

7 CHAPTER 7 – NEW FOREST AREA TRANSPORT STRATEGY

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Introduction to the New Forest Transport Strategy area

- 7.1 The New Forest Transport strategy area is one of four such areas in Hampshire. This chapter draws together all relevant text and programme information for the area, to provide a single point of reference for everyone with a local interest. In addition, it contains information on long-term transport proposals for a number of the main settlements in the New Forest and some information on specific schemes within the LTP five year programme.
- 7.2 This strategy for the New Forest is based substantially on the New Forest Transport Strategy, which was developed in partnership with local stakeholders and adopted by the County Council in 2003. This serves as a robust strategic framework pending the redefinition or refinement of local objectives as the new National Park Authority becomes more established.

Description of the New Forest Transport Strategy area

- 7.3 The New Forest Transport Strategy area is geographically dominated by the newly designated New Forest National Park. This designation recognises the area's natural beauty and special qualities for nature conservation, and builds on historical protection of the area from major development.
- 7.4 The New Forest has its roots as an ancient royal hunting forest, dating back to 1079, and is characterised by heathland, grassland and bogs as well as by woodland (inclosures and other wooded areas).
- 7.5 The strategy area is not entirely rural with a number of significant settlements in the New Forest itself, including Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Beaulieu. The strategy area also covers the southern coastal towns running between Lymington and New Milton. It abuts the Waterside towns to the east and the South East Dorset conurbation, centred on Poole and Bournemouth, lies immediately to the west.

- 7.6** The population of the strategy area is around 100,000, with 35,000 living within the National Park and around 40,000 within the coastal towns. The remaining live in towns and villages outside the National Park, the largest areas being Ringwood and Fordingbridge. Equally significant, is the population of over 500,000 living within the nearby urban centres (source: 2001 census).
- 7.7** Given the natural beauty of the New Forest, it is unsurprising that tourism is a significant element of the local economy. The New Forest generates up to 20 million visits per year, including 3.5 million overnight stays. With over 500 tourism enterprises in the New Forest district generating over £300 million per year in direct income. Currently 90% of visitor trips to the New Forest are by car. The County Council and its partners are trying to influence this through the promotion of car-free tourism. The large number of visitors places considerable stress on the road network, particularly during the summer months. Lyndhurst suffers particularly, being the focal point for most traffic – local and visitor – accessing the south of the New Forest.
- 7.8** There are ancient commoners' rights, including the right to turn out livestock, with the famous New Forest ponies being the most notable example of this practise. While this is essential to the character of the area, these animals are vulnerable to road traffic crashes. Much of the rural New Forest is covered by a blanket 40 mph speed limit, to reduce the impact of traffic and to reduce human and animal casualty rates and the general impact of traffic.
- 7.9** Effective partnership working is essential to achieving progress in the New Forest. The County Council works closely with a wide range of bodies including the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest District Council, the Countryside Agency (to be replaced by Natural England in January 2007), the Forestry Commission, the Highways Agency and tourism organisations. A number of the partners jointly fund a New Forest Transport Strategy Officer to coordinate activity and initiatives.
- 7.10** The County Council and its partners are looking to maintain and strengthen existing ties with organisations representing the local community's rights and traditions to protect the cultural heritage of the New Forest. This includes links with the Verderers (the ancient body protecting commoners' rights and regulating the grazing regime), the National Farmers' Union and the Commoners' Defence Association.
- 7.11** The New Forest is crossed by a number of strategic roads carrying high volumes of traffic. The A31 provides the main link to the national network for the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation and carries up to 65,000 vehicles daily. The A36 trunk road provides the main link between Southampton and Salisbury and onwards to the West Country. This is a key route for freight traffic accessing Southampton port and carries over 17,900 vehicles per day, including a high proportion (approximately 14%) of freight traffic (Hampshire County Council permanent counts). The A326 provides access for the Waterside towns. The high volume of fast moving traffic causes particular problems of severance between the local communities and the National Park.

