by the 4 transport authorities in order to evaluate the impact of development and transport interventions and provide supporting information for funding bids to central Government and other transport bodies. It has been validated against the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) guidelines and complies with the Department for Transport's WebTAG recommendations.

Transport modelling in the manner of the SRTM provides the best assessment of likely impacts for new schemes that propose new links and redistribute traffic, however validation against existing data is needed, and some uncertainty will remain in the results.

For more information, please see the link below.

<https://solent-transport.com/solent-sub-regional-transport-model/>

Previous traffic modelling Assessment Work 2015 - 2020

In 2015, the Eastleigh Strategic Transport Study was undertaken to support the then Local Plan evidence base. It modeled a range of land use changes and identified a package of transport interventions including the CLLR as potential schemes. This provided some limited analysis of the impact of the CLLR and results in terms of impact on traffic flows are shown in the output to the right. The modelling work was carried out using the SRTM transport model. The modelling:

- Included high levels of traffic growth across the network, based on potential new development sites in the Borough identified at that time.
- Showed that the CLLR would take traffic from the A335 and that it would form a bypass function
- Showed that Eastleigh town centre traffic levels would be similar or higher
- Showed Bishopstoke Road exceeding capacity

It only considered the link road in conjunction with new development (additional traffic in future year scenarios) and other highway improvements. Therefore to identify the effect of the link road as an isolated scheme on the network would require further work.

