

## 2.1 GENERAL

The City of Southampton lies on the south coast of England and is one of the major cities in the south outside London. It has a population of some 221,200 people (2004) and it forms the western end of the South Hampshire sub-region that extends to Portsmouth and Havant in the east and that has a total population of some 970,000.

Its unique location at the head of Southampton Water has historically ensured its development as one of the country's principal ports and it is still the case that the Port of Southampton is a key driver of the local economy.

The City has excellent transport links to the national networks - rail, road, air and sea - and by reason of the Port and the Airport, it also has excellent international links. It is a vibrant, multi-cultural urban area which has much to offer residents and visitors alike in terms of education, employment, healthcare and leisure.

## 2.2 THE TRANSPORT NETWORK

Box 1 provides information on the City's highway and transport network.

<b>Box 1 – Facts and Figures</b>		
<b>Highway Network</b>		<b>Public Transport</b>
• Principal Roads	54.8km	• Three main bus operators
• Non-principal classified roads	58.3km	• Almost 900 bus stops
• Unclassified roads	466.0km	• 18.9M bus trips during 2004-2005
<b>Total</b>	<b>579.1km</b>	• Eight passenger rail stations, served by four passenger train operating companies
Footways	approx. 1600km	• Central Station handles more than 5M passengers per year
Street lighting columns	approx. 26,000	• Two ferry operators
		• 263 Hackney Carriage licences and over 400 Private Hire licences
		• 26,000 concessionary fares pass holders
		• 2,850 Dial-a-Ride members

The City is well served by all major forms of transport. It has eight railway stations within its boundary, served by train services operated by four different companies. Southampton Central has direct services to London, Brighton, Portsmouth,

Bournemouth, Weymouth, Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and many other destinations in the Midlands and North (including Scotland). It also acts as the hub of a substantial local commuter network.

The City has an extensive network of bus services, both within the City itself and cross-boundary into the wider city-region. These services are run by two main operators, with one other smaller operator running a well-patronised network entirely within the City.

Immediately to the north of the City boundary is Southampton Airport. This is one of the fastest growing regional airports in the country, with a major increase in flights in recent years as the result of the arrival of low-cost carriers. Daily flights go to a variety of destinations, both in the UK and in continental Europe. The airport was voted "Airport of the Year" in 2004 – 2005. Southampton Parkway station is immediately adjacent and as a result, it has the shortest travel distance between train and plane of any UK airport.

The Port of Southampton is owned and operated by ABP. It is one of the biggest ports in the country and it is the UK's principal cruise port. In 2005 alone, it handled well over 200 cruise calls. A considerable proportion of the freight handled through the port travels by rail, much of it through the two Freightliner container terminals. Significant railflows also exist for car import and export, and for bulk aggregates.

The City is also extensively provided with green and open spaces, representing some 16% of the City's total land area. Many of these are laid out with a network of walking and cycling routes, providing opportunities for active, recreational travel in attractive surroundings.

### 2.3 THE VISION FOR TRANSPORT

The City's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is increasingly adopting a central role in shaping the development of the City. A key milestone in this process was the publication of the Community Strategy, setting out the proposed approach to a wide range of cross-cutting issues within the City. One of these issues was transport and the Community Strategy contains the following Vision Statement for Transport:

***'That by 2020, Southampton's comprehensive transport system will be unobtrusive, swift, safe and affordable – and easy for everyone to access, understand and use. It will be both environmentally and economically sustainable and there will be free-flowing movement of people and goods, and people will be able to make choices about how to travel into, around and away from Southampton.'***

This Vision Statement outlines the key elements of the transport network for the future to which the City aspires. It describes a transport system which will be efficient, accessible and safe, which will support economic development, will offer real choice and will be environmentally sensitive, both in terms of its impact and its sustainability. The definition 'comprehensive' implies that it will address the whole range of the City's transport-related needs. It has formed the starting point for the formulation of the objectives of this LTP.

### 2.4 CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As part of its leadership role of the City, the Council has set out what it considers to be its five key priorities, to be taken into account as part of all of its activities. These are:

- Tackling deprivation and inequalities
- Promoting life-long learning for all people

- Improving community safety and reducing crime and disorder
- Improving the street scene and the environment
- Promoting independent living

These priorities cut across most areas of Council activity, but it is apparent that transport has a key role to play in the achievement of most, if not all, of them.

The Council also has a series of wider objectives that derive from its other corporate strategies and where transport has a role to play in their achievement.

These are:

- Urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal
- Promoting economic development
- Reducing crime and disorder
- Supporting the night-time economy
- Improving standards of health
- Raising educational aspirations
- Supporting the provision of decent homes

These priorities and wider objectives have formed the basis for the LTP objectives in Chapter 4 and the Local Transport Strategy in Chapter 5, in particular in section 5.5.2.3.

