

Frequently Asked Questions on Connected Southampton – Transport Strategy 2040 Strategy

Why is the City Council producing an updated transport strategy now?

The Council has a legal duty to produce a Local Transport Plan (containing a long-term transport strategy and a shorter term implementation plan) and to update it as it sees fit. Our existing strategy was published in 2011, and this now needs updating to take account of the latest Government and City Council priorities, strategies and guidance and changes to the way transport improvements are funded. For example, since 2011, addressing the poor air quality in UK cities like Southampton has become a national and local priority. Some funding for major transport improvements that used to come from central Government is now allocated by Local Enterprise Partnerships – partly based on how well improvements contribute towards objectives set out in their Strategic Economic Plans (published in 2014).

What are the main challenges in the future that will affect Southampton’s transport network?

Southampton is a growing city – by 2040 there will be 30,000 more people living in the city and 24,000 more people working here than today. This growing population will mean an increased demand for travel – 74,000 more trips (one-way journeys) per day. To be an economically successful city, Southampton also needs to address below average productivity and health inequalities and tackle problems of poor air quality. Investment is required to help ensure that our strategic road and rail connections to and from the city on which businesses depend continue to be reliable and can cope with the demands placed on them.

What is new in this transport strategy that wasn’t in the previous one?

The strategy is seeking to develop a Mass Rapid Transit public transport system for the city on well used bus corridors. This would offer frequent, reliable fast journeys by rapid bus or in the future perhaps tram or light rail.

We want to make the most of technological innovations, encouraging take up of low emission cars, vans and buses, autonomous and driverless cars, and to test out new ways of delivering transport services that technology now enables.

Learning lessons from Uber, other firms, and the experiences of other cities we want to develop Mobility as a Service, and Demand Responsive Transport. Both enable service users to book flexible forms of transport, using their mobile phones or tablets.

The strategy is looking to manage car parking differently, to tackle an over-supply of car parking in the city centre, helping encourage developers to use land more efficiently and encourage denser development with no or low levels of car parking.

You say that the strategy is bold and ambitious, what makes this the case?

The draft Strategy proposes to focus on creating a liveable city where people and goods can move easily, efficiently and safely. More road space and more priority will be given over to public

transport, active travel, and spaces for people. To manage the network and dominance of traffic, technology and innovative practices will be introduced to shape Southampton and enable it to accommodate new trips. There is still a role for road-based transport in supporting the economy of the city in ensuring reliable connections to our main economic hubs. We need to plan for growth and make it sustainable, invest in the network, and then maximise how the network can perform and function so it is able to cope with the growing and competing demands placed on it.

What changes and improvements to roads and transport can I expect to see in the city as a direct result of this Transport Strategy?

The strategy aims to change how people travel around Southampton. By 2040, people will be less dependent on the private car, there will be less pollution from transport. People will have safe, frequent and reliable access to jobs, shops and services by public transport walking and cycling.

Road space will be re-allocated away from multi-lane highway for general traffic, and instead more will be allocated to space-efficient modes of buses, minibuses, bikes and people walking. This will mean buses will not get held up by delays at congestion hotspots.

New developments in the city centre, where most of the city's new housing will be built will have limited car parking – as living in the city centre, it is easier to shop and travel around without needing to use a car. It makes sense to use high value land in city centres efficiently. Near stations and bus routes, the level of new development can be denser, so we will see fewer large surface level car parks, which are land hungry and not the best use of space.

There will be more attractive pedestrian-friendly streets in the city centre and district centres. For local trips within and around neighbourhoods it will be quick and convenient to walk or cycle to access local services.

What will be the main benefits arising from the new Strategy?

Having an up-to-date transport strategy for Southampton that sets out a long-term vision for transforming how people travel in the city will help the Council to bid for and secure funding from the Government and other sources. It will help provide a high level framework for the Council to then develop more detailed supporting plans for particular areas of focus – such as public transport, walking and an Access, Movement and Public Realm Strategy for the city centre. It will help give businesses and transport operators confidence to invest in their activities in Southampton, by helping reassure them that the Council has a long-term commitment to improving transport and travel in the city and help to tackle congestion and improve the reliability of networks.

When will the proposed transport improvement projects be delivered?

The Delivery section of the draft Plan gives approximate time frames for when each of the projects proposed in the plan will be delivered. If funding and support for them can be secured, most of them would be delivered in the short term – by 2024, and some more complex and ambitious projects will be delivered by 2029. Some specific proposals could have adverse impacts on people and further investigation will need to be carried out to ensure potential impacts of their introduction are fully understood before coming to any decision on them.

How much will the various measures proposed in the draft strategy cost to deliver, and how will they be paid for?

