

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Solent Transport Joint Committee
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Draft Solent Transport Business Plan 2024-25
<b>Report by:</b>	Conrad Haigh, Solent Transport Manager
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## 1. Purpose of report

This report sets out a proposed Draft Business Plan for Solent Transport for the 2024/25 financial year, for the Joint Committee's ratification. The proposed main priorities for the next year are:

1. Solent Transport Prospectus - Take the agreed wider strategy and look to move it forward, gaining recognition, wider support, agreement with TfSE and national government. Lobbying to obtain funding to support the partnership and area goals. Developing the action plan shared across the four Member LTAs which will also help define the future focus of Solent Transport's activities.
2. Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC - Further work (with Network Rail) to develop the Solent Rail Connectivity proposals: Building a business plan and a roadmap looking to make the study a reality. This will include lobbying national government, promoting the schemes, and working with the four partner LTAs with a view of obtaining match funding to make the proposition more attractive to national government.
3. Solent Go – Portsmouth City Council have agreed to fund the SolentGo ITSO card operation for a further year to fit in with their BSIP delivery. Solent Transport will seek to deliver SolentGo products on the Breeze app and develop new products with SHOBA and the transport operators.
4. SRTM maintenance and management – Consider the Transport for the South East (TfSE) and Hampshire County Council studies on modelling that will report in April. Provide options regarding future modelling needs, which could include procurement of an upgrade of the Sub Regional Transport Model (SRTM) or a transition to an alternative.
5. FTZ delivery - to continue the successful delivery of Solent Transport Partnership's Future Transport Zone (FTZ) programme. This will focus on the final delivery and monitoring stages and start to look at which elements can be sustainably continued or obtaining funding that could extend all or part of the programme and develop an exit strategy for Solent Transport and the LTA partners, should this not be successful.

Solent Transport Partnership Changes - This is an emerging issue and is not reflected within this business plan. Time may need to be agreed on the management and transfer of the Solent Transport and its assets depending on the outcome.

## **2. Recommendations**

That the Joint Committee agree the Draft Business Plan and ask the member authorities to take it through their local approval processes.

## **3. Background**

### **Work Plan for 2024/25**

1. Solent Transport's proposed work programme for 2024/25 is outlined on the following pages. A table of the proposed average weekly time allocations to key activities is provided on page 8. There are five major priorities:
  - Solent Transport Prospectus
  - Solent Rail Connectivity
  - Solent Go
  - SRTM maintenance and management
  - FTZ delivery

### **Solent Transport Prospectus**

2. The present year has seen delivery of the Solent Transport Prospectus, with assistance from Portsmouth City Council. This is an important sub-regional document which consolidates the national, regional and local transport plans (published by the LTAs) in one document. It presents a shared vision and approach for transport improvements in the Solent region over the next 20-30 years. Work for 2023/24 includes:
  - Finalise and reach agreement amongst partners on the final document;
  - Further consultation, briefings and ratification of the Prospectus by the Partners to help embed the approach;
  - Development of a dissemination action plan, working with the individual Partners to identify the appropriate activities for their needs, and establish a programme of promotional and awareness-raising activities for the vision;
  - Engagement with PfSH and the planning authorities for delivering sustainable development, building on their broad areas of search; and
  - Work with the Partnership to consider how to address the gap between net zero carbon and planned delivery to decarbonise the transport network. This work will support the LTAs in addressing the anticipated Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on quantifying carbon emissions for new LTPs.

### **Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC**

3. In the coming year we will work jointly with Network Rail (who lead this project) to continue the Solent Connectivity project in creating a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to build on the most viable recommendations of the Solent Connectivity CMSP study (2020). Tasks include:

- Prepare an indicative timetable with an illustrative roadmap of activities necessary to progress CSMP schemes to SOBC and development of scheme elements that all partners can work to;
- Identify\ obtain budget to support this work;
- With Network Rail, undertake the Netley Line Corridor (Partner funded) and Botley Line Corridor (TfSE studies funded) SOBCs; and
- Whilst there is currently no Network Rail budget identified to realise the schemes in the event of a favourable Business Case, the partners have agreed to support lobbying, marketing and communications activities for the publication of the SOBC and to help realise these outcomes.