## **2.5 NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY**

In developing a long-term transport strategy and implementation programme for the City, however, it is vitally important that the wider policy context in national, regional and local terms is considered and that the resulting strategy is fully consistent with the aims and ambitions of all of them.

### **2.5.1 The Shared Priorities for Transport**

In July 2002, central government and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed a set of seven Shared Priorities for local authorities. These priorities are a focus for the efforts of government and local councils, to improve public services.

One of the Shared Priorities related to meeting local transport needs more effectively and covered four main thematic areas:

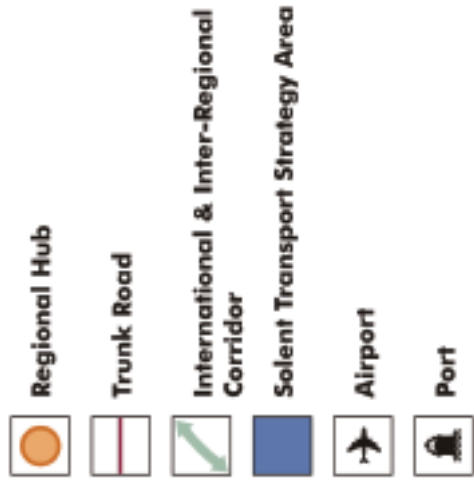
- Accessibility
- Congestion
- Road safety
- Air quality

It is vital that the policy direction of this LTP facilitates the delivery of these Shared Priorities, and the LTP objectives, the Local Transport Strategy and the implementation programmes have been developed accordingly.

### **2.5.2 South East Plan**

The South East Plan, as the Regional Spatial Strategy, will have major implications for the City and the sub-region over the next twenty years. The final version is due to be adopted in 2008 and will provide a strategy for the delivery of approximately 80,000 homes in the South Hampshire sub-region, underpinned by an annual economic growth rate of 3-3.5%.

Map 1: Regional corridors



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There is still a degree of uncertainty about the final spatial development options for the sub-region as the consultation process and public examination of the South East Plan will not take place until later in 2006. Although consistent with the strategic direction of the South East Plan, the longer-term strategies are broadly drawn at present, with more detailed strategies to be developed once the spatial options are finally agreed and the impacts of these and a range of transport interventions have been modelled in more detail.

### 2.5.3 Regional Transport Strategy

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) published in mid 2004 by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) forms the transport section of the South East Plan and is a statutory guidance document. Although published comparatively recently, it will inevitably be subject to early review as the emerging shape of development in the South East becomes clearer over the next few months.

The RTS has particular significance for the City and for the wider sub-region. The Port of Southampton and Southampton Airport are both identified as *International Gateways* (as is the Port of Portsmouth) and Southampton and Portsmouth are both identified as *Regional Hubs*, implying that transport networks will increasingly tend to be focussed on them as new developments take place. Map 1 shows the City and the sub-region in the context of the South East as a whole.

This LTP contains strategies to ensure that high quality links to the regional and national networks are provided from both the Port and the Airport to enable them to fulfil the roles identified. It also sets out, in broad strategic terms, how the two cities of South Hampshire are expected to have their roles as centres of gravity for the sub-region emphasised, with enhanced local transport networks being focussed on them (the 'hub and spoke' model) as opposed to a new 'Solent City' being created, with the consequent need to develop cross-regional networks.

The vision of the RTS is ***"a high quality transport system to act as a catalyst for continued economic growth and provide for an improved quality of life for all in a sustainable and socially inclusive manner: a regional transport system which progressively reaches the standards of the best in North West Europe."***

With the emergence over the next few months of the South Hampshire Strategy (the sub-regional strategy for the area, developed as part of the South East Plan) there will be a need to review the LTP strategies, policies and programmes to ensure that they are fully consistent with this as it develops. As outlined, the emerging understanding of the way in which development is likely to occur in South Hampshire aligns with the RTS, and it is expected that, as more detailed work takes place to look at the spatial options, this understanding will be confirmed.

Annex H contains a checklist showing how this LTP is consistent with the policies of the RTS.

### 2.5.4 Regional Economic Strategy

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for South East England was published by SEEDA (the South East of England Development Agency) in 2002. It is a ten-year strategy covering the period to 2012 and it sets out how the economic performance of the South East can be improved. South Hampshire is identified as an "area of economic opportunity" in the Strategy.

Priority 13 of the RES is entitled *'Transport – secure a sustainable transport network'*. It identifies two key issues for the period covered by the Strategy: a need to concentrate on delivery and not on more studies, and the challenge of congestion. Delivery is framed in terms of the need to concentrate on carrying forward the programme of maintenance and basic improvements to the existing road and rail networks as a pre-requisite to implementing new schemes. Congestion is recognised as a by-product of economic growth and the RES is clear that the link between economic growth and traffic growth must be weakened.