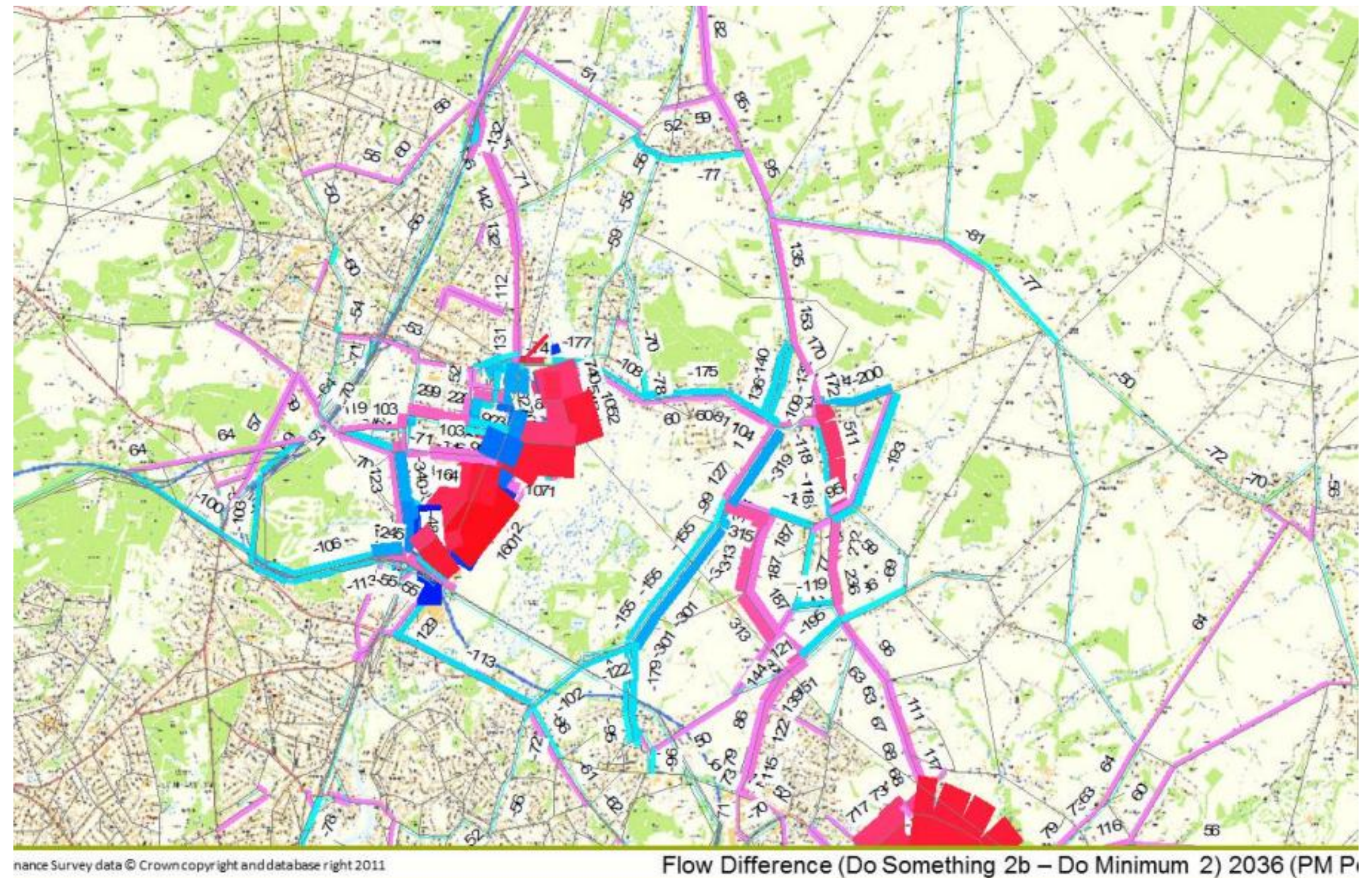


Figure 2: A model output of the 2015 SRTM assessment of the link road

Assessment Review 2025

Consultants were commissioned to provide outputs from the Solent Transport Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM) to facilitate an updated comparison of the impacts of the proposed CLLR in terms of traffic flows and delays, to help understand its purported benefits. The previous modelling did not consider a modelling scenario with the link road without development.

An evaluation of the Chickenhall Lane Link Road was undertaken using the SRTM to support this evidence base. The output from this evaluation includes the following scenarios:

Base scenario 2019 (Do Nothing 2019)

This scenario shows what the model predicts traffic patterns would look like for a typical, average day in the year 2019. 2019 is the most recent year the SRTM can model.

Scenario with CLLR 2019 (Do Something 2019)

This scenario shows what the model predicts traffic patterns would look like if the CLLR was fully constructed in the year 2019.

For all scenarios – Flow and Delay plus differences in the AM and PM peak.

This scenario takes the difference between the baseline scenario and the CLLR scenario to work out how the CLLR may change transport patterns in and around the Eastleigh town area, including how traffic accesses M27 Junction 5.

The modelling did not demonstrate a compelling strategic case for the CLLR or clear benefits to the area, with the exception of the forecast reduction in traffic using Wide Lane. Other roads such as Bishopstoke Road only marginally benefit and future development to the east at Horton Heath would be likely to reverse any benefits due to the additional traffic generated.

The limited utilisation of the link road forecast by the model raises significant concerns about the benefits and value for money of the scheme, particularly with the new road expected to cost substantially more than the original estimate given recent construction price inflation.

The modelling has shown that the network is at capacity and that introducing a new link would redistribute traffic across the network, creating pressures elsewhere that will in turn require intervention. Further work would need to be done to assess the level of impact and mitigation required at those junctions.

