Waterside Transport Strategy

1. Latest Updates

Hampshire County Council is in the process of developing a Transport Strategy for the Waterside area of the New Forest. In parallel, a number of funding bids and schemes are being developed for transport improvements in the Waterside area. A public consultation on the Transport Strategy will be held later in 2020.

A Waterside Transport Study was carried out for Hampshire County Council by consultants Atkins and completed in September 2017. This study forms a detailed evidence base of the existing situation in terms of land use, travel patterns, transport facilities and existing issues. It also assessed the forecast travel demand in the Waterside area and the forecast future issues for all travel modes.

This led to the adoption by Hampshire County Council of a ‘Waterside Interim Transport Policy’ in November 2017.

In support of the overall Waterside Transport Strategy, a number of workstreams are underway and funding bids have been made, as outlined below.

2a. A326 Highway Improvements

Improvements to the A326 in the Waterside area are currently being brought forward in two phases, with the first phase being improvements to key junctions on the more southerly section between Main Road, Dibden and Church Lane, Fawley. The second phase involves improvements to the northern section between the M27 at Junction 2 and Main Road, Dibden.

Phase 1 - Fawley Waterside Improvements

Plans for improvements to seven junctions on the A326 and one on the B3053 between Main Road, Dibden and Church Lane, Fawley were recently awarded funding from the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, with a contribution from the developer of Fawley Waterside. For further details on this scheme; A326 (South) Fawley Waterside Junction Improvements

Phase 2 - Large Local Major Scheme Bid

Hampshire County Council submitted a pre-Strategic Outline Business Case to Transport for South East (TfSE) in August 2019, seeking between £115-£140m of DfT funding for improvements to the A326 Corridor. The bid was subsequently prioritised by TfSE and submitted to the DfT in September 2019 for consideration as a Large Local Major (LLM) scheme.

The proposed scheme is still under development but is likely to include upgrades to junctions and links along the A326, including upgrade of some of the single carriageway sections to dual carriageway between Marchwood and the M27 at Junction 2. It will also include improvements for non-motorised users to encourage more sustainable local journeys.

2b. Walking and Cycling Improvements

A scheme to provide a continuous dedicated walking and cycling route between Holbury and Totton has been developed as part of the County Council's recently submitted Southampton Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) Tranche 2 bid to DfT (in conjunction with Southampton City
The scheme will fill in the missing gaps and join existing routes to make a more cohesive network.

Funding for improvements along from Redbridge Causeway to Eling was awarded for Tranche 1 of the TCF bid. Improvements will involve widening improving of the existing shared use path and addressing pinch points. The scheme will be delivered in 2021.

**2c. Public Transport Improvements**

As part of the recent TCF bid, funding has also been sought for measures to improve Waterside bus services, including bus priority measures at key locations; new bus ‘super-stops’ and ‘enhanced stops’ at key interchanges; and improved infrastructure at numerous other bus stops.

Work is also underway to consider the viability of passenger rail services, in light of proposed and potential emerging developments along the corridor.

**3. Background Information**

The Waterside area is peninsular in nature with the A326 being the main road connecting the 60,000 residents and businesses in Marchwood, Hythe, Dibden, Fawley and Totton with the wider Solent and UK, with up to 30,000 vehicles travelling along parts of the corridor each day.

The Waterside area already boasts existing nationally significant infrastructure assets that have proposals for expansion and redevelopment, alongside substantial additional plans for new development, which would also have national significance. These important development proposals include Fawley Oil Refinery, Marchwood Military Port/Solent Gateway, and the Fawley Waterside regeneration project (that aims to provide 2,000 jobs and 1,500 homes). There are also plans to provide 1,900 homes along the waterside corridor at sites in New Forest District Councils emerging Local Plan, and there is land identified for the Port of Southampton Strategic Land Reserve.

**Transport Vision**

- To develop a fully integrated multi-modal Transport Strategy, which includes enhanced public transport, cycling and walking routes to improve connectivity between the Waterside and Totton communities, and provide better access to and from the Strategic Road Network.
- To reduce the dependence on cars by enhancing choice and accessibility of public transport, cycling and walking routes.
- To develop an effective multi-modal transport system that considers the sensitive environment and habitats of the New Forest, the unique geographical location and areas of poor air quality.
- To enhance access to the National Park by ensuring the A326 does not present a barrier to movement by non-motorised users.
- To support planned new developments in the Waterside area by enabling more people to leave their cars at home and use public transport, cycle or walk safely to their employment, education or leisure destinations, contributing to improved air quality in the area and helping to avoid the need to travel long distances by car.
- To provide a high quality cycling and walking corridor from Southampton and Totton to Lepe.
- To enhance the public transport services between Waterside and Southampton via Totton, by reducing journey times and improving the quality of service provision.
• To reduce congestion and delay on the A326 to enhance journey time reliability to key destinations and to provide network resilience, and reliable and efficient access for the critical national infrastructure based along the A326 Corridor.
• To support the national economy by enhancing the efficiency of trade routes from the Port of Southampton to the manufacturing heartlands of the North.
• To ensure reliant and efficient access for the growing industries based along the Waterside including Marchwood Military Port, Fawley Oil Refinery and Southampton Port.