### **SolentGo Ticketing and Fares**

4. Solent Transport will continue to work with SHBOA and operators to develop and launch additional SolentGo ticketing options. Having successfully negotiated the new SolentGo Greater Portsmouth Zone, we will continue with SHBOA and the operators to launch the new zone and tickets during 2024. It will be marketed as 'SolentGo Greater Portsmouth Zone' and 'SolentGo Greater Portsmouth Travelcard' and provides a daily and weekly offering; daily tickets will be available in both paper and M Ticket formats, with the weekly ticket available as an M Ticket only.
5. We will continue to explore the possibilities of new ticket types within SolentGo, with SHBOA. SHBOA have agreed to test some of these with Portsmouth as part of BSIP and if they are considered a success, to work with Solent Transport to roll them out with the LTA Partners. Proposed improvements to be considered include:
  - SolentGo City Area ticket
  - SolentGo Evening Ticket
  - SolentGo Jobseeker Discount
  - SolentGo Evening and Family products.
6. Additional tasks include:
  - SolentGo ITSO service will finish in Spring 2025 and transition to a Mobile SolentGo offering in coordination with bus operators. A transition plan will be prepared for approval this autumn;
  - Portsmouth have expressed an intention to extend the number and type of products available under the Solent Go brand with Breeze; and
  - Continue engagement with the ferry companies who have approached us about integration within Breeze.

### **Sub-Regional Transport Model: Priorities for 2024/25**

7. Since 2017 the SRTM has helped evidence the need for more than £300m of investment in the region. The model continues to play a key role in providing the evidence underpinning major transport scheme/ programme business cases to DfT from the LTAs, and is an essential tool required by Local Planning Authorities and PfSH to undertake transport assessment work for Local Plans.

8. The top priorities for SRTM in 2024/25 are:

- Continuing effective client management and operation of the model, support for clients, and undertaking activities to raise awareness of and use of the model amongst user groups, such as developers;
- Define scope and costs associated of an appropriate update and development enhancement programme for SRTM to expand its lifespan, ensuring that the area has a model that is capable and WebTAG compliant for the next few years;
- Work with TfSE, and Hampshire County Council to bring recommendations to SMB on progressing activities which will determine the longer-term future of the model and/or add value to the model in the medium term; and
- If necessary, agree a sustainable way to run and fund the model in future years.

9. A robust programme of updates and development has been identified which could expand the SRTM lifespan by approximately 6-7 years and be completed within 12 months from inception.

### **FTZ programme**

10. As Solent Transport's current flagship area of work with most immediate benefit to the Solent area and our partners, continuing the excellent progress made on FTZ is a key priority, while also ensuring a strong focus on the future sustainability of the projects and products created, some of which directly contribute to achievement of our member LTA's policy and strategy objectives. Solent Transport continues to provide support (staff resource and direct funding to cover specific LTA officer time) to assist our members to deliver and gain maximum value from the opportunities presented. Core activities planned include:

- Dissemination of lessons learnt, approaches and sharing best practice, supporting recognition and raise the partnership's profile regionally, nationally and internationally;
- To continue with the implementation of a robust programme-wide Monitoring and Evaluation strategy with University of Southampton and TRL Limited;
- Direct engagement with DfT and other critical stakeholders remains a key priority to explore and exploit opportunities for sustaining FTZ activity, and/or compliment it with additional initiatives beyond the scope of the grant and investigate potential extension of FTZ programme beyond current June 2025 timeframe; and
- Begin development of programme exit/transition plan for six months from close down of FTZ programme when funding ends. This will include ensuring costs associated with staff redundancies are secured from FTZ budgets and will not expose Partners to additional funding liability.

