



Purpose: For Decision

Committee report

Committee	SOLENT TRANSPORT JOINT COMMITTEE
Date	20 OCTOBER 2021
Title	BUSINESS PLAN- 2021/22 – PROGRESS UPDATE
Report of	CONRAD HAIGH – SOLENT TRANSPORT JOINT COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report covers current activities this fiscal year against the approved Business Plan. This covers three overarching strands of work:
 - Short/ medium term, continuing successful delivery of Future Transport Zone programme
 - Short/ medium term, continuing and where possible completing activities started in 2020/21 - including our role facilitating liaison between the Local Transport and Local Planning Authorities as part of the PfSH Statement of Common Ground project; and development of a strategic vision statement/ shared high-level strategy across the four Member LTAs.
 - And medium/longer term actions which will help position the Solent to capture a share of govt funding anticipated over the next few years for transport linked to the “green industrial revolution” and other opportunities - including the strategic vision statement work referenced above, in addition to actions such as further development of the Solent Rail Connectivity proposals.

These activities will also support rebuilding/ rebounding from Covid, and deliver against many of the policies and strategies of our funders. They are also the areas where Solent Transport judges it can best add value for our member LTAs.

BACKGROUND & WIDER PICTURE

2. Solent Transport is currently working to a Business Plan that was approved at the 4th March Joint Committee meeting.

3. The ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit and issues of recovery continue to ensure the pace of change in the transport sector is significant, reflecting impacts and changes on society and the nation in general. Despite this Solent Transport have made good progress against the current business plan.
4. Solent Transport continues to be agile, adapting and flexing to respond as positively and effectively as possible to issues and opportunities that have arisen. Overall we continue to do this with a significant degree of success, however we have experienced some of the effects of Covid and Brexit related matters including increased difficulties in recruiting and other associated HR and business related issues.
5. Some of the changes observed during the Covid-19 pandemic will endure into the future. Many of the changes in people's lifestyles and functioning of the economy, business and society during 2020 were accelerations of previously slow-moving but growing trends, such as increases in working from home, and growth in online deliveries and other services moving online. Solent Transport is making plans to adapt to these changes, this can be seen in several pieces of work including the Future Transport Zone and further development of the Sub Regional Transport Model.
6. Partner Authorities and Solent Transport continue to try to manage these these changes, this includes:
 - Rebuilding user confidence in public transport, and restoring passenger levels
 - "locking-in" some of the recent growth in walking, cycling and other modes of travel, and working/ accessing services remotely
 - Managing growth in goods vehicle traffic
 - Continue to reduce "rebound to car"
7. The Business Plan also recognises the considerable pressure the Covid crisis has brought to our funder authorities' resources – both in demands to deliver schemes and initiatives the negative financial impacts on the Local Authorities.
8. The challenges that the transport sector, and our Member authorities must respond to, have not gone away. This includes the climate crisis; regenerating the economy responding to post-Brexit opportunities; and actions to support healthier lifestyles and environments for residents. All of our Member authorities have now declared climate emergencies.
9. The UK Government published it's "Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution" in November 2020. This document sets out the Government's plan to rebuild the UK's economy post-Covid on a sustainable, zero net carbon footing. Two of the ten points in the Government's plan relate to the transport sector:
 - Accelerating the transition to zero carbon (electric and hydrogen fuel) vehicles, with an end to sale of fossil fuel powered private cars in 2030, and most hybrid cars by 2035