- 7.12** In carrying large volumes of traffic, these routes and other A roads provide relief for the more rural routes, and have enabled the introduction of the 40 mph blanket speed limit across much of the rest of the New Forest. However, there are existing and increasing problems of rat-running through the minor roads of the New Forest, including a number of short cuts used by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) to avoid congestion points on the strategic network.
- 7.13** In one particular instance, the through routing of HGVs between Hampshire and Wiltshire has led to the establishment of a joint authority officer working group, tasked to investigate the problem. The group is assessing cross boundary movements along the B3078, B3079 and B3080 in the north of the New Forest area.
- 7.14** The New Forest is relatively well served for long-distance rail travel, with a number of stops on the London-Bournemouth line. Bus service coverage is relatively sparse away from the main corridors of movement in the Waterside area and on the coast. There are existing Cango demand responsive bus services in the Sway and Fordingbridge areas. The overall level of passenger transport provision reflects the area's predominantly rural nature where many residents are far from bus and rail access. Consequently car ownership is high.
- 7.15** While visitor traffic is a highly significant element of road traffic, a proportion of locally generated traffic also uses the network. As might be expected in a rural area adjoining two large urban conurbations, there is a net outflow in commuting trips. Approximately 31,000 people out-commute from the New Forest district (source: 2001 census) while only 18,000 commute inwards. A total of 46,000 live and work within the district. Figure 7.15 shows that commuting to and from the New Forest strategy area is relatively low and reasonably balanced. This is unsurprising given the largely rural nature of the area, and the relatively small population and number of places of work. Note that the diagram relates to the strategy area and not to the New Forest district (which also includes the Waterside area).

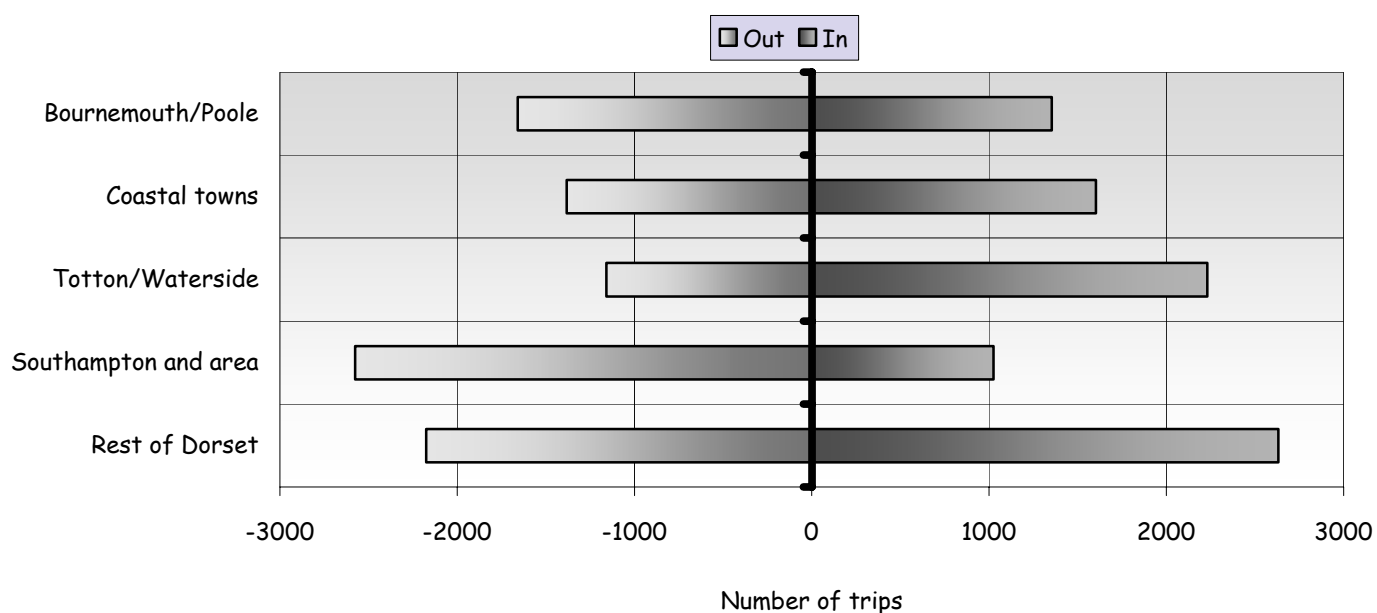


Figure 7.15: New Forest Strategy area commuting

Public perceptions and attitudes in the New Forest

- 7.16** The county-wide travel survey, Transpol, was carried out in 2003 across the New Forest. The survey asked residents for their reasons for travelling by different modes of transport, as well as asking for attitudes towards alternative modes of transport to the car.
- 7.17** The main reasons given for travelling by car were journey time savings, convenience, and lack of public transport alternatives. Bus and rail travel were chosen because they are perceived as being less stressful, conveniently located and also offer journey time savings. Walking and cycling were chosen for their health benefits and convenience.
- 7.18** Asked to give their opinions on alternative modes of transport to the car, residents felt that local bus services were convenient, with good availability of seats and good ease of boarding and alighting. However residents were less happy about the frequency, level of fares and waiting facilities for buses. Rail services were seen to offer good journey times, frequency and ease of car parking, but were poorly viewed in terms of the cost of parking and fares. Impressions of cycling were that of a good network of cycle lanes offering good safety to cyclists, but with concerns over cycling on normal roads and also the security of parking facilities. Walking facilities were generally considered to be quite good with clean facilities, good crossing points and good personal safety; however lighting is an issue in the New Forest, together with the quality of footways and ease of passage.