### **Theme 1 (Personal Mobility)**

11. Breeze app development & integrations:

- Integration of ferry operators is a core objective for the forthcoming year. Function developed, tested and rolled-out to provide users with step-by-step guidance throughout their planned trips.
- Discovery into additional user requested /identified functionality – safe walking/ cycling routing, improved accessibility information, landmark wayfinding, increasing robustness and access to disruption information.
- Improvements to user messaging interfaces to allow targeted/preference-based communications.
- Breeze for Business engagement and expansion – securing buy-in from stakeholder organisations and investigating bespoke Breeze app development opportunities with specific key trip generating sites.
- Wider roll out of Mobility Credits trials accessed via Breeze to other LTA partner areas following successful launch in Havant area during 2023.
- Explore and exploit the commercialisation of Breeze to current and wider markets.

12. Dynamic Demand Responsive Transit (DDRT) trial: Complete review of phase 1 pilot, followed by development of plan for second phase of the project in the form of a wider trial, to include integration of additional operators/services.

13. Full review of Micro Mobility operations across the region and strategy for ensuring sustainability of service provision during and beyond FTZ funding timescales.

**Theme 2 (sustainable urban logistics trials):**

14. Macro-consolidation: Following the comprehensive review of the Southampton Sustainable Distribution Centre (SDC) performance to date, the next steps are to identify opportunities for improvements/ efficiencies and commencement of next steps for new trial projects/ approaches.

15. Micro-consolidation: Sites that have been shortlisted for potential trials to be prepared for pre-application advice. Project team engaging with industry expertise to refine hub design and specific requirements ahead of pre-application submissions. Aim to have live micro-consolidation sites up and running from mid-2024. Additional project opportunities for shared fleet services with key delivery partners (incl. NHS, Local Government, Universities)

16. Drones for medical logistics: Enablement of new temporary airspace options following submission of Airspace Change Proposal to Civil Aviation Authority, to allow further flying and testing of drones with differing capabilities, to best assess the most appropriate drones for logistics usage. Development of an airspace sensor network; installation of sensors which will better detect uncooperative aircraft in the Solent and build the case for a permeable airspace change in the Solent, allowing further data

gathering and building the business case. Visual Line of Sight UAV tests and trial flight planning to be fully scoped and implemented.

**Other areas of work**

17. We will continue to work with DfT, National Highways, Network Rail, TfSE and other key partners to promote the Solent region’s best practice and lobby for better deals in transport funding.

- Solent Transport will be hosting a key Future Transport Conferences during 2024 focused on Personal Mobility and Sustainable Logistics, which will provide significant national and international exposure of our work;
- Continue to Chair the TfSE Future Transport Forum, providing positive influence and showcasing the Solent’s work in this field; and
- Continue to administer and co-ordinate the Solent Transport Joint Committee meetings, occasional Member briefings and Senior Management Board.