Traffic using Chickenhall Lane Link Road

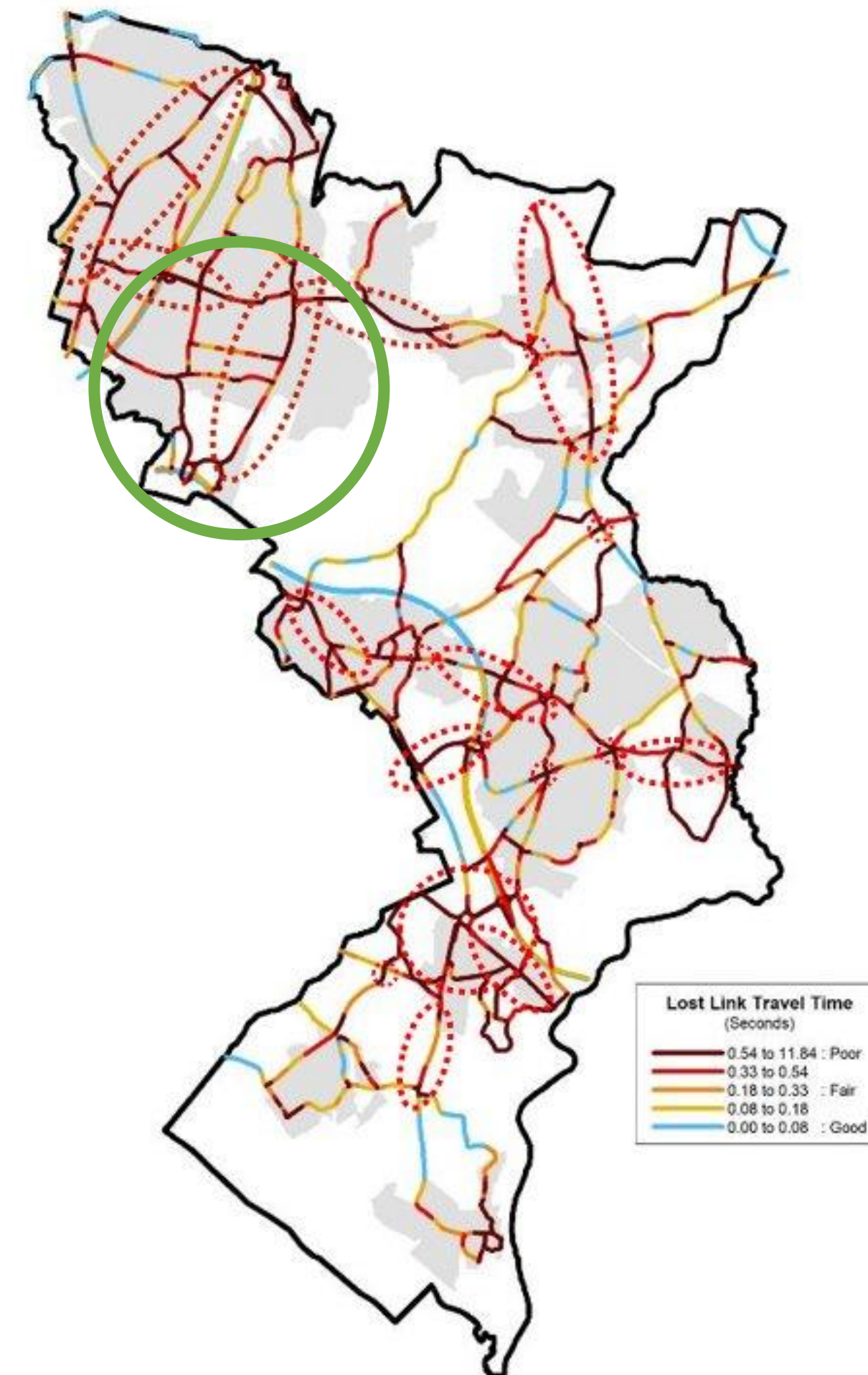
The recent modelling indicatively shows that two-way flows using the CLLR (Fig. 4 overleaf) in both peak hours (the busiest hours in the morning and evening) would be low. A new link would generally be expected to have over 1,000 vehicles using it in the peak hours to generate enough journey time savings to support a viable business case.

The modelling showed that significant changes can cause issues elsewhere (Fig 5 overleaf) such as creating delay on the approach to M27 Junction 5 (Fig. 6 overleaf) which causes traffic to divert across the network creating pressures on junctions elsewhere.

This is likely due to many of the other links and junctions in the surrounding area being either close to capacity or over capacity (Figure 3).

This needs to be studied further and would likely to result in additional complementary schemes which would push the costs higher.