7.19 Residents' top priorities for transport improvements were:

- Improvements to roads and pavements.
- Measures to reduce the impact HGVs.
- Develop school and work place travel plans.

Problems and issues

Visitor pressure and National Park designation

7.20 The New Forest relies heavily on the income generated by visitors to the area to support the local economy. During the summer months, when visitor numbers are at their highest, many towns and villages experience high volumes of traffic that pose a significant threat to the unique environment of the area. Lyndhurst, for example, has a designated Air Quality Management Area and therefore would benefit from measures to relieve the village from any additional traffic generated as a result of the National Park designation.

7.21 The now granted National Park status has the potential for many more visitors adding additional pressure to the local road network. Opportunities exist to influence the mode of visitor transport, whether it be travelling to or around the Forest. Hampshire County Council is working with the New Forest Tourism Association, New Forest District Council and the National Park Authority to introduce car-free alternatives that will reduce the need to travel in the Forest by car.

7.22 The New Forest Tour, a circular 'hop-on, hop-off' tourist bus service, is moving from a two hourly to an hourly frequency. This will increase passenger confidence and double the number of spaces available on the cycle trailers, allowing cyclists access to a wider area without the need to drive into the Forest first. The County Council has, through the New Forest Transport Strategy Officer, worked closely with existing partners in the Forest and has now built a working relationship with the National Park Authority and the district council. The New Forest Tour has had funding approved to secure two nearly new open-top busses as part of the 2006/07 capital programme.

Lyndhurst congestion and Air Quality Management Area: Operation of the New Forest Road Network Group

7.23 The village of Lyndhurst is the New Forest's main area of congestion. This is largely due to the limited capacity of the junction where the A337 and A35 intersect in the High Street at the village centre. The junction is currently signalised, with identical signal timings for both approaches.

7.24 Due to the operational problems with this junction and periods of slow moving traffic or long queues of vehicles, air quality problems in the High Street have been detected. New Forest District Council has recently declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

- 7.25** The County Council has for the past 18 months, run a working group (a sub-group of the New Forest Transport Strategy Panel), involving New Forest District Council, to address issues associated with the operation of the local road network. The group has considered many issues such as congestion, air quality and traffic flow in terms of how each of these issues can be improved to benefit the operation of the network within the area.
- 7.26** This will use the variable message signs on the M27 which will react to traffic conditions on the A337 north of Lyndhurst. Should traffic queues on the A337 north of Lyndhurst become problematic then an alternative route via Junction 2 of the M27/A326/A35 will be promoted.
- 7.27** The work so far has resulted in the identification of an intelligent routing strategy for Lyndhurst and the south of the New Forest. Extensive trial and feasibility work will take place in the summer of 2006 and if successful, full implementation of the routing strategy is set for the 2007/08 capital programme.
- 7.28** The strategy will be accompanied by traffic management or capacity improvements that may arise in the coming months as the result of a detailed feasibility study. This will focus on a second set of traffic signals in Lyndhurst aimed at reducing queue lengths from the south and relieving air quality problems in the High Street. New Forest District Council's environmental health officers are working closely with the group to model the two schemes mentioned to assess their effect on the AQMA.
- 7.29** One of the issues the working group has examined is the need for a bypass for the village of Lyndhurst – see paragraph 7.77 for more details.

Heavy goods vehicles

- 7.30** For many years, the routing of HGVs in the New Forest has caused problems, especially in areas with unfenced roads. In response to pressures in the south of the New Forest, particularly in Lyndhurst High Street, a 7.5 tonne HGV restriction was implemented in 1997. This restriction prevents HGV through-movements, except for legitimate access in Lyndhurst, Burley, Minstead, Bartley, Woodlands, Bransgore and Ringwood, south of the A31 and east of the B3347.
- 7.31** More recently, town and village communities north of Lyndhurst have raised concerns. Of particular concern is the route from Cadnam to Downton (in Wiltshire), the B3079/B3078/B3080 and from Cadnam to Fordingbridge, B3079/B3078, essentially the Forest area bounded by the A36, A31 and A338. In Hampshire, the settlements of Brook, Godshill, Hale and Fordingbridge have all reported concerns about the increasing number of HGV journeys through the respective villages, despite the legitimate access to the waste disposal centre at Pound Bottom (B3078).
- 7.32** Across the Hampshire boundary, Wiltshire County Council and some concerned residents groups have also reported problems of the same nature in the village of

Downton. Their main concerns are similar to Hampshire's and include noise, vibrations, and damage to the environment caused by HGVs.

