
SUBJECT: Portswood Corridor Consultation Report
DATE: June 2023
RECIPIENT: General release to public

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

Introduction:

1. This document outlines the results of public consultation, which ran from September - November 2022. This covered four projects under the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) Programme which include:
 - a. Portswood Broadway
 - b. Highfield Active Travel Zone
 - c. Lodge Road Junction improvements
 - d. Portswood Travel Hub
2. This will outline what consultation has been conducted to date and the results. It will also include Officer recommendation for next steps.
3. Only outline plans for these proposals exist currently. Should it be decided to proceed to the next phase, further consultation will be required. More detail designs are needed for any future consultation.

BACKGROUND:

1. In 2020, Southampton was one of 12 cities that received funding through the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund (TCF).
2. The joint bid submitted in November 2019 by Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council for Southampton and Hampshire was awarded £57m of Government funding towards the total £68.5m programme and covers the four years to March 2024. The remainder of the funding comes from local match contributions with the Council and its partners.
3. The Eastleigh to Southampton Corridor for which the Portswood Corridor is part of is a key corridor within the TCF programme which was submitted to Department of Transport (DfT) in November 2019. The programme includes a number of schemes within this corridor, both within Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Southampton City Council (SCC).
4. The programme's key objectives of the programme are:
 - Making the Southampton City Region a productive vibrant and successful place at the forefront of innovation;
 - Supporting sustainable economic growth by connecting our City Region together;
 - Providing people with a more effective commute through a new Rapid Transit System; and
 - Providing additional sustainable, healthy and active mobility options to meet the needs of and empower all residents.

5. The Southampton Mass Transit System (SMTS) and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) set out the ambition for public transport in Southampton to be reliable, frequent and integrated.
6. Portswood Road is one of the identified Rapid Bus Corridors within the SMTS and measures have been investigated to improve bus journey times and making them more reliable between Eastleigh and Southampton via Portswood.
7. The corridor is also being investigated through the Southampton Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) study which will look at future innovation and measures along the corridor. This is concluding in Autumn 2023 and will help to inform the strategy for Portswood Road.
8. Initial perception surveys were carried out in October and November 2020 with the findings presented in December 2020 and January 2021. An on-street customer survey for Portswood Broadway was conducted in September/October 2021 the results of which was published and widely promoted on the Councils website and promotional material.
9. Improvements were identified to Thomas Lewis Way that aim to enhance the strategic function of the corridor for the movement of through traffic in and out of the city and so reduce the demand and need for through traffic using Portswood Broadway and facilitate a possible bus gate to Portswood Broadway to improve this district centre and make it more sustainable.
10. A full public consultation was launched in October – November 2022 for which the results are outlined below.

Summary of Proposals:

11. Summary of the four schemes consulted on for the Portswood Corridor:
 - a. Portswood Broadway scheme, budgeted at £2.9m, includes the following key objectives
 1. To regenerate and make the district centre a more competitive economic area;
 2. Make the district centre more attractive and a more enjoyable place to spend time;
 3. Provide greening, improve bio-diversity and more space for pedestrians within the district centre;
 4. Improve walking and cycling connectivity to and through the district centre;
 5. Provide safer crossing opportunities; and
 6. Improved priority to buses via upgraded signal technology.
 - b. The Lodge Road junction improvements, budgeted at £0.90m, includes the following key objectives:
 1. Provide safer crossing opportunities for people traveling on foot or by bike;
 2. Afford more priority to buses via upgraded signal technology;
 3. Northbound vehicle traffic guided away from Portswood Road residential area;
 4. Slow vehicles turning left from Lodge Road onto Portswood Road;
 5. Removal of the left slip lane from Lodge Road to Portswood Road; noting that the left turn would still remain available;
 6. Improved connection for people who chose to cycle; and
 7. New toucan crossing on Bevois Hill at its junction with A335.

- c. Portswood Travel Hub budgeted at £0.31m, includes the following key objectives:
 - 1. Improved transport mode options;
 - 2. Increased disabled access and parking; and
 - 3. Improve public realm and green spaces.
- d. Active Travel Zone in the Highfield area, includes the following key objectives:
 - 1. Improve road safety;
 - 2. Reduce the amount of through route traffic on local roads;
 - 3. Improve air quality; and
 - 4. Encourage walking, wheeling and cycling as a mode of transport.