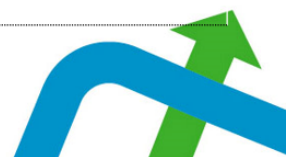
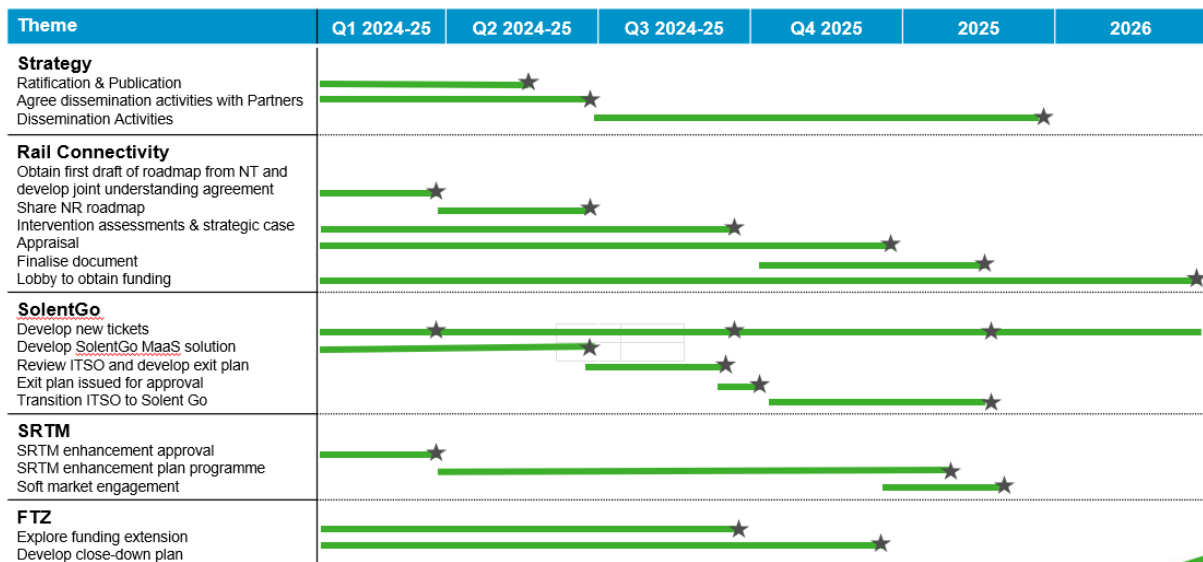
**Table 1: Solent Transport staff approximate weekly allocation of days per week**

Estimated Average Resource Allocation (days per week)	Solent Transport Core Staff Activity
1	Further development, promotion and lobbying of Solent Transport high-level strategy. Potential work with PfSH linking it to the Broad area of search to help identify suitable locations supporting sustainable development aspirations. Work with DfT and TFSE to look at potential, funding sources and gaps that may need filling to achieve net zero carbon from transport. Agree and implement a promotion and dissemination plan with LTA partners.
1	Solent Rail Connectivity SOBC (in partnership with Network Rail) and development of indicative delivery roadmap, to help provide movement towards unlocking delivery and lobbying for the project which is subject to funding.
1.5	SolentGo ongoing operation of ITSO card, development of new products with SHBOA in line with the LTA partners Enhanced Partnership Boards and supporting their BSIPs. This will include conversion of products to the Breeze app and potential development of more multimodal tickets.
2	SRTM ongoing Business as Usual client management, user advice/ support and administration; further exploration of future development and upgrades. Critical activity is exploring and developing a strategy to keep the present model valid and useable for an extended period of time. Further development of the findings of the HCC/ TfSE future modelling study to identify a long-term modelling capability. Subject to SMB decision start the process of agreeing a joint specification for a replacement.

2	Future Transport Zone time allocations from core staff N.B: The FTZ programme budget is recharged for the cost of the resource. This has been reduced to the minimum required and includes: ongoing management and oversight of the FTZ manager and the FTZ Team, their outputs and providing a link between FTZ outputs and core transport deliveries, future assets and liabilities. Strategic direction and oversight, review of key documentation and public facing literature, including PR, Board and DfT reports, core evaluation and reporting, delivery of SolentGo and related PT products, Senior stakeholder engagements and meetings, lobbying and looking for funding and assistance in preparing an exit strategy and post-FTZ grant funding.
1.3	Solent Transport administration/ management time, including preparation for and actions associated with SMB and Joint Committee meetings.
0.6	Time allowance to accommodate all other activities, in accordance with SMB priorities: includes marketing (which will also receive FTZ support), liaison with stakeholders, Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Board, Network Rail, TFSE engagement, LEP, Freeport support, etc.
0.6	Allowance for staff annual leave
10	TOTAL

**NB: no allowance as been made for working on Solent Transport Partnership Changes that may be required at this stage so the resource may need to be reviewed as this issue evolves. Depending on the scale of the changes these may be significant.**