- 7.33** A weight restriction has been actively pursued for the past 18 months, as in the south of the New Forest, by Hampshire and Wiltshire residents and local groups. This is not a new issue and the latest developments have endorsed long-standing concerns voiced over many years. As a result of partnership working with Wiltshire County Council, a 7.5 tonne weight restriction will be implemented as part of the 2006/07 capital programme, subject to statutory consultation.

Access to services, especially health care

- 7.34** Access to health services in the New Forest area has been identified as a problem in the initial Accession analysis, particularly access to hospitals. The pilot study has thoroughly analysed the area and a steering group has been set up with the New Forest Health Community Action Network to examine the issues. The age profile in the New Milton and Barton-on-Sea areas show a high proportion of elderly residents with lower than average car ownership. Because of the older population walking distances to public transport stops are more important and the threshold of 800m set by Accession in the initial accessibility audit is too far for many older people. Accession was used to re-evaluate the area using a maximum walking distance of 400m to the nearest public transport stop.
- 7.35** The result showed generally poor access by public transport and to hospitals for the selected areas. Consequently, a comprehensive pilot will identify improvements that can be made in the New Forest for access to health care facilities. This will be tied in with the review of public transport services for the area which will, for the first time, consider access to health care and in particular the new Lymington hospital. Any interventions that are identified through the pilot will be implemented through an investment programme, which will be funded by a number of budgets identified within the annual capital programmes.

Animal casualties

- 7.36** Speed is widely recognised as the main contributory factor in animal collisions. An animal casualty location map, produced annually by the New Forest Transport Strategy Officer, clearly shows that the longer and straighter stretches of unfenced roads have the worst safety record. When the blanket 40 mph speed restriction was introduced in 1988 on the unfenced roads in the New Forest, the animal casualty rate reduced from over 150 animal deaths in 1987 to around 75 in 2004. In 2004 there were 162 collisions involving stock animals on the unfenced roads, leading to 75 deaths. This number, while lower than the 1988 figure, represents an unacceptable level of collisions, and continues to have a detrimental effect on the livelihood of the commoning community.

- 7.37** Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) form part of a strategy that aims to raise driver awareness and reduce the speed of traffic in the most at risk areas. A partnership project involving Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Hampshire Constabulary, Forestry Commission and The Verderers, started in January 2006. The SIDs are mobile and are used for up to two weeks in one area before being moved to a new location. The data is interrogated and speed enforcement follows if appropriate. Quarterly reports will provide updates on the results achieved as well as monitoring the outcomes.

Community severance and safety

- 7.38** The majority of communities in the Waterside area are situated to the east of the A326 corridor (most of Marchwood, Hythe, Applemore, Dibden, Holbury and Fawley). Residents of these communities rely heavily on access to the open space of the New Forest for recreation and dog walking, with access to these activities being intersected by the A326.
- 7.39** Concerns about the severance caused by the A326 have been long standing. This issue will be tackled by the Solent Transport Strategy but will closely link with that of the New Forest Transport Strategy in terms of improving effective crossing points to access the New Forest.
- 7.40** To help tackle this issue of severance and safety along this corridor, a formal pedestrian crossing is being designed for construction north of the roundabout junction on the A326 with the B3054, known locally as Heath roundabout. This will be implemented as part of the county-wide pedestrian crossing programme.
- 7.41** More generally across the New Forest, crashes involving younger people are much higher than in other areas in Hampshire. The casualty reduction programme provides the opportunity to explore this trend and investigate measures to overcome it. See chapter 5 for a description of the County Council's wider approaches to safety and casualty reduction.

Development pressures from South East Dorset and the South East

- 7.42** Substantial new development is planned within the South East Dorset sub-region, within the context of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy. Between 40,000 and 67,000 new homes need to be accommodated, all of which will be in close proximity to the National Park, given the relatively small size of the sub-region.
- 7.43** A population increase of this level will inevitably lead to additional visitor pressures, particularly from day visitors, within the New Forest National Park. It will also place additional stress on the transport infrastructure that passes through the New Forest, particularly the A31 and the Poole-London rail link. Hampshire County Council will seek to ensure that adequate infrastructure provision is in place to support any new development and to mitigate such impacts.