Consultation Overview:

12. Officers conducted a full public consultation which ran from 3rd October – 13th November on the above four outlined proposals
13. The consultation consisted of:
- a. Creation of website material with an online survey;
 - b. Stakeholder meetings;
 - c. Two rounds of mailout to 6,487 residents & business owners in the surrounding area;
 - d. Face to face engagement with local businesses;
 - e. Copies of a printed survey available at Portswood Library;
 - f. Promotion through social media and local press; and
 - g. Four public open days run as drop in events located at October Books, Portswood Broadway and University of Southampton
14. Council staff were invited to speak at two residents led events, and gave presentations / questions and answers at a meeting with the Portswood Gardens Residents Association and Highfield Residents Association.
15. We hosted four public events during the main consultation. Officers present were there to answer residents questions, clarify details and direct them to the survey to provide feedback. Two events were hosted on Portswood Broadway and one on the University of Southampton Campus which is located close by.
16. A questionnaire was distributed to the public in which they were asked questions if people agreed or disagreed that the proposals met key objectives of the programme and wider council objectives. The survey also asked for a general response on what affect they would have on their travel habits when traveling in and around the area.
17. Additional meetings were held with other community groups which included Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary, Southampton Cycle Campaign and the Bahir Ahmed Mosque. Further meetings were held after the consultation and continued comminute and business engagement continues.

Summary of Consultation Survey Results:

18. A questionnaire was distributed to the public in which we asked questions if people agreed or disagreed that the proposals met key objectives of the programme and wide council objectives. We also asked for a general response on what affect they would have on their travel habits when traveling in and around the area.

19. 1,558 responses were received on the questionnaire about the proposed schemes. An analysis of postcode information indicated that 63% of submissions were from the local SO17 postcode area.
20. Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide comments for each of the four projects proposed. In this section we will give a quick summary of whether the consultees agreed or disagreed with these statements.
21. Officers have also conducted a thematic analysis on comments provided by consultees. These have split into areas of concerns and areas of support and neutral statements. For each area we have put the comments into themes, below is outlined the top themes for each project and each area.
22. Please note: for the themes represented in the summary below we have discounted themes that were of general support, generally against and additional suggestions. These will be in the full final consultation report which will be released in February. Along with all other information collected as part of this consultation process.
23. It is important to note that concerns were raised by residents about the questions asked, the format in which there were presented and the character limit on the comments box. For Phase 2 of the consultation, a review will be conducted by Council officers on these areas of concern and the consideration of an independent review be conducted prior to launching the next phase of consultation. Full details of the consultation's questions and a summary of the comments can be found in Appendix A & B.

General Responses to change in travel habits

24. Summary

Mode of Travel	Percentage of Respondents
Encouraged to travel by e-scooter	10%
Encouraged to travel by bus	24%
Encouraged to travel by car/van/taxi less	33%
Encouraged to cycle more	27%
Encouraged to walk/wheel more	27%

Portswood Broadway

25. Response to statements:

Improvement Statement	Agree	Disagree
Proposed improvements will improve walking and cycling connectivity to and through the local centre	61%	22%
Proposed improvements will provide safer crossing opportunities for people travelling on foot or bike	66%	20%
Proposed improvements will enhance the waiting experience for bus passengers	57%	22%
Proposed improvements will reduce bus journey times	57%	23%
Proposed improvements will afford more priority to buses	67%	18%
Proposed improvements will encourage visitors to spend more time in the district centre	50%	37%

Improvement Statement	Agree	Disagree
Proposed improvements will make the district centre more attractive	60%	30%

26. Top themes of comments:

Supported Themes	Number of Responses
More Green Areas	29
Better Pedestrian Space	11
Help Economy	8
Need Protected Spaces for Bicycles	8
Safer for People Who Choose to Cycle	5

27.

Areas of Concerns	Number of Responses
Traffic Overspill	112
Harm Local Economy	62
Journey Time/Access by Car	51
Congestion	33
Fine as it is	27

Highfield Active Travel Zone

28. Response to statements:

Improvement Statement	Agree	Disagree
Proposed ATZ will improve air quality	47%	34%
Proposed ATZ will increase road safety	51%	32%
Proposed ATZ will improve access to Portswood Centre on foot and by bike	48%	33%
Proposed ATZ will slow traffic speeds	58%	28%
Proposed ATZ will deter local traffic from taking a short cut through residential streets	51%	38%

29. Public Preference to Active Travel Zone Options

Active Travel Zone Preference (All Respondents)	Amount	%
No Active Travel Zone	272	18%
Option 1: Reduce the impact through traffic calming, speed humps and improved pedestrian crossings	728	49%
Option 2: Remove the impact through modal filters which block through-traffic	477	32%

30.

