

South East Dorset Strategic Planning and Transportation Joint Committee

7 March 2011

South East Dorset Transport Study – Recommended Strategy and Implementation Plan

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To advise the Joint Committee of progress with the Transport Study, and outline the final recommendations for the long term transport strategy for SE Dorset.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. That the Joint Committee approve:
 - (i) The final recommended Strategy and Implementation Plan, as outlined in Section 6 of this report, and recommend that it be integrated into the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. Further details will be presented at the meeting.
- 2.2. That the Joint Committee note:
 - (i) Progress made on the Transport Study including the results of the recent draft strategy consultation.

3. Context

- 3.1. The SE Dorset Transport Study Partnership is made up of Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset Councils, the Highways Agency, Government Office for the South West (GOSW), the SW Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and the Department for Transport (DfT). In line with Multi Area Agreement (MAA) responsibilities for transport, the Borough of Poole is lead authority for the Study Partnership.
- 3.2. The purpose of the study is to develop the long term transport strategy and includes identifying major transport infrastructure improvements and policies that would be required to facilitate the planned future growth in housing and employment across the SE Dorset area to 2026
- 3.3. An agreed long term strategy to 2026 is a requirement for the next Local Transport Plan 3 to be submitted by 31 March 2011, and will strengthen the evidence base for the SE Dorset Transport Contributions Scheme. It is also vital to have an evidence-based strategy in place if any future bids for transport funding from central Government are to be successful. An agreed overarching joint transport strategy would significantly increase the likelihood that substantial funds could be secured for SE Dorset from the recently announced Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

4. Technical Analysis - South East Dorset Multi- Modal Transport Model

- 4.1. The development of the transport model covering the South East Dorset area formed the basis of Phase 2 of the Study. In forecasting forward to 2026, the key inputs are the projections of future population and employment levels, and the locations of growth points.
- 4.2. As a result of the coalition Government abolishing the RSS targets, it was necessary to amend the future year forecast model to bring it into line with the 'most likely' future development scenario. This information has been gathered from each of the 5 Planning Authorities in the SE Dorset area, and fed into the new Forecast model to provide a future 'Baseline' against which the impacts of potential measures can be compared. This enables the comparison and appraisal of the relative impacts/ benefits of various 'Do something' transportation scenarios for SE Dorset.
- 4.3. The 'most likely' development scenario includes in excess of 33,000 new homes in the core area in the period 2008 to 2026, plus additional employment land at the airport and Ferndown industrial estate area.
- 4.4. The transport model outputs provide a comparison of the relative performance across the SE Dorset transport network of the recommended strategy against the 2008 Base year, the 2026 Reference case (or Do Minimum) and the consultation draft strategy. This provides an indication of what would happen if nothing was done between now and 2026, and the impact of the recommended strategy.
- 4.5. The 2026 Reference case model shows that this level of growth has a severe detrimental impact on the future transport network if nothing is done. Total distance travelled is predicted to increase by around 30% in the peak hour periods, with vehicle delays and related congestion set to more than double across the network, with marked increases on key corridors. These effects would spread into off-peak periods as drivers seek to avoid the worst impacts. This would have knock-on impacts on carbon consumption, reduced journey reliability, and poorer accessibility to employment and key services. This worsening of congestion, with the effects spreading throughout the day would have a detrimental impact on the local economy including the tourist industry.
- 4.6. If the development aspirations change in the future, the model can be adapted to assess their impact on the transport networks. Maintaining the transport model will ensure that the tools are available to update the transport strategy to respond to future changes in development levels, and to provide an up to date evidence base when seeking funds from central Government.

5. Developing a Transport Strategy for SE Dorset

Draft Strategy Consultation

- 5.1. The recent consultation on the draft strategy has been undertaken in parallel with the consultation on the draft Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) for Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset. The consultation ran from 6th January to 28th February 2011.