Figure 3. 2018 Road Traffic Congestion : AM Peak



Traffic using Chickenhall Lane Link Road - Maps



Fig 4. Link Road flows PM peak



Fig 5. Flow differences in the PM peak

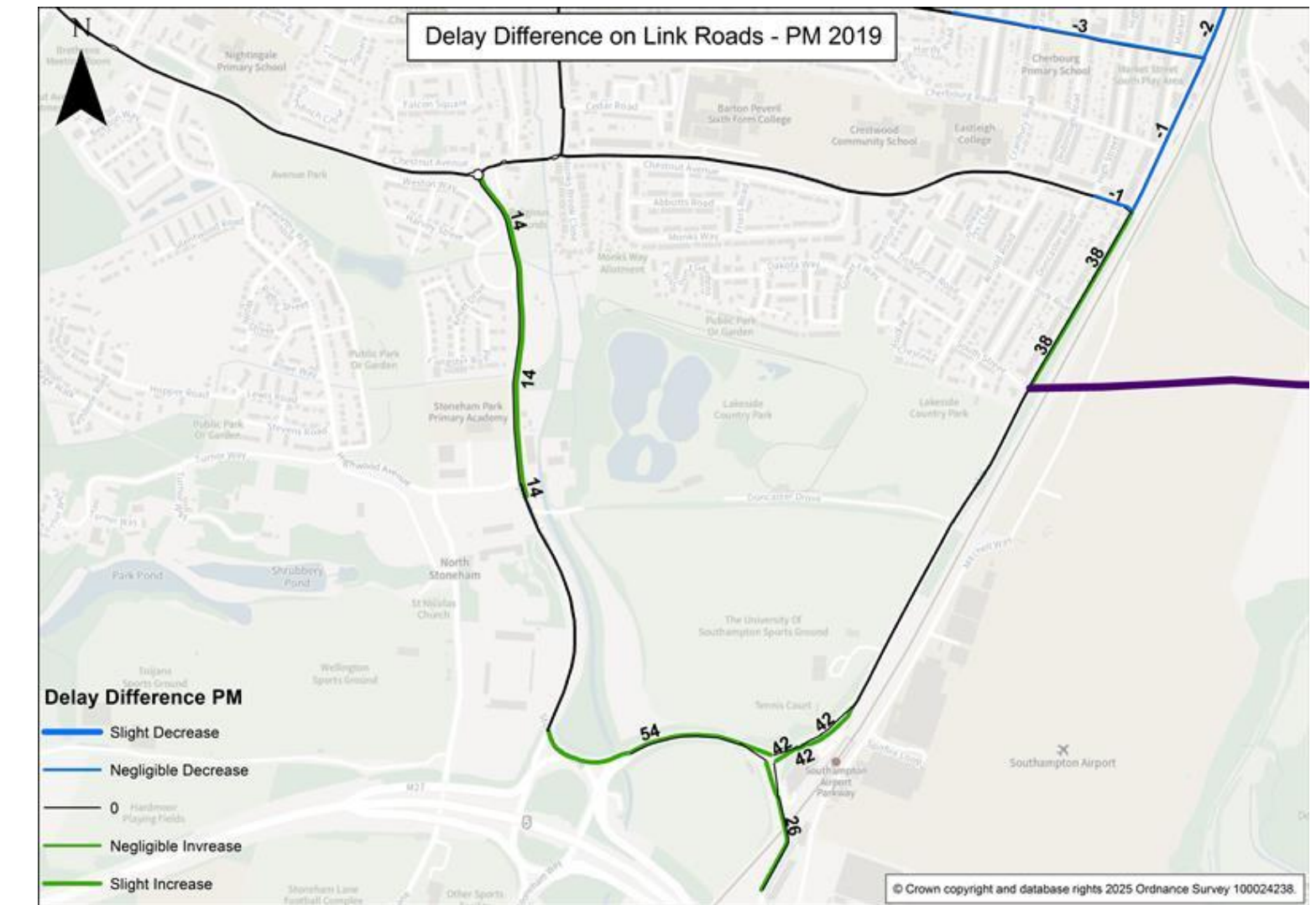


Fig 6. Delay PM Peak

The maps above show the some of the modelling outputs with the link road. The findings are summarized on the previous slide (slide 12).

Traffic using Chickenhall Lane Link Road

One of the reasons for the limited utilisation of the link road can be explained by Figure 7, which shows the direction of commuter flows from the 2011 census for the Fair Oak and Bishopstoke areas. This includes people travelling both to and from the area for work.

It shows that the majority of journeys for work purposes to and from Bishopstoke and Fair Oak are local, northwards or westwards with a smaller proportion heading South. This implies that a new southbound link in the form of the CLLR would not be aligned with most people's work journeys.

The modelling has also demonstrated that the link is under utilised due to traffic avoiding Junction 5 of the M27 and seeking alternate ways to access the wider network as explained on slide 11.