It goes on to state that ***"this means recognising that demand management is an integral part of the overall transport policy for the region, alongside the necessary investment in public transport and road schemes"***.

The RES then sets out four strategic transport actions that flow from these two key issues. These are:

- Establishment of a regional transport compact
- Ensuring the regional transport system supports national and international priorities
- Improvement of cross-regional movements
- Support for economic development and regeneration

All of these are relevant to the South Hampshire sub-region, in particular the second (because of the identified International Gateway role of the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth, and of Southampton Airport) and the fourth (how the development of, for instance, the rail route north from Southampton can contribute towards handling the growth of the area) It is also important to note that part of the role of the proposed regional transport compact would be to *"secure specific commitments from all parties to address issues of demand and supply. This will embrace the role of congestion charging within demand management, as well as improvements to the existing network"*.

There are also specific policy references, such as Policy RE 1: Sustainable Economic Development, which establish principles for the identification of employment sites that accord with the policy direction of this LTP by requiring that, amongst other things, they should be in locations that minimise commuting, promote sustainable communities, intensify the use of existing sites and focus on urban areas. It should be noted that, although published as recently as 2002, the RES is currently being revised.

### **2.5.5 The Planning Context – Local Plan Review, Local Development Framework and Government Guidance**

The Local Development Framework (LDF) will comprise a portfolio of planning documents to be produced over the next three to four years that, together with the LTP, will play a significant part in the delivery of the spatial elements of the transport strategy for the City.

Local planning is influenced by Government planning policy. Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) are currently replacing the older Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes and these set out how Government wants local planning authorities to address development in their areas. They describe, amongst other things, how sequential testing should be applied to development proposals, how planning decisions can help to reduce the demand for travel, and outline the development control standards that should be applied to new developments (e.g. car parking standards). When taken together, the overall direction of the statements ensures that planning decisions can make a significant contribution towards influencing travel demand and network utilisation, and the policies and strategies contained in this LTP are consistent with PPS's.



### 2.5.6 The Local Plan

The City has recently reviewed and adopted its new Local Plan, a land use development plan that has been produced under the earlier planning system. The content of the Plan will gradually be superseded by the spatial planning policies set by the Local Development Framework under the new Planning Act. The transport policies in the Local Plan Review, as well as being consistent with the PPS's, are also consistent with those outlined in this LTP. Of particular relevance to the LTP are those policies that cover:

- Integrating transport and development
- Accommodating travel demands
- Development access
- Parking standards
- Safety and security
- Accessibility and movement
- Air quality
- Lighting
- City Centre parking provision
- Safeguarding for transport improvements (Dock Gate 4 access improvements only)

### 2.5.7 Core Strategy and Area Action Plan for the City Centre

As part of the Local Development Framework, two major statutory spatial development plans will be produced:

- The 'Core Strategy' that will outline the spatial vision and development framework for the City up to 2026;
- The 'Area Action Plan' (AAP) for the City Centre that will outline the development framework and masterplan for the City Centre.

Work has already begun on the two plans, including background evidence work and visioning for the City and City Centre. The City Centre Vision 2 document was produced in 2005 and following a series of workshops, the City Spatial Development

Vision was also produced in 2005. These documents currently have no statutory planning weight but they inform the general direction intended for the future development of the City. To achieve the vision, it is presently intended that the City Centre will:

- Reconnect with its waterfront
- Establish a north-south pedestrian spine centred on the Bargate
- Become increasingly pedestrian-friendly, with through traffic restricted except for public transport and cycling
- Become a high quality urban environment
- Promote the Old Town
- Incorporate new employment, retail, leisure and residential uses
- Be more attractive, efficient and welcoming to all users
- Develop a night-time economy to appeal to a wide audience
- Become a major centre for culture and tourism

The Core Strategy and the AAP will become the spatial development plans and, following adoption, will seek to implement a broad development strategy for the period up to 2026. The objectives and strategy of this LTP take into account the ambitions outlined above and, together with wider long-term transport visions, will be incorporated within these spatial documents. This will include a transport strategy for the City Centre.

#### **2.5.8 Medium Term Plan**

The City Council recently adopted the latest version of its Medium Term Plan, covering the period from 2005 – 2008. This document is intended to bridge the gap between the annual programmes of the Council and its longer-term strategies by linking the key challenges and aspirations set out in the Community Strategy with the Council's own priorities, statutory obligations and resource forecasts over the next three years.

The Medium Term Plan (MTP) is at the heart of the Council's Performance Management Framework. It translates the need to secure better outcomes for the City into specified results through the Council's annual business planning and employee appraisal systems. It is thus a guide to the Council's priorities in the medium term, enabling the annual programmes to be placed in a more strategic context.