- 5.2. As with previous consultations during the Study, the consultation methodology included a questionnaire available in a newsletter format for the public to complete and return (postage free). Similar information with an online questionnaire was also available at the study website. A workshop for the 'Wider Reference Group' of stakeholders took place on 20th January.
- 5.3. The public consultation has been promoted in the Council publications delivered to every household across the Study area since the New Year, as well as online links from each Council's website. All those individuals and organisations that have previously responded to the Transport Study consultations were contacted plus relevant Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) contacts. Additionally, press releases and the use of social media (e.g. Facebook) have been utilised to generate as much public interest as possible in the consultation.
- 5.4. The draft strategy approved for consultation at the last meeting of the Joint Committee (29 November 2010) was illustrated in terms of measures and schemes to be implemented in the short/ medium term up to 2020 and longer term beyond 2020. Respondents were encouraged to express their level of support for, or opposition to, the components of the short/ medium term and long term strategy, and to identify their 3 favourite and 3 least favoured specific schemes and/ or policies.
- 5.5. The response from the general public was 454 completed questionnaires [304 returned paper versions and 150 online] (as of 23 Feb).
- 5.6. A number of organisations responded to the consultation in writing, as did neighbouring Local Authorities. Views were also received from the 'Wider Reference Group' of transport operators, business representatives, environmental and interest groups. A series of reports detailing the consultation methodology and an analysis of the responses from each stage of consultation are available on the Study website www.sedorsetmms.com. Further details of the recent draft strategy consultation are included in Appendix B
- 5.7. The headline findings that may be drawn from the response to the draft strategy consultation are as follows:

Respondents were asked if they supported the strategies outlined in the consultation in the short/ medium term and the long term.

- Support for short/ medium term measures – 71.6%
- Support for long term strategy – 65.2%

Respondents were then asked which three proposals they thought were the most important in order to improve transport in the study area in the short/ medium term and the long term.

Table 5.1 - Most favoured **short/medium** term measures:

	Description	%age of responses
1.	Improved walking and cycling	11.9
2.	Bus Showcase Corridors	10.2

3.	Junction Improvements	9.9
4.	Providing through trains to Swanage	8.6
5.	Park and Ride	8.3

Table 5.2 - Most favoured **long term** measures

	Description:	%age of responses
1.	Dorset Area Rapid Transit System (DARTS)	15.2
2.	New highways link west of airport to Ringwood Road and Canford Bottom	9.7
3.	Improved walking and cycling	8.6
4.	Widening A31 between Ameysford and Merley	8.3
5.	Bus showcase corridors	8.2

Respondents were also asked what 3 proposals are least suitable for the South East Dorset area.

Table 5.3 - **Least** favoured measures:

	Description	%age of responders
1.	Increased parking charges	21.4
2.	Greener travel options - travel plans, car clubs, car sharing, travel awareness campaigns	9.2
3.	Park and Ride	8.6
4.	New highway link west of airport to Ringwood Road and Canford Bottom	7.3
5.	Bus showcase corridors	6.5

6. Recommended Strategy and Implementation Plan

6.1. In addition to consultation, the development of the recommended strategy has also involved:

- analysis of strategy options for the future year 2026 to assess their performance against a range of factors including value for money, carbon consumption and operational feasibility using output from the transport model;
- investigating potential measures and their deliverability, including
 - availability of finance/funding,
 - engineering feasibility and environmental impact

- 6.2. In order to identify the phasing of implementation, further detailed work has taken place in parallel with the consultation to refine the final preferred strategy and consider the different potential levels of future funding. This has involved planning for reductions in Central Government transport funding, as well as consideration of income generated by the SE Dorset Transport Contributions Scheme and other possible sources of future funding. Further details on the potential sources of funding and an indicative programme are included in Appendix A
- 6.3. The main elements of recommended strategy are summarised below, with the delivery programme based on availability of future funding to ensure that the final recommended strategy is affordable and deliverable.
- 6.4. The recommended strategy has been developed to address current problems on the transport network, while seeking to meet the future challenges created by the planned growth in housing and employment by 2026 across the SE Dorset area.
- 6.5. Further details on the performance of the recommended strategy compared to both the existing situation, and future Reference case 'baseline' are included in Appendix A and will be presented at the meeting.
- 6.6. The recommended strategy is broken down into short, medium, long term up to 2026 and longer term measures beyond 2026. Further details on the development methodology of the recommended strategy and its various components are also included in Appendix A, and will be presented at the meeting.
- 6.7. Short Term strategy (2011 – 2013/14)