Active Travel Zone Preference (Respondents in the Highfield Area)	Amount	%
No Active Travel Zone	104	23%
Option 1: Reduce the impact through traffic calming, speed humps and improved pedestrian crossings	226	50%
Option 2: Remove the impact through modal filters which block through-traffic	121	27%

31. Top themes of comments:

Supported Themes	Number of Responses
Safer for people on foot/bike	13
Improve Road Safety	8
Cleaner Air	5

32.

Areas of Concerns	Number of Responses
Journey Time/Access by Car	146
Air Pollution	68
Congestion	68
Traffic Overspill	63
Harm Local Economy	39

Lodge Road Junction

33. Response to statements:

Improvement Statement	Agree	Disagree
Planned improvements for Lodge Rd junction overall	54-69%	18-31%
Improvements will slow traffic turning left onto Portswood	57%	25%
Improvements will guide northbound traffic to Thomas Lewis	54%	31%
Improvements will better link Portswood to Bevois Valley	56%	22%
Improvements will provide safer crossing opportunities	69%	18%
Improvements will give more priority to buses	60%	21%

34. Top themes of comments:

Supported Themes	Number of Comments
Improve Road Safety	16
More Green Space	10
Safer for Cyclists	6
Loss of Left Slip Road	5
Need Protected Spaces for Bicycles	4

35.

Areas of Concerns	Number of Comments
Congestion	45
Loss of Left Slip Road	31
Fine as it is	25
Not a Good Use of Money	23
Need Protected Spaces for Bicycles	19

36. Travel Hub

37. Response to statements:

Improvement Statement	Agree	Disagree
Proposed Travel Hub overall	48-57%	27-35%
Proposed travel hub will enhance the public space	55%	29%
Proposed travel hub will support zero emissions deliveries	50%	30%
Proposed travel hub will provide an attractive space to spend time	48%	27%
Proposed travel hub will encourage multi-modal trips	48%	34%
Proposed travel hub will promote a range of sustainable transport options	57%	28%

38. Top themes of comments:

Supported Themes	Number of Responses
More Green/Attractive areas	35
Travel Options	13
Cycle Safety/Security	11
Better Pedestrian Space	6
Improve Road Safety	1

39.

Areas of Concerns	Number of Responses
E-scooter Danger	43
Not a Good Use of Money	37
Some People Can't Use It	33
Anti-social behaviour/Security	25
Fine as it is	21

Stake Holder Representation

40. This section will provide a summary of the various views and written inputs shared by the residents' associations and community groups. By examining their concerns and suggestions, we can gain a better understanding of the community's perspectives on the proposed transport scheme. The residents' associations play a crucial role in representing the interests of their members, and their feedback can help inform the decision-making process.

41. The summary will focus on key points raised by the residents' associations, highlighting areas of consensus and disagreement. By examining this feedback we aim to present a comprehensive overview of the community's stance on the proposed changes. This will serve as a valuable resource for decision-makers as they move forward with the transport scheme, ensuring that the interests of the residents are taken into account.

Outer Avenue Residents Association Formal Response

42. The Outer Avenue Residents' Association (OARA) has shared their thoughts on the proposed Portswood Corridor Improvement Proposals. The members have different opinions, but all agree that the area needs improvements. They support making it a more pleasant and greener environment, but have concerns about the impact on traffic and safety. There are concerns that reducing traffic on Portswood Broadway could lead to congestion on nearby residential streets.

43. OARA members also want to make sure the new plans keep the local shopping centre thriving and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. They suggest adding more greenery, reducing traffic speed, and testing temporary traffic changes before making any major decisions. They also want to see secure bike storage and designated routes for cyclists and scooters.
44. Lastly, the residents' association urges the project team to consult with local businesses and consider their suggestions to improve the area. They appreciate the effort put into the proposals and would be happy to meet in person and discuss their concerns further.

Portswood Residents Garden Association

45. A stake holder meeting was held with the Portswood Residents Gardens Association to discuss the Portswood plan.

Many people at the meeting expressed concerns with the proposals, as they have concerns about more traffic on surrounding roads, making it difficult for elderly and disabled people to move around, and hurt local businesses. There were also concerns about the consultation process, as people felt it was hard to express their opinions with the limited text boxes. Some people at the meeting thought it would be better to make smaller improvements, even if it meant losing the government grant.