- A step-change in investment in public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, and a transition to zero-emission public transport, to increase the share of journeys taken by these modes of travel. Financial support over the coming years will include tens of billions of pounds in enhancements and renewals of the rail network, £4.2 billion for urban public transport, and £5 billion on buses, cycling and walking
10. Achieving these points will require transformative actions and changes in our sector over the next 5 to 10 years which will be much greater in scope than the short-term changes observed during 2020.
 11. Whilst there are great challenges and opportunities in the future, the other major background consideration for this business plan is the very significant - arguably transformational- level of Government funding for infrastructure, service and behavioural change initiatives which was secured by our Member LTAs and by Solent Transport itself in the last financial year.
 12. The Transforming Cities Fund programmes underway in the Portsmouth and Southampton city regions are delivering a collective £171m (£112m from DfT) of improved infrastructure for public transport and walking/cycling. Continuing to support our Members' successful delivery of TCF programmes will be an important priority for Solent Transport this year.
 13. One of the key ways we will achieve this is through delivery of Solent Transport's Future Transport Zone (FTZ) programme. The FTZ programme was awarded £28.75m by DfT in March 2020. Southampton City Council are the accountable body for the programme but Solent Transport are responsible for leading the delivery and governance arrangements. The FTZ is a Solent-area wide programme which complements both city region's TCF programmes, and other LTA objectives.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST 2021/22 SOLENT TRANSPORT BUSINESS PLAN

14. As stated, Covid 19 has required us to be agile and responsive. However, the majority of the priority objectives in the business plan are being achieved, and those which have been delayed, due to Covid impacts and/or diversion of resource for initiation of the FTZ programme, are in progress.
15. **Commencement of delivery of the FTZ programme, continuing to 2024:** Following interim staffing arrangements during 2020/21 to allow a rapid start to the programme, a full recruitment programme has been completed and almost all staff roles highlighted in the original staffing plan have now been filled. Additionally the following achievements are highlighted:
 - Full review of programme plan to respond to changed circumstances (Covid 19) agreed with funder (DfT) and now being implemented
 - All Project Inception Documents and plans have been prepared and agreed for all active projects
 - Governance, joint working, partner funding arrangements completed
 - A further trial of vertical take-off drones for cross-Solent medical logistics is in progress this autumn.

- E-scooter/ micro-mobility framework procurement completed, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth trials have been underway since November 2020 (IOW) and March 2021 (SCC,PCC).
 - Mobility as a Service (MaaS) app system procurement completed and work is well advanced for public launch; “Beta” versions of the product are already in early testing and branding is being developed.
 - Solent Go carnet (multi-trip) products – Saver5 carnet ticket now available for purchase by public but has been “soft launched”; plans for active promotion in conjunction with launch of the Solent MaaS app are set for March 2022
 - Southampton and Portsmouth Bike/ e-bike share scheme market testing and feasibility is complete and procurement is underway.
 - A review of the planned DDRT trial has been completed and a revised approach is subject to approval by FTZ Steering Group.
 - Monitoring and evaluation method reviewed in light of Covid and has been being agreed with NatCen (DfT’s appointed evaluation body), a first year report has also been prepared.
16. A special note of thanks is due for PCC’s procurement team and SCC’s HR and finance team, who have provided significant support in procurement activities for FTZ to date.
17. **To deliver a new Solent Transport Strategy:** Progress on this task commenced in January 2020 with workshops for partner bodies but it proved difficult for both Solent Transport and Partner Authorities to prioritise this work during the pandemic. Solent Transport also had to reprioritise staff time to support FTZ initiation.
18. This piece of work will provide an area-wide vision statement and high-level strategy which links together our Authorities’ Local Transport Plans and other key sub-regional, regional and national emerging/adopted strategies and plans in a coherent way. This will make it easier for the Solent area to collectively articulate its transport priorities and ambitions.
19. Work to develop supporting evidence to underpin this continues, jointly with University of Southampton to use the National Infrastructure Systems Model (NISMOD) to test around 50-60 possible strategic interventions at a high level, establishing their likely effectiveness to help inform prioritization within the strategy. This work is also acting as a “test” of NISMOD as a potential tool that could be accessed to undertake more rapid testing of options for strategy development.
20. At time of writing the NISMOD study had recently been completed but the outputs not fully digested. Once this has happened, we will seek to convene a “task and finish” group of officers from the Member LTAs with the aim of jointly developing a draft version of this Statement during late 2021/early 2022.
21. The use of NISMOD also helped explore its possible use as a a simplified “sandbox” model for testing of high-level scenarios and options more economically and quickly than the present SRTM. The exploration of such a “sandbox” model concept was an objective of the 2020/21 business plan.
22. **To continue to operate the Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM) and further explore development & improvement options:** The SRTM continues to be a highly