There are around 75 projects that are proposed in the draft strategy. Details of these can be found in the Delivery section of the 'How Will We Get There? Delivering Connected Southampton' chapter. As the tables in this chapter indicate, these projects are at different stages of development and some can be delivered (or begin to be delivered in the case of networks) in the next 5 years and others will be delivered within 10 years. This is because some projects have been designed, are fully funded and will be delivered in the coming months. Other proposed projects will require further investigation to see if they are feasible and can be built. If these are feasible, then funding will need to be found to deliver them and then consultation will be carried out on the proposed design.

The precise cost of a number of projects has yet to be confirmed, and will depend on the design solution selected. The tables therefore indicate an approximate cost. Funding will be used from a number of different sources. This includes grant from the Government, a levy or charge on new developments, funding bids to the Solent Local Enterprise partnership, locally raised revenue and funding bids to the Government.

With planned development both in the city and in neighbouring local authority areas, this will mean more cars on the road, so what is the Strategy going to do to tackle traffic congestion in rush hour?

The majority of new housing planned for Southampton will be delivered within the city centre of Southampton, by redevelopment of identified sites and making better, more efficient use of land. A large proportion of employment growth will also be in the city centre or at the port, hospitals, universities and industrial estates. Development – whether residential or employment in the city centre is less likely to lead to large numbers of additional car trips. Distances to job opportunities, shops and services within the city centre are shorter than in suburban areas and most of these places are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Employers locating in more accessible areas that are well served by public transport can be easily reached by people from a wide catchment area. Therefore, there is less need for residents to own or use a car if they live or work in the city centre.

The main routes into the city centre are already congested. Rather than planning for more cars, which are not space efficient, we will give greater priority for bus services and cycling, helping enable more people to move along main corridors into the city centre.

We will work closely with neighbouring councils to encourage new development to be located in sustainable locations that are well-served by public transport or where existing bus services could easily be extended to cover them, to provide a realistic and convenient alternative to driving.

How will the Council measure the level of progress in changing and improving travel?

We collect a range of data on road traffic volumes travelling around the city through traffic surveys and a series of permanent vehicle and cycle counters and via roadside survey counts. We also receive information from bus operators about monthly passenger numbers and the rail industry public figures about the estimated number of passengers using rail stations. By developing Smart City data collection infrastructure, this enables us to obtain and use real-time data on traffic volumes

and journey times. Through this data, and through other data collected for Connected Southampton supporting strategies, we will monitor how effective the delivery of schemes is in achieving changes to how people travel. We will publish regular progress reports to monitor trends and progress made on indicators for all eight themes.

If the City Council doesn't control motorways, trains or buses, how is it going to be able to improve these travel options?

We already work very closely with Highways England, who manage the motorway and trunk road network in England (including the M271, M27 and M3), with passenger rail operators and Network Rail on prioritising, developing and delivering transport infrastructure projects. We also have strong and close partnerships with all the bus, ferry and taxi operators where we meet regularly to consider ways we can improve services and the customer experience. We will continue to work with these organisations to lobby and influence them to deliver improvements to their networks and services for the benefit of people living and working in and visiting Southampton.

How is the City Council going to make it easier for people to travel around the city without having to rely on the car for everyday journeys quite so much?

We will be investing in projects that help make public transport, walking and cycling more attractive alternative options, so these alternatives are able to match the convenience and cost of travelling by car. A lot of shorter journeys made by car could be walked or cycled instead. To help encourage this we will be making improve cycle routes by creating a good network of 14 safe, well-signed cycle links serving the whole city. By improving the quality of pavements and streets and discouraging rat-running traffic we will make neighbourhoods areas more walkable. We will work with schools and businesses to develop travel plans and continue the My Journey behaviour change campaign we can encourage more journeys by these other modes of travel.

When will Southampton get a Park and Ride service like other cities like Portsmouth and Winchester have?

The Council's previous transport strategies have set out aspirations to develop Park and Ride for Southampton, but this has never been viable due to the low cost and good availability of city centre car parking. We recognise that in order to make Park and Ride workable and cost effective, we need to reduce the level of spare parking capacity in the city centre and use pricing to change travel behaviour.

Rather than looking to build large Park and Ride sites near the motorway which are very expensive to build and then cost a lot serve with dedicated buses we will learn from cost-effective approaches that have worked well in other cities and proved to be affordable and sustainable. We intend to take an incremental approach to developing Park and Ride, where we will work with major employers who have shortages of on-site parking on site to see if 'remote' park and ride sites can be developed for their staff. We will explore if opportunities exist to use these as well to serve the city centre. This would require bus priority measures to make the bus just as expensive or as quick as driving.

I travel around using lots of different travel modes. How can I understand what improvements are planned without having to read the whole document?

Our current strategy from 2011 is structured around our aspirations for each different transport mode. People use different travel modes to get around depending on which works best for a particular journey – sometimes they are a driver, other times a pedestrian, a cyclist or a bus passenger. Rather than setting out improvements one transport mode at a time, this draft strategy focusses more on the outcomes we want to achieve – like helping the economy and improving the quality of places and the environment. The eight themes explain what projects are proposed. When reading the strategy, you can choose to focus in on the themes that most interest or concern you.