Highfield Residents Association Formal Response

46. The Highfield Residents' Association (HRA) Chair has submitted a formal response these comments has been considered and addressed in this report. The HRA has also gathered many comments about the proposed transport scheme in Portswood Broadway, for which they have provided us with a full copy.
47. These have been assess and taken into account as part of this consultation. While there is a significant amount of correspondents received by local members of the HRA, officers have done their best to summarise for note in this report. Many members of the HRA appreciate the effort of the Council and Council Officers in organising consultations, people have concerns with the questionnaire as some feel it was biased towards the scheme and greater effort should be made prior to any future consultation to the choice of questions. It was also felt the character limit for comments was felt too short.
48. Many people who responded to the HRA were not convinced that the proposed transport scheme will be beneficial to the area and these benefits need to be better outlined. They think the possible costs might be more than the benefits. There is scepticism about whether the scheme would reduce traffic with additional concerns it will create bottlenecks in other areas as well as on the reliability of the traffic data collected.
49. The HRA suggests the Council consider two alternatives before making a decision. One option is to try improving Portswood District Centre in a less permanent way, such as reducing speed limits, widening pavements, and improving signage. The other option is to implement the scheme in stages, starting with smaller changes before moving to more significant ones. In any case, the Council should perform a detailed risk assessment that considers the issues raised during the consultation and plans for how to fix any problems that might happen.

Southampton Cycle Campaign Stake holder meeting and Formal response

50. Council Officers met with and received feedback on the proposed scheme from Southampton Cycle Campaign. They are worried about safety at junctions and want better protection for cyclists. They also would like further restriction to motor cars from parking in bike lanes and would like us to install protected bike lanes wherever they can. One specific junction, Highfield Lane and Portswood Road, has had a lot of discussion, and the Council officers have committed to improving safety there should the scheme go ahead. Additionally, more bike parking spaces is requested to be created along Broadway, and cyclist access to be maintained.
51. It was also requested that bike racks are designed to accommodate long bikes without blocking pedestrian paths or causing an obstruction to the footway. They have also requested we consider feeder lines to advance Stop Lines to make sure cyclists have enough space to access them and think about adding advance cycle filters at certain junctions. Lastly, they will investigate adding a new lane on St Denys Road and a parallel crossing at Belmont Rd/St Denys Rd junction to enhance the overall transport scheme.

Additional Stake Holders

52. Council officers also held discussions with Waitrose, Sainsbury's and other local businesses owners. we also held a stakeholder meeting with the Bashir Ahmed Mosque. Efforts were also made to reach out to the Highfield Church of England primary school, Portswood primary school and the Gregg preparatory school however officers did not hear back from them to meet. It must be taken into account that it is difficult for schools to make time for public consultation such as this, due to resource pressures that they face.

Analysis of event and consultation outcomes

53. The public open day drop-in sessions and discussion with the two resident groups identified that many residents would like to see additional information to make a more informed decision about the project and the impacts it will have on the local journeys and amenity. These have been categorised as follows:

Updated Traffic Counts.

54. Some of the traffic data collected to inform the modelling was carried out pre covid and in early covid recovery periods in 2020. Traffic conditions have changed across the city as a “new normal” has been established of changing work patterns. Representations have been made to have updated traffic count data that reflects current traffic conditions.

Impact on local roads

55. Traffic modelling carried out for the project has focused on the impacts on the Portswood Corridor which is limited to the A335 TLW and Portswood Road, with detailed analysis made available for these roads only. Representations were made that more specific details on local roads such as Winn, Westwood, Brookvale, Westridge and Abbots Way in terms of exact numbers.
56. Information about local roads has been limited in the consultation process and will be dependent on the work carried out as part of the Active Travel Zone process to confirm exact traffic numbers on these local roads, but the results of the modelling process has indicated some increase of traffic volumes in these local roads without an Active Travel Zone in place. Representations have been made requesting more detailed information on the impact on local roads which shall be carried out as a recommendation of the consultation report.

Capacity of TLW

57. Upgrades to TLW have been carried out to remove pinch points and upgrade traffic signal technology. Representations have been made to allow time for the changes to be assessed to see if assumptions made about the new capacity for A335 TLW are correct.

Viability of the resilience A335 TLW to be the main road arterial into the city due to emergency situations

58. Representations have been made that have raised concerns in emergency situations that can impact A335 TLW such as localised flooding or crashes which would mean it is not viable to be the only route along this corridor.