relevant resource for the Solent area. Between 2017 and 2020, SRTM has provided transport and economic evidence for bids which have secured £183m of external funding for the area. During the 2021/22 financial year so far, a total of 13 studies have utilised the SRTM model.

23. Covid-19 and impacts on travel patterns mean that a major model update to reflect the “new normal” cannot be commissioned until there is stability in movement patterns across the area, including for international travel via our three international “gateways”. Therefore we a major model update looks likely to be feasible in 2023, providing an opportunity for Solent Transport to address some of the shortfall in the finances required for this work.
24. The model-wide “present year validation” exercise previously reported to this Committee has now been completed.
25. Generally the ability of a model to independently forecast travel patterns and flows of a “current” year is taken as evidence that it is “fit for purpose” to forecast future years – although this industry-wide assumption is potentially jeopardised by uncertainty about long term changes in travel patterns and behaviours post-Covid.
26. This exercise compared the model’s forecasts for 2019 against recorded traffic counts from that year, and used some further count data from 2019 to update parts of the model in order to improve its forecasting accuracy.
27. For large scale area-to-area movements, eg total counts of traffic crossing “enclosures” around towns/cities or “screenlines” containing multiple count sites across an area, the SRTM’s 2019 forecasts come close to achieving standards set out in DfT’s guidance. In most geographical areas the DfT guidance standard has been achieved with only a small number of areas where they are not. The table below shows model-wide performance.

Criteria		AM Peak	Inter-peak	PM Peak
<p>DfT TAG standard: <i>“Differences between modelled flows and counts should be less than 5% of the counts, on all or nearly all screenlines*”</i></p> <p><i>*Nb: TAG does not define what “all or nearly all” means in percentage terms</i></p>	Whole model	84%	84%	83%
“Relaxed” standard: Modelled flows within 10% of the counts	Whole model	91%	95%	88%

28. Comparison of 2019 traffic flows at individual count points with model forecasts for 2019 at the same locations has also been undertaken. This more detailed level of validation gives an indication as to how accurately the model is forecasting traffic at individual points on the highway network. This helps to establish its suitability for use on projects such as scheme development and development planning projects, where understanding impacts of changed demand or infrastructure at specific parts of the network is important.
29. The table below shows these results for all vehicle flows. The SRTM 2019 model year comes close to achieving the TAG standard, and exceeds the TAG standard for the motorway network.

Criteria		AM Peak	Inter-peak	PM Peak
DfT TAG standards: >85% of locations should meet the below standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual flows within 15% of counts, for flows from 700 to 2700 veh/hr • Individual flows within 100 veh/hr of counts, for flows less than 700 veh/hr • Individual flows within 400 veh/hr of counts, for flows more than 2400 veh/hr 	Whole model	71%	79%	69%
	Motorway Network	91%	98%	95%

30. Given the large and complex area covered by the SRTM, the results shown above are considered to be acceptable for the model's intended uses, and are an improvement on previous iterations of this exercise albeit still not quite reaching DfT's TAG standards (which are designed for less complex models/areas).
31. A technical report with more details has been published on the Solent Transport website, and has been signed off by our Member LTAs. A supplementary "fitness for purpose" note focusing on the Strategic Road Network in the model has also been circulated to and reviewed by Highways England/ National Highways.
32. Following this successful validation exercise, and per the Business Plan, work has commenced on land use and highway scheme updates and incorporation of various other changes (eg revised post Covid economic forecast changes as specified by DfT and the Office for Budget Responsibility) which will ensure the model incorporates current developments and wider forecasts. In combination with recent guidance issued by DfT on how to adapt transport modelling to better account for uncertainties regarding the post-Covid world, this should extend this important tool's utility by at least a year or two, to 2023.
33. Work has also commenced (supported by HCC and PCC) to re-procure a consultant to operate the model in the short to medium term as part of efforts to improve financial/cost efficiency, and in parallel investigation of potential mechanisms for

securing additional funding for the major upgrade of the model targeted for 2023 is underway.