The MTP contains a chapter entitled '*Improving the City's Transport Provision*' and this sets out a view of where the Council wants to be in 2008 and what the key challenges are perceived as being over that timescale. It also lists a number of planned initiatives and expected outcomes over that period. The principal achievement areas are:

- A significant improvement in the quality of the roads infrastructure as measured by the condition indicators
- Actions to encourage people to use cars less, leading to a more pleasant environment and improved public transport
- Reduced disruption as a result of improved controls over roadworks using the powers in the 2004 Traffic Management Act
- Significant improvements to public transport information
- Extended bus priority
- The development of major projects to introduce Park & Ride and to re-model Central Station
- Improved road safety
- More widespread introduction of travel plans



- Promotion of active travel
- Support for the development of Solent Transport
- Reduction in the use of transport by the Council

These issues are covered extensively in Chapter 5 and 6 of this LTP.

### 2.5.9 Making Smarter Choices Work

Whilst being a publication providing guidance rather than policy, the DfT publication 'Making Smarter Choices Work' sets out a range of transport interventions that can make significant contributions to reducing congestion and offer people genuine travel choices. They can also make cost-effective contributions to other policies, such as improving accessibility and social inclusion, encouraging regeneration, improving air quality and helping to increase levels of physical activity.

Smarter Choices include such initiatives as travel planning (workplace, school and personalised), public transport information and marketing, car sharing, car clubs, and travel awareness campaigns, and the Local Transport Strategy in Chapter 5 covers many of these as part of its interventions strategy.

### 2.5.10 Best Value Reviews

The LTP also needs to reflect the outcomes of recent Best Value Reviews undertaken by the Council, in particular those that looked at Community Safety and at the Council's Use of Transport. Both of these reviews were subsequently inspected by the Audit Commission, the outcomes being that Community Safety was rated as a 'Good' service with excellent prospects for improvement, and the Use of Transport was graded as 'Good' with promising prospects for improvement.

Elements of transport policy were involved in each of these reviews, and the Action Plans developed following the inspections both contain transport-related actions that have been incorporated into this LTP.

## 2.6 CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The LTP has been developed with the involvement of a wide range of local stakeholders, including local business and commerce, service providers, local communities and special interest groups. There has also been extensive dialogue within the Council itself with other disciplines, such as Community Safety, Life-Long Learning, Housing Strategy, Health and Social Policy, and Planning Policy.

An extensive consultation process on this LTP was carried out using the Provisional Plan (published in July 2005) as the basis, including two half-day workshop sessions during the autumn of 2005 (one for stakeholder groups within the Council and one for external organisations), together with individual meetings with representatives of

key bodies, such as Associated British Ports (ABP), the Chamber of Commerce, bus and rail operators, the University and the NHS Primary Care Trust. Presentations were also made to meetings of the Neighbourhoods Partnerships, and the whole of the document was made available through the Council's website (and advertised as such).

The LTP is one of the Council's Policy Framework plans and as part of the formal adoption process, there were discussions at the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Panel, Cabinet and Full Council. It was also considered by the Council's Chief Officers' Management Team and Policy Co-ordinators' Group.

Crucially, the LTP was also developed through a series of regular joint working group meetings involving officers from neighbouring authorities (Hampshire, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight) and through internal meetings with other Directorates of the Council.

The full list of consultees, together with more detail about the methods of consultation and the outcomes, is shown in Annex J.

## **2.7 Solent Transport and PUSH**

Solent Transport was established in March 2003 as an innovative partnership between the highway authorities of South Hampshire, government agencies (including the Highways Agency) and the transport providers (bus, rail and ferry), its remit being to promote and manage the development of the transport network of the sub-region and enable better co-ordination of the activities being undertaken by the various stakeholders.

PUSH (the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) was established during 2004 as a grouping of the Leaders and Chief Executives of all of the local authorities in South Hampshire to address matters of sub-regional concern, in particular to co-ordinate the approach to the South East Plan.

With the advent of the South East Plan, it became clear that the Local Transport Strategy (which forms a key element of the LTP) would, in effect, represent the transport section of the sub-regional strategy for South Hampshire (this having been identified as one of the areas for which a specific strategy would be required). There was thus a need to ensure that the workings of PUSH and Solent Transport became more integrated and, as a result, PUSH has now endorsed the principle of Solent Transport acting as their transport sub-group.

The sub-regional part of the Local Transport Strategy (section 5.4 and Appendix 1) has thus been developed jointly by the three South Hampshire authorities (in consultation with the Isle of Wight) working under the umbrella of Solent Transport, and it has subsequently been endorsed, both by the Solent Transport Executive and by PUSH.