Impact of the local economy and businesses

59. Representations have been made that they are concerned of what the impact will be on retail trade in the area with the proposed changes to the highway network.

Anti-social behaviour

60. Concerns were raised about existing anti-social behaviour, street drinking and safety along the Portwood Broadway.

Suggestions of more incremental changes

61. Various people during the consultation have suggested that we attempt temporary or smaller incremental changes rather than making the full introduction of the bus gate. We are limited from doing this for a number of reasons including such as access to funding is limited to a certain time frame for implementation.

62. We also feel that temporary changes to restrict through traffic along Portwood Broadway would not bring with it any of the pedestrian and public realm improvements. These alternative suggestions have been considered by officers however we do not feel that it is possible to proceed forward with this scheme in small increments in a way that would bring the benefits proposed.

Ensuring access for disabled and elderly users of the Broadway

63. They have been raised as part of the consultation that the need to maintain access for disabled and elderly users is critical for the area. To improve disabled and elderly access to Broadway on foot and by car, the council will implement several measures.

64. Firstly, we intend to improve the pavements, such as adding tactile paving, repairing uneven surfaces, and widening footpaths to make them more accessible for wheelchair users and those with mobility issues. Secondly, the scheme will provide more pedestrian crossings and accessible parking spaces near the shops and attractions along Broadway.

65. In order to reassure the public that this important access concern is considered in the second phase of the consultation it is imperative that these details are better conveyed to the public.

RECOMMENDATION:

66. The first phase of the consultation has shown that the community require additional information to make an informed choice about the project. This additional information will be supplied as part of the next phase of consultation which is planned for late Summer 2023.

67. It is important to note that the highest levels of approval rating and the lowest levels of disapproval rating were for the Lodge Road Junction Proposals. During the consultation at stakeholder meetings, received correspondence from the public and public open days very few concerns were raised about the Lodge Rd Junction proposals.

68. One of the biggest concerns about the Lodge Road Junction proposals was the loss of the left slip road coming off Lodge Road onto Portswood Road. However any loss of capacity resulting from the change will be mitigated by the improved smart signal that are planned as part of the improvements. There were also a number of comments saying that they supported replacing the left slip road with additional pedestrian space, which also reduced pedestrian crossings distance and will result in improved safety.
69. While it is acknowledged that the overall Portswood corridor scheme has outstanding concerns and additional assessments that need addressing, we do not feel that the Lodge Road Junction Proposals are not a area of major concern and is generally supported by the public and therefore should proceed to detailed design and not require to take part of the next phase of consultation.
70. Feedback on the Active Travel Zone, showed a majority preference for the lite touch option 1, with 49% preferring this option. It is recommended that officers outline a design based on option one which would reduce the impact of traffic overspill with traffic calming measure such speed humps and improved pedestrian crossings. This option would not include the use of any modal filters, which proved controversial during the first phase of consultation. This outline design should be presented as part of phase two of the consultation.
71. For the three remaining scheme the next phase of the consultation must consist of:
- Additional traffic count data obtained. This would require new automatic traffic count data / camera data to be carried out in a traffic neutral month (March to November);
 - A period of monitoring of three months on journey time and traffic flows on A335 TLW to assess the recent improvements made on this part of the corridor;
 - An independent Economic Impact Assessment to be carried out in conjunction with local retailers on what the impacts would be of the proposed scheme (to be carried out February / March / April);
 - Revised traffic assessment to quantify the impacts on local roads more accurately (after new traffic count data is obtained);
 - Council officer discussions with the Police will introduce additional CCTV in the area to address the existing antisocial behaviour issues; and
 - An emergency incident plan for A335 TLW to assess the impact of instances such as localised flooding or a crash that restricts access along the corridor
72. The Southampton Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) study which will look at future innovation and measures along the corridor. This will include recommendations for the future transport network in the Portswood Broadway area, and this study will need to conclude before final design decisions are made. The study will conclude in Autumn 2023.
73. After this additional data is collected, it is proposed to undertake a further consultation on the scheme with the new information in late Summer 2023 (A Phase 2 consultation). This will include an improved consultation questionnaire following the feedback received from the phase 1 consultation.
74. No decision will be made with regards to the implementation of the scheme until the outcome of the phase 2 consultation is known.

APPENDIX:

75. [Appendix A: Portswood Corridor Consultation Report Questions](#)

76. [Appendix B: Portswood Corridor Consultation Report Comments](#)