34. The estimated costs of a major model update (“do minimum” likely cost up to £800k; “do more” likely cost circa £1.2m - both costs based on outline quotes prior to Covid-19 pandemic) still significantly exceeds the available model reserve budget and it is unlikely that current growth of the pot will be sufficient to reach the level required for a “do minimum” upgrade. Therefore exploring further options to increase the value of this reserve, through external income generation and/or financial efficiency, are required.
35. We will therefore explore any and all opportunities for improved financial efficiency and income generation which present themselves. One option under exploration is whether some Member LTAs could implement a scheme by which a small share of capital income from successful funding bids supported by model, could be top-sliced to enhance the model upgrader budget in future.
36. **To work with the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) on the creation of a ‘Statement of Common Ground’:** Solent Transport continues to support PfSH and its consultants on the transport workstream within this project, working to a jointly agreed brief. This has included facilitating liaison and information exchange between the Local Transport Authorities and PfSH/ consultants as the earlier stages of the project progressed, and supporting PfSH on transport modelling of potential Strategic Development Opportunity Areas using the SRTM model.
37. Following recent completion of the modelling work Solent Transport is supporting further engagement & liaison between PfSH and the LTAs to discuss the results/outputs and how they influence the development of a preferred Spatial Strategy, as well as supporting the drafting of shared transport related policies for inclusion in the draft Joint Strategy document.
38. An update on the findings of the Employment, Economic and Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study was presented to and noted by PfSH Joint Committee on 22nd March ([link](#)). A key finding of this study was an identified need for up to five larger strategic warehouses in the South Hampshire. PfSH are currently considering how to take forward the recommendations in the Study, particularly the need for up to five larger warehouses (including transport/accessibility issues). This could also have transport / highways implications.
39. Solent Transport provided specialist advice and support to PfSH on transport matters, and facilitating engagement between PfSH and our Member LTAs. Member Authority officers have stated that that this activity has added value through reducing duplication of calls on their staff time, and has also contributed to more unified approach to review/ response to early stages of the transport study, although there is a clear need to ensure that the respective roles of Solent Transport and the LTAs is fully understood by the Local Planning Authorities.
40. **Profile-raising, marketing & branding:** Solent Transport has been very active during the period and has achieved significant success in this area:

- **Brand development** – Solent Transport will ‘go live’ with a refreshed and update website at the end of September 2021. We have also developed branding concepts for the MaaS product which is being finalised ahead of proposed MaaS promotional launch in Feb \ March 2021. New marketing and comms protocols have been drawn up and agreed with the LTA comms departments.
- **Government engagement** – We continue to work closely with both TfSE and national government, particularly on the Future Transport Zone and E-scooters projects and have regular engagements with both.
- **Conferences** – Staff from Solent Transport have spoken on subjects ranging from the benefits of the FTZ and e-scooters, to mobility hubs and MaaS applications. Conference hosts have included Landor LINKS, TfSE, Buckinghamshire Council and Smartex.
- **Social media** – Creation and ongoing use of a Solent Transport LinkedIn page, this has been key to promotion of the FTZ work and to recruitment. 68% increase in followers since the beginning of December.
- **Media coverage** – Solent Transport has through the FTZ created several media opportunities particularly around Drones and E-scooter work, resulting in a significant level of media coverage.
- **Future FTZ marketing** - A marketing agency has been engaged to support the marketing and communication activities of the FTZ programme. This support includes the development of a brand for the MaaS product. The Marketing and Communications Manager continues to work closely with operators and LTAs to lead, develop and coordinate marcomms activity.
- **My Journey** – Solent Transport is currently working with Wokingham Borough Council and Bracknell Borough Council to agree brand licensing for the use of My Journey.