- 7.44 There is a growing problem with informal ‘park and share’ arrangements that have developed over a number of years in Ringwood town centre. Commuters park for the duration of the working day in the town centre car parks and share onward trips, often to employers in Bournemouth. This has created parking capacity and turnover problems for Ringwood and is an issue that needs to be managed in the light of development from the south east of Dorset.
- 7.45 Concerns are increasing about the efficiency of the A31/A338 interchange at Ringwood as traffic levels continue to grow. Congestion and capacity issues will need to be tackled with the Highways Agency, in conjunction with infrastructure packages required to accommodate future growth.
- 7.46 The direct impact of the South East Plan on the New Forest is relatively small. As currently proposed, the area need only accommodate a relatively modest amount of new development. However, the indirect impacts from larger, strategic development planned for the Solent area will need to be considered, in terms of the additional visitor pressure this may create and the potential increase in trips to and through the Forest.

Impact of development at Bournemouth Airport

- 7.47 Substantial growth is planned for Bournemouth Airport, involving both passenger numbers and employment within the associated business park. The impacts in terms of surface access requirements will grow in line with the expansion in activity. Current road access to the site is relatively indirect and is not well linked to the strategic road network.
- 7.48 Access by alternative modes to the car is very limited. Concerns relate to airport growth leading to additional traffic passing through the New Forest and in particular, that traffic will increasingly use unsuitable routes such as the Avon Causeway. Hampshire County Council will work with the local authorities in South East Dorset, at the strategic level, to assist in identifying the most appropriate way to accommodate the airport’s access needs.

Review of the road hierarchy

- 7.49 A review is needed of the Strategic Road Network and some local routes in the New Forest. This exercise will establish whether changes are needed and appropriate, and whether such changes will impact positively on localised congestion and general traffic routing. The review will include the A31 and A36 and at the local level, the A35, A337 and A336.

Summary of key problems, issues and actions for the New Forest Transport Strategy area

Problems and issues	Actions
<p>Particular problems of traffic congestion through the centre of Lyndhurst (A35/A337 junction).</p>	<p>The County Council has established the Operation of the New Forest Road Network Group to investigate all potential improvement options. The group's initial recommendations are reflected in the programme shown in chapter 10.</p>
<p>Need to review the Strategic Road Network and some local routes in the New Forest.</p>	<p>The review will establish whether changes are needed and appropriate, and whether such changes will impact positively on localised congestion and general traffic routing. The review will include the A31 and A36 and at the local level, the A35, A337 and A336.</p>
<p>Congestion in Lyndhurst High Street has resulted in air quality problems leading to the designation of an Air Quality Management Area.</p>	<p>The County Council is working jointly with the district council and will provide and test transport related options, as set out in chapter 5, for inclusion in the Air Quality Management Plan. The Operation of the New Forest Road Network Group is considering these issues alongside congestion, as both are closely inter-related.</p>
<p>The routing of some HGVs is currently causing environmental damage and disturbance to communities through noise and vibrations, particularly on unsuitable routes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Council is working with freight operators and adjoining authorities through Freight Quality Partnerships, to agree advisory routes and to introduce weight restrictions where required. • Improved signing will be introduced under the investment programme to support such measures. This will include improved signing to ports, an approach agreed with Associated

British Ports.	
<p>Safety of road users particularly those in vulnerable groups eg young people, pedestrians and cyclists. The New Forest has an above average incidence of crashes involving younger people.</p>	<p>The casualty reduction programme (CRP) – chapter 10 – targets locations with the worst safety records. This will be supported by education and publicity to highlight particular problems for particular groups.</p>
<p>There are specific problems with increasing traffic speeds and resultant personal injury accidents and animal collisions on unfenced roads.</p>	<p>The CRP will tackle particular safety locations. This will be supplemented by new signing providing information on animal collisions.</p>
<p>Severance problems affect Waterside residents accessing the New Forest. In particular, the A326 is a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movements and causes significant severance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation is currently underway to identify safe crossing facilities, which will be delivered as part of the programme (chapter 10). • A New Forest strategic cycle network has been agreed with partners and will guide investment in cycle links.
<p>Major development arising from regional spatial strategies, particularly in South Hampshire and South East Dorset strategic growth areas, will generate additional demand for travel within and through the New Forest. Accommodating new residential development, all of which will be in relative close proximity to the National Park given the relatively small size of the sub-region.</p>	<p>The County Council is working jointly with a range of neighbouring and second tier authorities to ensure that the impact of new development is appropriately managed and that long-distance travel to and through the Forest is minimised. Traffic management measures will be required to reduce the use of unsuitable Forest roads. Hampshire County Council will seek to ensure that adequate infrastructure provision is in place to support any new development and to mitigate such impacts.</p>
<p>Substantial growth is planned for Bournemouth Airport, both in terms of passenger numbers and employment within the associated business park. The impacts in terms of surface access requirements will grow in line with the expansion in activity.</p>	<p>Hampshire County Council will work with the local authorities in South East Dorset to assist in identifying the most appropriate way to accommodate the airport's access needs.</p>