As a result of the relative scarcity of funding in the immediate short term, initial efforts would concentrate on low cost/ high return schemes in the first three years, which are identified in more detail in the LTP3 Implementation Plan. Resources for the development of medium term measures would also be required in this period. Initiatives include:

 - a) Smarter choices including personalised travel plans, expanded travel plans, passenger information
 - b) Low cost improvements to public transport (especially within Bus Showcase Corridors)
 - c) ITS improvements – extend and improve traffic control and information systems, especially on key corridors across the conurbation
 - d) Junction improvements especially on key corridors
 - e) Cycling & walking schemes
 - f) Highways improvement – A31 Canford Bottom [Highways Agency Scheme - awaiting decision]
 - g) Freight Quality Partnership measures
 - h) Development/implementation of Travel Smartcard (Oyster card type scheme)
 - i) Development/progress of major scheme bids for implementation in the medium term, managed by a joint strategic projects team.

6.8. Medium Term strategy (2014 – 2019/20)

Assuming transport funding returns to pre-recession levels, the medium term would see the implementation of a number of strategic improvements to public transport and highway networks as below. The development of longer term schemes would also be required in this period. Initiatives include:

- a) Formation of an Integrated Transport Authority or similar Joint Strategic governance arrangements
- b) Joint Traffic Control Centre with single Traffic Manager
- c) Cycling and Walking – completion of the strategic network
- d) Building on smarter choices success of early years
- e) Phase 1 Bus Showcase Corridors – A35-Christchurch–Bournemouth-Poole and North Bournemouth
- f) Phase 2 Bus Showcase Corridors –Wallisdown, North South link to Poole, Castle Lane
- g) Express bus services to outlying areas
- h) B3073 Parley Lane improvements – Blackwater to Chapel Gate
- i) Airport transport Hub/Interchange
- j) Poole Regeneration gyratories/ links
- k) A31 Ringwood [Highways Agency]– westbound widening
- l) Improvement of key junctions, e.g. Bear Cross, Ensbury Park, Queen Anne Drive, Shah of Persia, Bakers Arms
- m) Swanage Rail – running through services to Wareham
- n) Increased rail frequency – Brockenhurst to Wareham
- o) Park and Rail – Wareham/ Hinton Admiral/ Holton Heath
- p) Development of future Major Scheme bids

6.9. Long Term strategy (2020 – 2026)

To meet the projected growth in traffic as a result of population growth and increased economic activity, over the longer term significant additional infrastructure will be required. Initiatives include:

- a) A31 Trunk Road dualling – Ameysford to Merley
- b) Phase 3 Bus Showcase Corridors –extensions to Ferndown, Wimborne and east of Christchurch

6.10. Longer Term strategy (beyond 2026)

Due to costs and deliverability issues the following schemes are deferred for future re-evaluation and post 2026 delivery.

- a) East West road link (single c/way) - Chapel Gate to Magna Road/ Canford Bottom
- b) A338 3 lane widening – Blackwater to Cooper Dean

- c) DARTS (Rapid Transit) system – operation of train/ tram vehicles across the conurbation, utilising the existing heavy rail network with on street running section connecting to Bournemouth centre.
- 6.11. It is recommended that the long term strategy be reviewed at least every five years, or as required to respond to changing circumstances and future levels of funding.

Refinement of the draft strategy and implementation plan

- 6.12. The refinement of the strategy has been based on a balanced consideration of the availability of funding, the consultation findings, and the costs, benefits and deliverability of the major strategy components. Further commentary on the main amendments to the recommended strategy and implementation plan, including those areas highlighted in the consultation, is included below:

Bus Based Park and Ride

- 6.13. The concept of providing bus based Park and Ride sites on the periphery of the conurbation has been the existing policy in the first two Local Transport Plans. A number of sites identified from previous studies were tested using the up to date transport model. The concept of Park and Ride and the specific sites were included in the draft strategy for consultation.
- 6.14. Concerns have been raised in the recent consultation about both the general principle of Park and Ride for SE Dorset and the merit of specific sites, in terms of the operation, funding and local impacts.
- 6.15. The concept of Park and Ride is to provide a high quality alternative to car drivers that currently drive into the town centres, adding to congestion in peak hours, and who park all day at their place of work, on street or in public town centre car parks. It also offers an opportunity to intercept those in the more rural wider 'travel to work area' with poor public transport and hence little alternative but to use their car on part of their journey to work.
- 6.16. The technical justification for Park and Ride relies on a number of factors, principally the need to balance parking supply against demand, in the town centres and at the peripheral Park and Ride sites combined. Where Park and Ride schemes work well there is large demand for parking that is not met in congested city/ town centres. Additional Park and Ride capacity on the periphery can also help enable the release of town centre car parks for redevelopment.
- 6.17. Park and Ride, *if implemented correctly*, can be an effective tool to reduce the impacts of car-based commuting into the built up area. Key attributes of a successful Park and Ride scheme are:
- to be located where it can intercept car commuters and provide an effective bus service to the town centre(s)
 - to be introduced in tandem with town centre parking policies designed to encourage all day commuter parking in the P+R sites on the periphery, thus freeing up short term capacity in the town centres for visitors and shoppers
- 6.18. However the technical analysis indicates that bus based Park and Ride operated at the potential sites identified on the periphery of the conurbation

would not succeed as a stand alone scheme. In the future year scenario modelled the levels of predicted patronage would not justify the capital investment and ongoing revenue requirements for operation of the scheme. However it is worth noting that the business case for Park and Ride would be stronger in the event of significant additional town centre developments in Bournemouth or Poole that may come forward over the long term.

- 6.19. In light of the technical analysis, the uncertainty around future town centre developments and feedback from the consultation, the recommendation of this Study is that bus based Park and Ride should only be brought forward if and when the conditions would necessitate it. This would be dependent on future parking policy, specifically in relation to the cost and availability of town centre parking, and the success of the other Public transport elements of the strategy.
- 6.20. This recommendation does not apply to rail based Park and Ride. The Study has identified increased parking capacity and facilities at smaller rail stations to the east and west of the conurbation, which in tandem with increased local rail frequency, would provide worthwhile benefits, without significant impacts and be more financially viable.
- 6.21. Bus based Park and Ride should be retained as an option to consider bringing forward in the long term. It is also recommended that if Park and Ride is brought forward, that sites north, west and east of the conurbation would be considered as a single package to be delivered together within a relatively short period, to ensure that a future Park and Ride scheme can fully serve the polycentric nature of the conurbation. Further work would be required to determine the exact site locations, requirements, costs and impacts as part of a future business case submission for funding.

Demand Management ~ Parking Policy

- 6.22. Improvements to public transport, cycling and walking on their own are unlikely to achieve the desired change in use of more sustainable modes. With congestion charging and workplace levy discounted earlier in the Transport Study, the ability to set parking charges to influence driver behaviour and mode choice is the main demand management tool available to the Authorities.
- 6.23. Currently town centre parking charges are set to balance parking demand and revenue against the need to retain vitality of the various town centres and support the local economy. This includes competing with private sector car parks, workplace parking and the spread of on-street all day parking by commuters in residential areas.
- 6.24. The recommendation of this Study is that **long stay** town centre parking charges for commuters are increased in real terms by 2026. This would encourage commuters who currently drive into town centres in peak hour periods to consider alternative sustainable modes such as public transport, walking or cycling in which the Authorities would be investing. The level of town centre long stay price increases would need to be balanced against future demand, including consideration of possible additional capacity at Park and Ride sites on the periphery, and the prevailing local economic conditions. Complementary measures should also be implemented in tandem to introduce self financing resident permit schemes to discourage on-street

parking by non residents, with the roll out of travel planning initiatives to counter single occupancy car commuting.

- 6.25. The intention is that the attractiveness of long stay all day parking for commuters would be reduced, thus freeing up short term capacity in the Town centres for visitors and shoppers. It would be necessary to implement this recommendation in such a manner to ensure a positive net impact on parking revenues as well as balancing the wider economic benefits.