18. An indicative programme is shown below and provided at a larger scale in Appendix 1.



**Financial/ budget implications**

19. The present budget and contributions have remained fixed since 2013 at £190k. It is not proposed to increase contributions, so they will remain as follows:

- Isle of Wight Council £20k
- Hampshire County Council £90k
- Portsmouth City Council £40k
- Southampton City Council £40k
- Total £190k

20. The Solent Transport core staff establishment stands at 2 FTE funded through the core budget. It should be noted that contributions now only make up enough to cover the staff budget only, many projects are dependent on study budgets from alternative sources or LTA partners.

21. More details including proposed breakdown of the budget is provided in the separate finance report.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

22. The Business Plan presented here has been confirmed by SMB as their recommendation for how Solent Transport can best support their respective authorities' priorities. This follows consideration and discussion of other options and opportunities.

23. Endorsing the recommendations would result in continuation of Solent Transport's activities and services during 2024/25 in line with a plan agreed across the four partner LTAs.

24. Internal consultation on the detail of this Business Plan has been undertaken with the Senior Management (SMB) officers from each Member Authority.

#### **5. Integrated impact assessment**

25. No new or revised policies or procedures directly affecting the public will be introduced as a result of the recommendations in this report. Therefore, an integrated impact assessment is not deemed to be required. Integrated impact assessments will be undertaken on individual projects as required.

#### **6. Legal implications**

26. Statutory power to make decisions in this report are provided by the following legislation:

- 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.



- 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).

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

27. There is no additional financial commentary for this report. Please refer to the accompanying finance report for additional financial information.

**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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Summary of delivery 2023/24</b>	Attached

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved by Solent Transport Management Board on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2024

## **Appendix 1: Summary of delivery 2023/24**

1. During 2023/24 Solent Transport and its member authority officer teams have overseen the continued delivery of the innovative FTZ programme, making significant progress delivering real-world travel solutions benefiting Solent travellers.
2. Alongside this, Solent Transport officers have worked closely with partner authority officers and other partners, such as transport operators, Network Rail and Transport for the South East (TfSE) to progress projects and provide support, partnership and leadership; this has included Chairing the TfSE Future Transport Forum and working closely with partners on issues such as future modelling and freight.
3. Details of delivery against the 2023/24 Business Plan are provided in the following sections.

### **FTZ Delivery**

4. A full summary of the activity undertaken by Solent Transport as part of the FTZ during the year is provided separately (presentation). Some key outputs, including those directly linking to 2023/24 Business Plan objectives, relating to the implementation of the FTZ programme include:
  - the full public launch and ongoing development of the “Breeze” Mobility as a Service platform;
  - Breeze integration and roll out of the Mobility Credits scheme (following first phase in Havant) to other Solent Transport partner LTAs;
  - launch and expansion of the Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) project to integrate additional operators;
  - micro/macro consolidation review, research and planning phases progressed to delivery of micro consolidation centre trials in Winchester and Portsmouth;
  - progression of project phases of drones for medical logistics trials;
  - expansion of both rental e-scooter trials and shared bike/e-bike trial schemes in the cities and the Isle of Wight;
  - outreach to employees and the business community with the Breeze for Business engagement programme; and
  - continuing to raise the profile of Solent Transport and the partner LTAs through these projects and associated research, evaluation and communication at local, regional, national and international levels. Also receiving industry recognition through a number of national award submissions.
5. A major piece of work undertaken this year with KPMG has explored developing a business case for the Breeze MaaS app to self-sustaining beyond the existing FTZ programme funding. The work indicates that for Breeze to become self-funding it must expand beyond the Solent Transport operating area. The process of doing this

and the structure that would be required, have been explored and the detail is provided in a separate item.