<p>Informal 'park and share' arrangements have developed over a number of years enabling onward trips to large employers in the Bournemouth area. This has caused capacity and turnover problems for town centre car parks and around junctions in the town centre. It also causes problems in meeting the needs of shoppers and workers in the town.</p>	<p>Investigations will take place to consider how this issue can be addressed, in liaison with the district and town councils and the local chamber of commerce.</p>
<p>Concern over the capacity of the A31/A338 interchange as traffic levels continue to grow.</p>	<p>Opportunities to work with the Highways Agency to consider whether capacity improvements can be developed.</p>
<p>The New Forest Health Community Action Network (sub-group of the New Forest Local Strategic Partnership) has recognised that access to healthcare, particularly to hospitals, for the elderly population (in the coastal towns) is an important issue.</p>	<p>A new hospital is due to open in Lymington in December 2006. Liaison with the Health Authority and the County Council's Passenger Transport Group to link public transport services to the hospital, will help achieve the best possible access.</p>

Opportunities

National Park designation and partnership working

- 7.50** The recent designation of the New Forest as a National Park presents new opportunities to develop and build on existing partnerships. Strong relationships already exist with various organisations representing the diverse range of interests in a protected area such as the New Forest.
- 7.51** The New Forest Committee (predecessor of the National Park Authority), brought many of these interests together on a voluntary basis for a number of years, until it disbanded on the creation of the statutory National Park Authority in 2005. The membership of the former committee is now largely reflected in the National Park Authority, offering continuity and a common understanding of problems and issues.

- 7.52 A number of the statutory authorities jointly fund a New Forest Transport Strategy Officer. Partnership working and coordination of activities are key elements of this work. A steering group representing all the funding bodies determines the objectives of the post, which are currently:
- Demand management.
 - Strategic cycle network.
 - Car-free tourism.
 - Promotion of community and public transport schemes.
- 7.53 The objectives are currently under review, in part to ensure that the work of the post holder is focussed on delivery of LTP objectives.

Demand management: car-free tourism

- 7.54 The 'New Forest Tour' open top bus introduced in 2004, provides a circular tour for visitors and local residents. The bus provides the opportunity for passengers to hop-on and hop-off to suit their own needs and includes a cycle trailer to allow cyclists to use the service. Local residents can also use the tour bus for individual journeys that form part of the circular tour and are subject to a separate fare structure.
- 7.55 The service ran as a commercial venture in the first year with support from the County Council for marketing and the purchase of cycle trailers. The service did not make a profit but showed that with some minor amendments to the route and more targeted promotion it could become increasingly commercially viable over time. The second year provided a pack of 'Day out Guides' that promoted use of the tour to access cycling, walking and visitors attractions in the New Forest. The County Council is working with partners on the route to provide discounts and tie-ins to make the service even more attractive to potential users. These improvements resulted in a doubling of passenger numbers in the second year to over 5,000 trips in 2005 and is projected to further double to 12,000 in 2006.
- 7.56 The County Council has signed-up to the national Tourism on Board research project, led by the University of Central Lancashire, to examine how to maximise the benefits of the service. The draft results show that 69% of passengers had a car available on the day for the journey but decided to take the bus. This is the highest proportion of any scheme in the country.
- 7.57 Investment has been secured to provide two nearly new open top buses for the sole use on the New Forest Tour. The newer buses will provide a more comfortable ride experience as well as offering greater opportunities to hop-on and hop-off. The vehicles will have stricter and more efficient emission level control as well as being low floor, thus reducing the impact on air quality and improving accessibility. This would also mean the service moving to an hourly frequency, increasing passenger convenience.

7.58 The tour provides the opportunity to reduce the number of cars on Forest roads, especially those that are transporting bicycles, as the tour buses will continue to use a cycle carrying trailer. It also provides additional rural bus journeys and helps to reduce social exclusion for those without a car wishing to access the main attractions and villages. Funding for the tour has been allocated from the 2006/07 capital programme.

Decriminalised Car Parking Enforcement and visitor parking

7.59 New Forest District Council introduced Decriminalised Car Parking Enforcement (DCPE) in January 2006. The district council introduced the arrangements under an agency agreement with the County Council. The regularised enforcement that DCPE puts in place may help towards the better management of parking and identify where there are opportunities to modify existing parking controls.