East West Road Link

- 6.26. An indicative alignment for a single carriageway road link west of the airport (Chapel Gate Roundabout) bypassing Parley and linking with Bearwood and A31 at Canford Bottom has been assessed and was included in the draft strategy for consultation. This would provide a strategic East West link between the A31 and A338 Spur Road and serve the identified areas of future employment at the airport and Ferndown.
- 6.27. Whilst this road link has merits in relieving predicted congestion across the conurbation, especially along the Castle Lane corridor, the overall cost and likely difficulties in delivering a new road across the flood plain mean that this section of the east west link would not be implemented until after 2026. A future review of the strategy will need to consider if and when this link comes forward in the longer term, which would be dependant upon future circumstances and the success of other elements of the strategy. Significant additional work would be required to determine the preferred alignment for this road and to mitigate against the environmental impacts.

DARTS (Dorset Area Rapid Transit System)

- 6.28. The concept of a train~tram rapid transit system operating on a combination of the existing heavy rail system and new on street running section through Bournemouth Town centre was included within the consultation on the draft strategy.
- 6.29. Initial investigations by Study team have established that such a scheme is broadly feasible in engineering terms and analysis from the transport model illustrates that DARTS would attract significant patronage. Evidence from other tram schemes suggest that DARTS would also provide a high profile public transport attraction for the area, and have wider economic benefits. The findings of the current UK tram~train trial currently underway in Rotherham/ Sheffield area will help inform future investigations into the more detailed feasibility and operation of such a scheme.
- 6.30. Based on the technical analysis and indicative costs the recommendation of this Study is that the DARTS scheme has merit and is worthy of further detailed investigation. However due to current funding situation, and that this concept is still in its infancy as far as the UK is concerned, it is recognised that this scheme would not be implemented until after 2026.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The various measures identified above comprise the 'recommended' transport policies and infrastructure priorities up to 2026 and beyond that will be required to facilitate the projected population growth and economic development in the conurbation, whilst meeting the demands of tackling climate change and maintaining the quality of life of residents.

- 7.2. From the scale of the measures outlined in the recommended strategy above, it is clear that ongoing investment in staff and scheme development resources will be required by the Local Authorities and Highways Agency to progress the measures, if the predicted benefits of the strategy are to be achieved. Initially this would involve reallocation of staff resources to progress Smarter Choices initiatives in the short to medium term.
- 7.3. For major schemes, successful bids to the DfT/central government for funding typically involve 10-15% of total project costs being incurred in scheme development and business case appraisal. Further consideration of how the Authorities can best work together to deliver these strategic measures is required. The recommendation of this Study is that a joint strategic projects team would be required to progress these bids in the medium to long term, overseen by an Integrated Transport Authority (or similar joint strategic body with decision making powers)
- 7.4. The performance of the recommended strategy up to 2026 has been appraised against the existing objectives using current forecasts and the backdrop of transport trends in line with DfT guidance. It may need to be refined if the overarching objectives are revised, or if there is a dramatic change in travel behaviour as result of (say) a significant rise in fuel costs due to 'peak oil'. Also the strategy will need to reflect any changes to the guidance issued by the DfT on the evidence required to support future funding applications. Therefore it is essential to maintain an up to date transport model to help review the strategy throughout the Local Transport Plan period and to support future bids for funding towards the interventions identified.
- 7.5. Funding has been secured from the Study partnership to ensure completion of the Transport Strategy work in line with the latest DfT and Coalition government guidance and the recent White Paper on Transport [Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen – 19 Jan 2011]. The development of the transport model and the resultant transport strategy has been a significant investment by the Study partnership of £2.25 M. This needs to be considered in the context of the long term infrastructure requirements for the area and the opportunities to secure significant funding from central Government. A long term strategy, based on credible evidence base, provides the best opportunity to deliver the transportation improvements required in the area over the next 2 decades.

JOINT OFFICER GROUP, March 2011

APPENDIX A – Summary of the final recommended Transport Strategy developed by the SE Dorset Transport Study

APPENDIX B – Further details of the Draft Strategy consultation

If you have any queries on this report please contact:

Rick Clayton, Project Manger SE Dorset Transport Study

Tel: 01202 262044; Email: r.clayton@poole.gov.uk