41. **Solent Go:** The Saver 5 Carnet ticket was made available across the Solent Go region on 12 April. Active promotion so the ticket is planned in line with the MaaS app launch in early 2022. The ticket is also available via all local bus operators own apps. Unicard are presently working on the integration of Solent Go into the MaaS system. Other new products (Hopper ticket, new travel zones and jobseekers' discount) are being planned for delivery. We are also working with Trafi (the developers of the Solent MaaS app) to explore if we can sell Solent Go tickets via QR code from the first release of MaaS.
42. **Rail strategy:** The approved Business Plan includes allocation of staff time to support further development of the Solent Local Rail Connectivity Strategic Study (published in 2020 and endorsed by this committee) to the next stage of the development process (publication of a Strategic Outline Business Case) working jointly with Network Rail.

43. Network Rail have taken forward through the Railway Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) process recommendations that further development funding is allocated by central Government. After passing through the initial hurdles successfully and positively a final decision is awaited from the funder (the Department for Transport) as to entry of these schemes into RNEP; this is being delayed owing to deferment of the government's multi-year Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2020. DfT have however agreed for the next stage of development (preparation of a Strategic Outline Business Case) to proceed, and this has commenced recently, with Network Rail acting as promoter, with continued input and support from Solent Transport. We will seek that this SOBC continues to take into account the Waterside Rail proposals currently being developed via the Government's "Restoring Your Railway" fund, and if possible, we would like to explore potential for greater alignment/synergy between these proposed schemes.
44. Solent Transport is also participating in the working groups for the Network Rail -led Mainline Strategic Study (Tranche 2) which is underway, and which will develop options for future development of long distance/ main line services from Woking west/southbound to the Solent area. This study will be complimentary to the Solent Connectivity study completed last year.
45. Solent Transport has also prepared a shared Solent response to SWR's December 2022 timetable changes consultation, supporting the interests of the Solent sub-region and highlighting some potential opportunities for improved service in alignment with the strategic approach identified in the Solent Connectivity Strategic Study.
46. **Other areas of work:** Solent Transport's work programme for 2020/21 also included several other objectives:
47. **To provide an assurance role for Transforming Cities programmes, subject to agreed funding from TCF partners:** Available budget and reduced level of core Solent staffing as made this difficult to accommodate within present resources. It has now been agreed that the two separate TCF schemes will audit and provide assurance on each other.
48. **To assist in the delivery of work package 3 of the Highways England Travel Demand Management work:** Solent Transport has taken the lead on Work Package 3 which has now been allocated to mobility hubs, following programme changes as a result of Covid-19 reducing the viability of originally planned uses for this part of the funding. A detailed design guide and model for identifying the likely successful sites has been developed and launched. This will provide a standard and route map to provide a consistent and high-quality delivery of these facilities across Solent authorities. Highways England who funded this guide also intend to use this as a national guide for deliveries of such facilities. Two likely sites at Cosham and Winchester have been identified and detailed feasibility studies are underway for these sites.
49. **Continue to support/lead strategic transport planning projects and initiatives which collectively benefit our Members potential to access funding:**