7.60 The Forestry Commission is planning a full review of its visitor parking arrangements and has invited the County Council to support this work. This will provide a major opportunity to influence the levels and locations of car based tourism in the New Forest.

Table 7.60: Summary of key opportunities for the New Forest Transport Strategy

Opportunities	Actions
Existing strong partnerships, particularly with the New Forest Transport Strategy Steering Group and the National Park Authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The County Council will maintain and develop existing partnerships, as described in the five year strategy (chapter 5) to guide future transport policy. In particular there will be a need to strengthen partnership working with the National Park Authority as it becomes more established.
A number of proposals from the recently adopted New Forest Transport Strategy.	The strategy establishes a number of priorities for investment that are reflected in the programme.
Decriminalised Car Parking Enforcement was introduced for the New Forest district in 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district council introduced the arrangements under an agency agreement with the County Council.

Demand management: car-free tourism

- Opportunities to improve demand management will be examined, albeit that such measures will need to reflect the rural nature of the area and to accommodate the needs of visitors.

Continuation of the New Forest Tour will provide the opportunity to reduce the number of visitor cars on Forest roads. By 2008 it is predicted that the tour will remove 6,000 car trips from the local network. This will especially benefit those who are transporting bicycles, as the tour buses will continue to use cycle trailers.

Visions and objectives and long-term strategy

The existing New Forest Transport Strategy (NFTS, 2003)

- 7.61** The existing NFTS strategy was developed by Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and the New Forest Committee in November 2003, in recognition of the growing transport problems and reflecting national transport policies.
- 7.62** The strategy provides a framework of proposals aimed at managing the increased demand for travel by car, by visitors to the area and residents. The document sets out ways of encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport to the car, improving integration between different modes of transport and improving access to town and village centres.
- 7.63** The LTP has used this framework by reflecting the New Forest Transport Strategy's aims and objectives (set out in chapter 4 paragraph 4.130) in the context of any transport plans or schemes. This will be achieved through partnership working with the various local agencies and also through the work of the New Forest Transport Strategy Officer.
- 7.64** The LTP's long-term strategy may need amending following discussions with the National Park Authority to reflect the change to National Park status.

Vision and objectives for the New Forest

7.65 The New Forest Transport Strategy vision is:

“To maintain and improve the area’s distinctive character, while improving opportunities for sustainable travel for everyone through appropriate transport investment and greater integration. Enhancing the environment, the local economy and reduced social exclusion will be achieved through the integration of land use and transport policies, through an innovative approach to travel and the management of existing resources in the New Forest.”

7.66 The strategy sets out a number of aims and objectives relevant to the LTP:

Aims:

- To help deliver the aims and objectives of the New Forest Committee’s Strategy for the New Forest.¹
- To support and maintain the vibrancy and economic vitality of local communities.
- To provide effective local transport solutions tailored to the needs of particular areas, which reduce impacts on the Forest environment.
- To reduce the adverse impacts of traffic on the environment and local communities especially in the designated National Park.
- To integrate land use and transport planning.
- To increase the opportunities for sustainable travel and accessibility for all, having regard for the particular sensitivity of remote areas.

Objectives:

- To promote new and improved passenger transport, cycling and walking facilities that are accessible to all and that provide safe, reliable, affordable and attractive alternatives to the car.
- To provide imaginative local solutions that maintain the character of the New Forest and its towns and villages, contribute towards the development of a safe, attractive and cherished environment, reduce visual impact, noise and air pollution, and at the same time improve sustainable access to services, goods and markets for local people and businesses.
- To ensure that any new major development that is likely to generate significant additional traffic is located and planned to provide as far as possible alternative means of travel to the private car, preferably making use of existing services and interchanges.

¹ The New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) has endorsed and adopted the New Forest Committee’s strategy for the New Forest. The NPA is the successive body of the committee.

- To investigate measures such as road closures and road pricing to manage the use of the New Forest's highway network and reduce the undesirable effects of traffic on wildlife, outdoor recreation, the unique New Forest environment and the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.
- To raise awareness of transport issues and maintain support for the strategy to bring about changes in travel behaviour.
- To identify a range of targets and indicators that can be monitored, to assess the effectiveness of the strategy's measures.
- To improve road safety and reduce the number of injuries to both people and animals.
- To ensure adequate accessibility for disabled people.
- To reduce the level and impact of through-traffic in the New Forest.

