

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date:	1 March 2011
Title:	Whitehill Bordon Eco Town Rail Study – Interim Report
Reference:	2663
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline the findings of the Whitehill Bordon Rail Study Option Selection Report and to seek authority to continue to the next stage of the study. The study conforms to Network Rail's Guide to Rail Investment Projects (GRIP) stage 2 - prefeasibility.
- 1.2. The study is directly funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as part of Eco-town transport work stream and the funding is ring-fenced for the rail study in Whitehill Bordon. This report has no impact on the County Council's budget as the study, including officer time, is entirely funded by DCLG.
- 1.3. The study has identified the heavy rail route from Whitehill Bordon to Bentley as the only option that demonstrates a sufficiently positive business case at this stage to warrant further study.
- 1.4. The study considered several other potential heavy rail routes (to Liss, Liphook and Alton) plus tram and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) options, and has ruled out all of these other options due to their low Benefit to Cost Ratios, and in some cases, their environmental impacts.
- 1.5. The next stage of the study will be to Network Rail's GRIP 3 Level. Having ruled out all other options, this work will concentrate on the Whitehill Bordon to Bentley heavy rail route and will examine the following areas in further detail:
 - Business Case development and refinement;
 - design and costing;

- railway operational impacts;
- environmental appraisal; and
- potentially relevant sources of funding and affordability.

1.6. It should be noted that once the DCLG grant funding has been spent (at the end of GRIP 3 level study) there is no funding identified to develop the project beyond that stage. It is likely that the project would therefore only proceed to the next stage of feasibility study, if the GRIP 3 study is satisfactory and further Government funding is made available to support further work.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The Whitehill Bordon Emerging Transport Strategy (March 2010) sets out the expected future travel demands from the Eco-town development. The figures suggest that there will be a requirement to handle an additional 9,000 trips per day into the wider region across all travel modes. With the current levels of public transport provision in the town, such increases would be unsustainable, would go against the principles of Eco-towns, and would create significant traffic impacts on the local and regional roads.

2.2. The Whitehill Bordon Rail Study therefore considered a range of sustainable transport solutions including heavy rail, tram and BRT to link Whitehill Bordon to Alton, Liphook, Bentley and Liss to ascertain the most viable and cost effective solution. This work built upon the Hampshire County Council Rail Pre-Feasibility Study (2010) which undertook a desk-top assessment of possible rail connections.

2.3. The study was carried out in accordance with Network Rail's investment guidelines (the GRIP process) and the Department for Transport's (DfT) appraisal guidance. The object of using these guidelines is to filter out solutions that would not achieve the required value for money criteria specified by Government for public funding, should funding become available for this project at some stage in the future.

2.4. The study shows that the preferred option at this stage is the heavy rail route to Bentley which, once the Eco-town is built out could potentially generate up to 1 million trips per annum with through services to London Waterloo. With a capital construction cost of £130 million, this generates a Benefit to Cost ratio of 2.14, which suggests the scheme would provide 'High' value for money. This option provides the least environmental impact, the best economic and financial case and would be deliverable in engineering and operational terms, subject to availability of funding.

2.5. Whilst the capital cost of construction is in the region of £130 million, the total cost (including land purchase, Transport and Works Act, public enquiries, legal costs etc.) is estimated to be in the order of £169 million at this stage. The Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.14 is based on this higher total cost figure.

2.6. A BCR is generally defined as Net Benefits (benefits minus costs) to users, business, private sector providers divided by Public Sector Cost. The Department for Transport currently assess the value for money of a scheme as follows:

- BCR less than 1 is 'poor' value for money;
- BCR between 1 and 1.5 is 'low' value for money;
- BCR between 1.5 and 2 is 'medium' value for money;
- BCR between 2 and 4 is 'high' value for money; and
- BCR greater than 4 is 'very high' value for money.

2.7. The routes to Liphook and Liss are significantly less attractive due to the lower levels of daytime off-peak service frequency at these stations added to the increased environmental constraints to the south east of Whitehill Bordon. Alton may well be the most viable in terms of railway operations but the costs of delivering a rail line to Alton, due to the topography, are almost double that of connecting to the mainline railway at either Bentley, Liphook or Liss.

2.8. None of the potential tram or BRT options exhibit a sufficiently positive Benefit to Cost Ratio due to longer journey times, relatively high infrastructure costs in relation to demand, and in the case of the tram, the need to acquire and maintain a fleet of bespoke vehicles.

3. Finance

3.1. The next stage of the rail study to GRIP 3 level will be funded by DCLG with no impact on County Council budgets. Should the study indicate that the Whitehill Bordon to Bentley option could progress through a further study to GRIP 4, then Government funding will be required in order for this project to proceed.

4. Other key issues

4.1. In respect of delivering a rail service to Whitehill Bordon at some time in the future, there is currently no funding identified. As part of the GRIP 3 study, the consultants will be required to investigate potential funding streams, both public and private, and to consider possible mechanisms for implementing the scheme.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. That approval be given for the Whitehill Bordon Eco-town Rail Study Option Selection Report to be published.
- 5.2. That authority be given to continue to the next stage of the study.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Whitehill Bordon Emerging Transport Strategy	<u>Reference</u> 1382	<u>Date</u> March 2010
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>
Whitehill Bordon Rail Study Option Selection Report 1 st February 2011	Electronic
Whitehill Bordon Eco-town Emerging Transport Strategy 2010	Electronic
Whitehill Bordon Eco-town draft Rail Pre Feasibility Study 2010	Electronic
Whitehill Bordon Eco-town Option Selection Report – Annex A, Environmental Constraints	Electronic
Whitehill Bordon Eco-town Option Selection Report – Annex B, Vertical Alignments	Electronic

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Not applicable.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Not applicable.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The Whitehill Bordon Rail Study is being carried out as part of the Emerging Transport Strategy for the Whitehill Bordon Eco-town. The Emerging Strategy sets out a sustainable strategy to reduce the impact of development, reduce carbon emissions and to promote sustainable travel. The implementation of the strategy will reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption, and deliver sustainable growth.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The emerging Transport Strategy will develop to become the long term strategy for the development of significant growth in East Hampshire. The strategy focuses on tackling climate change through the promotion of sustainable travel, the reduction in travel (particularly by car) and the management of car travel.