50. We continue to input and engage with TFSE led studies, particularly the Outer Orbital study, Future Mobility Strategy and Freight Logistics and Gateway study helping our Members to ensure that these studies fully represent the Solent area's needs, interests and ambitions. We have added value through considering wider/cross boundary connectivity issues and by coordinating inputs to this work so that engagement with TFSE is done in a coordinated and collective manner.
51. **Cross-Solent Connectivity:** Solent Transport continues to engage with and support the IOW Transport Board, to support new initiatives to improve connectivity to and within the Isle of Wight. This has included actions in support of the Isle of Wight's Restoring Your Railway fund bid to DfT and the relevant TFSE study.
52. Finally, we continue to administer and co-ordinate the Solent Transport Joint Committee meetings, occasional Member briefings, Senior Management Board, and are looking to re-start in November 2021 a revised successor to the Strategy Working Group (per 2020/21 business plan proposals) – this engagement group has been on hiatus this year due to diversion of staff resource to support FTZ initiation. This year significant effort and resource has been put in to driving down costs and meeting Partners budgetary expectations, this will continue as discussed below.
53. The table below indicates the estimated time allocations across Solent Transport's core staff, to deliver the above activities.

Estimated Average Resource Implication in days per week	Solent Transport Core Staff Activity
3	Future Transport Zone- Minimum contribution from core staff including management (1.5 days/ week x2) per match funding commitment in FTZ bid. N.B: During 2020/21, core staff time allocated to FTZ exceeded this level, averaging 3.75 days/week.
1	SRTM ongoing operation & administration
0.25	SRTM update & related maintenance activities eg 2019 Present Year Validation & Reference case updates; commissioning process improvements (assumes major rebuild is not procured/commissioned until 2022/23)
1	Strategic vision & high level strategy development, including NISMOD study
0.5	Rail strategy development
0.5	PfSH Statement of Common Ground project
1.5	Solent Transport administration \ management time, including preparation for and actions associated with

	SMB and Joint Committee meetings; administration; recruitment; finance management etc
1.75	Time allowance to accommodate other activities, allocated in accordance with SMB priorities- includes marketing, liaison with stakeholders, Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Board, input to M27/M3 TDM project, HIOW LRF, TFSE engagement, and potentially support for other projects that may arise in the coming year (eg Freeports bid). Additional time demands from the Future Transport Zone programme may also need to be accommodated from this allowance.
0.5	Allowance for staff annual leave
10 days	TOTAL

CONSULTATION

54. Our Senior Management Board (SMB) previously highlighted three key ambitions for the medium term: to Develop a Solent Transport Strategy, to update and develop the Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM); and to raise the profile of Solent Transport through marketing and lobbying.
55. The approved Business Plan aligns with these ambitions and actions undertaken so that this financial year are helping to deliver that agreed Plan.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

56. Solent Transport's Budget has not changed since the last report and Solent Transport spend is in line with expectations. Details of this is covered in the finance report and the FTZ report. As agreed by the Joint Committee positive action to explore other options of funding has been taken to some success, particularly around recouping Solent Transport costs against projects and this continues to be explored. This should assist with keeping Solent Transport's core budget on a more even keel.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

57. Statutory power to make decisions in this report are provided by the following legislation:
58. S. 1 Localism Act 2011 (the general power of competence) permits Local Authorities to work in partnership with other public and private bodies to secure the delivery of functions, services and facilities that are for the benefit or improvement of the areas they serve.
59. S101 & S102 Local Government Act 1972 grant statutory power for Local Authorities to arrange for the discharge of their functions by a committee, sub-committee or an officer of the authority, by a Joint Committee, or by any other local authority (subject to any express provision within LGA 1972 or any subsequent Act).

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

60. No new or revised Policies or Procedures introduced via this business plan. Therefore equality impact assessment not deemed to be required.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

61. No property implications: the content of this business plan makes no proposals for development/ changes which would affect property owned by any of our LTAs

OPTIONS

62. The options presented here are confirmed by SMB as their recommendation for how Solent Transport can best support their respective authorities' priorities, this follows consideration of other options and opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

63. That the Joint Committee notes the progress against the Solent Transport Business Plan for 2021/22
64. That Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council be invited to note progress against the Business Plan through their own decision-making processes, if required/desired.

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