### **Solent Transport Prospectus**

6. A significant amount of work was done during the year on collaboration, consulting and consensus-building with the LTAs on the details for the future Prospectus. A consultant, ITP, commenced the development work from March 2023 onwards, holding several workshops, seeking inputs and developing consensus between the partners for strategy elements. This work identified key challenges and interventions. After significant research and consideration of all available options the decision was made by the partners not to pursue the modelling appraisal aspect of the project. In late 2023, work on development of the Prospectus was brought in-house, with the Partners contributing to iterative drafts and Portsmouth City Council taking the lead to finalise the document.

### **SRTM Model**

7. Key pieces of work were completed in the year to ensure the model remains relevant and WebTAG compliant, such as completion of the 2019 (base) model year journey time validation exercise and NTEM8 reference case updates. Solent Transport have continued to work with both TfSE and HCC on their separate studies considering the modelling needs of the region and the potential funding gap. Debate on the future of the SRTM has continued throughout the year, recognising the need to update SRTM with a post covid baseline and further enhancements for maintaining the validity of the model, and will take these studies into account this year as this issue develops.

### **SolentGo**

8. Solent Transport officers have continued the relationship with SHOBA and the bus operators to further the develop the ticket offering available via SolentGo. Post-pandemic passenger numbers have left the public transport industry less able to consider initiatives of these type, however, an agreement has been struck to launch new daily and weekly tickets via the Portsmouth BSIP programme through a new SolentGo 'Greater Portsmouth Zone' comprising the Portsmouth travel-to-work area. The new tickets and travel zone will launch later in 2024.
9. Additionally, Solent Transport undertook a fully encompassing evaluation of the current SolentGo ITSO cards. In the context of the national government £2 fare cap offer, the review recognised that the present SolentGo tickets have become largely irrelevant; when combined with the lack of recovery of the product post-covid, uses of the tickets have seen significant decline. This low usage, particularly via the ITSO card and the growing costs of this facility, means the value for money of this product is questionable, long term. Detailed proposals have been provided to Senior Management Board; for now, Portsmouth City Council have agreed to fund a further

year of operations as the ITSO card is seen as key to the delivery of aspects of their BSIP programme, a further joint evaluation has been planned for 24/25.

10. As part of this evaluation, the FTZ team undertook an exploration exercise to understand the requirements for moving SolentGo tickets to the Breeze app. This was deemed feasible and offers an alternative for users to ITSO cards, with implementation anticipated in Spring 2025, subject to coordination with operators.

### **Solent Rail Connectivity**

11. The Solent Connectivity CMSP study completed in 2020 was a significant piece of work to consider and identify potential upgrades to deliver the greatest benefits and increase in rail users. This work led to new thinking around rail service delivery in the Solent area and some of the suggested timetable changes have been implemented into the Westway work due to be implemented in the new First Great Western timetables from 2nd June 2024.
12. Solent Transport continue to work with Network Rail and the Partners to develop a plan to develop individual scheme business cases from the CMSP study; this is dependent on funding from the LTAs for supporting technical appraisal work. Progressing these schemes will be heavily dependent on third-party funding, which we are exploring options for; however, progressing the SOBCs with Network Rail will assist in their entry to DfT's Railway Network Enhancements Pipeline. The development of the plan will provide Solent Transport and the partners with a programme to try and make the proposals a reality.

### **Marketing, Promotion and Profile-raising**

13. Achievements in 2023/24 include:
  - Phase 1 and 2 of Breeze marketing delivered over 17,000 new registered users;
  - Solent Transport web traffic increased by 7.4% and Solent FTZ page traffic increased by 115% in comparison with the previous 12-month period;
  - LinkedIn following increased by 67% (404) and posts generated an average engagement rate of 7.4%; higher than TfSE and the Isle of Wight Council;
  - Solent Transport has participated in 6 press releases this year, providing over 648m opportunities for people to see information relating to the Solent FTZ and associated projects. Press coverage has been regional, national and international; and
  - Increased dissemination opportunities by 4.3% as a direct result of an increased profile driven by the activity outlined above.