

## **THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Transport, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
<b>Subject:</b>	Transport accessibility research
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	16 November 2021
<b>Report by:</b>	Charlotte Smith, assistant director, Corporate Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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### **1. Requested by**

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to update the Transport, Environment and Community Safety (TECS) scrutiny panel on the current position with the proposed transport accessibility research, and to advise the committee of options for future delivery of the project.

### **3. Background**

In October 2019, a programme of research was commissioned by the TECS panel. An approach was agreed, and a survey was developed and approved by the committee, along with a series of in-depth interviews, engagement events and workshops with key stakeholders and representatives from organisations and charities in the city.

The first phase of the research programme, the quantitative survey was due to launch in March 2020. As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and due to government guidance to restrict travelling and avoid using public transport where possible, it was agreed with the Chair of the TECS Scrutiny Panel to postpone this work.

In discussions to inform this formal meeting, the committee noted its preference for the research to resume in November 2021, with a survey running for six weeks and qualitative research elements running concurrently, and analysis to be incorporated into a scrutiny panel report before the start of purdah in March 2022.

### **4. Research scope**

The aim of the research is to review the overall accessibility of the transport network within Portsmouth with specific focus on:

- Public transport - bus service, rail network

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- Private hire vehicles and hackney carriages
- Highway network - walking and cycling networks
- Road works
- Economic inaccessibility
- Impacts of the Covid pandemic of travel behaviours

### **5. Resources**

The transport accessibility research was originally developed to be delivered by the council's small in-house market research and engagement function. However, since informal discussions about next steps for this research project, the research and engagement manager has resigned from his position and will be leaving the council in December. The result of this unexpected change is that the in-house research function will no longer be able to support the full scope of the TECS accessibility research to the desired timelines.

This is because a piece of research of this scale requires the capacity and the skills and experience of the research and engagement manager to project manage the work, to lead the research officers in delivering the quantitative and qualitative research elements, and to provide robust quality assured analysis. There will be a recruitment process to replace the research and engagement Manager, but it is expected to be a difficult post to fill because the recruitment market for roles of this type is highly competitive.

### **6. Options**

In terms of a way forwards, the proposed approach for consideration is set out at option one, with an alternative possible approach at option two.

#### **6.1. Option one**

- quantitative survey to go live in November and run for six weeks, as per the timelines already discussed
- market research and transport to investigate options/timescales for the analysis of the quantitative data (approx. 30 days work) and the preparation of the scrutiny report, with a view to informing the date of the next TECS panel meeting
- qualitative elements of the research be postponed until a new market research manager is recruited, which is very likely to delay this element of the work until after purdah in March 2022.

#### **6.2. Option two**

- Outsource the project to an external research agency.

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- This option is likely to result in increased costs and is dependent on additional budget being identified and agreed, and an agency having capacity to undertake the work in line with the committee's timeframe.

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Signed by (Director)

**Appendices:****Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location