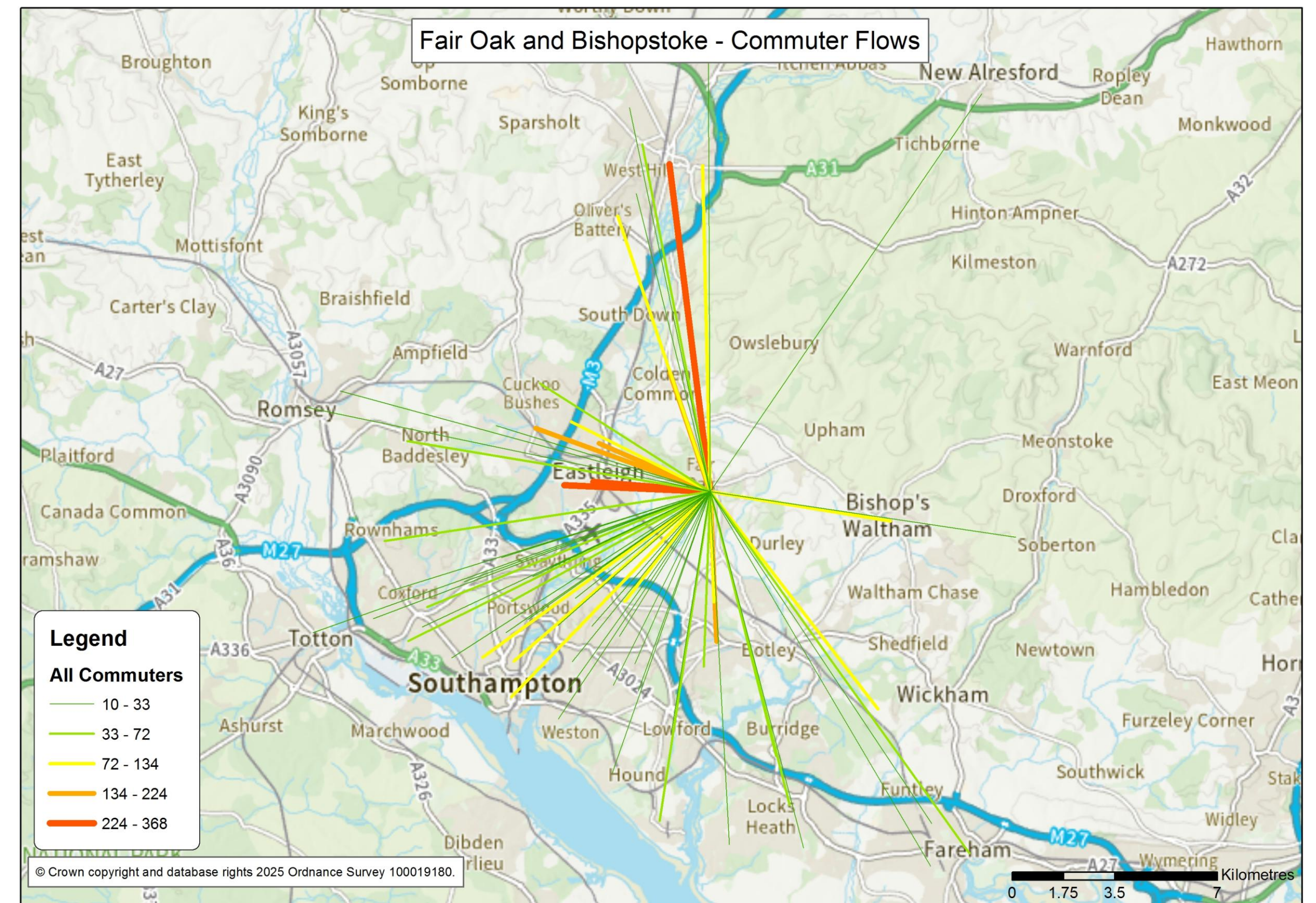


Figure 7: Commuter flows

Conclusion

- The information presented outlines that no detailed assessment has been undertaken to date of the business case or need for the CLLR. The traffic assessment work carried out is somewhat inconclusive in terms of providing a clear picture of the potential impacts and benefits of the scheme while its impacts on the environment is unknown.
- For the scheme to offer value for money the high cost would require there to be significant monetised benefits. The work undertaken to date suggests that this is highly unlikely to be the case. Therefore, even if a strong strategic case for the CLLR existed (for which there is limited evidence available), it would be very difficult to make a compelling business case.
- Because of the design complexities the CLLR also stands to be a scheme prone to cost escalation and scope extension.
- A significant amount of additional work would be required in order to robustly assess the potential impacts and benefits of the scheme, which would be costly and take a long time.
- Based on past experience of major highway schemes there is a very low likelihood of the scheme being able to present a compelling business case.
- The full link road is not needed to access the proposed Navigator Quarter. Access can be suitably achieved via Mitchell Lane and improvements to Wide Lane Bridge.

Glossary

Term/abbreviation	Definition
Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR)	A financial metric used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or project. It is calculated by dividing the total benefits of a project by its total costs.
Biodiversity Net Gain	The legal requirement for organisations to leave biodiversity in a better state than it was before works were conducted.
CLLR	Chickenhall Lane Link Road
EBC	Eastleigh Borough Council
Local Highway Authority	A public authority responsible for maintenance of old, and construction of new, highway infrastructure (excluding motorways and trunk roads).
Local Plan	A document drafted and adopted by a Local Planning Authority setting out what and where new development should be.
Local Planning Authority	A public authority responsible for development and land use planning functions within its boundary.
Peak Hour (AM/PM)	The busiest hours on the highway network in the morning and afternoon.
SRTM	Solent Sub-Regional Transport Model