Long-term strategy

- 7.67** The overall long-term strategy for the New Forest is to **reduce, manage, invest** and also **protect**. In the short-term, (the five year period of the LTP), the New Forest Transport Strategy primarily focuses on measures to manage traffic routeing, affecting both standard traffic and HGVs. This will be achieved through the implementation of weight limits, where necessary and practical, and through signing strategies to influence the route taken, particularly by visitors, towards Lyndhurst and the south of the New Forest.
- 7.68** Investing in improvements to access, particularly on busy pedestrian routes, is also an area of focus within the five year strategy and is highlighted through the stakeholder consultation as an aim for the long-term strategy. It is recognised that improvements in accessing a number of services, particularly health care in the New Forest are an important focus over the long-term time period.
- 7.69** The emerging long-term strategy aims to protect the special environmental qualities of the New Forest area by addressing issues of sign clutter and reducing the number of animal collisions. It is also acknowledged that there is a need to manage the increasing pressures placed on the unique environment of the New Forest, while recognising their importance to the local economy.
- 7.70** Drawing on the aims and objectives of the existing New Forest Transport Strategy and on stakeholder comments, the key long-term themes for the LTP are:

I – Ongoing protection of the New Forest as a nationally important area for leisure and nature conservation

- 7.71** The approach to transport planning and traffic management must match the Forest's recent National Park designation. This will include appropriate management of visitor traffic, particularly at hot-spots such as Lyndhurst, and promotion of car-free tourism.

- 7.72 Commercial traffic services and supports the local economy although careful management of such traffic is needed to reduce its impact, particularly on the quieter areas of the Forest.

2 – Accommodating and managing the impacts of visitors to the New Forest

- 7.73 Car traffic accounts for over 90% of all visitor travel in the National Park. The County Council will continue to examine and implement a range of interventions to boost car-free tourism and to manage visitor traffic.
- 7.74 The main focus of congestion in the New Forest area is in the village of Lyndhurst, in particular at the traffic signal junction of the A337 and (eastbound) A35, which has very limited capacity. An Air Quality Management Area has been declared in this location covering the High Street (see also paragraphs 5.358 to 5.363).
- 7.75 The strategy for Lyndhurst and the New Forest will be developed and evaluated to ensure the problems of congestion and air quality are adequately addressed within the wider policy and planning context, particularly the National Park status and the importance of the tourism industry to the local economy. A working group made up of officers and elected Members from the County Council and New Forest District Council is examining the operation of the road network in the New Forest, including previous and new proposals to relieve congestion and address other related problems.
- 7.76 The group has identified an intelligent routeing strategy using variable message signs on the M27. This will direct traffic bound for Lyndhurst and the south of the New Forest from Junction 2 of the M27 via the A326 and A35 to Lyndhurst. Trials to assess the effectiveness of this strategy will take place in the summer of 2006. Another outcome of the working group is subject to a detailed feasibility study. The study will ascertain whether a second set of traffic signals in Lyndhurst will help improve queues from the south and the air quality problems in the High Street.
- 7.77 The working group is also discussing the issue of a bypass for Lyndhurst. Given the potential costs of such a project and the impact on important areas of nature conservation such a scheme could not be approached within the scope of this LTP. The entirety of the scheme will include detailed environmental and habitat survey work to ascertain the effect on the European and national environmental designations that make up the New Forest. The impact on the archaeological properties of the area also need to be duly considered. Similarly, the likely costs of construction, environmental mitigation and compensation are likely to be too great within the context of Hampshire's integrated transport programme under this LTP.
- 7.78 Full consultation with English Nature (soon to be re-named Natural England), and other relevant bodies, will take place to ensure all environmental issues are addressed and any plans that may come forward in the future are subject to an appropriate assessment under relevant regulations. Any future proposals for a

bypass in Lyndhurst will be subject to a major scheme bid to the Government and not funded by the LTP.

- 7.79** In line with the LTP's overall theme of **reduce, manage and invest**, demand management measures will need to support the schemes that are aimed at improving the road network in the New Forest. Information and measures to influence travel behaviour will be particularly important. Cycling is a popular activity for visitors and residents, providing a sustainable means of accessing and getting around the New Forest.

3 – Maximising access to services and employment, particularly recognising the rural nature of the New Forest

- 7.80** Given the rural nature of the New Forest, the car will continue to play an important role in personal mobility within the strategy area. Ensuring adequate availability of community and passenger transport services is needed, particularly for those who do not have access to a car, or choose to use to use alternatives. The long-term strategy is for improvements to bus services and infrastructure, including the appropriate use of demand responsive services.
- 7.81** Rail provides an important public transport alternative in the New Forest, particularly for longer distance journeys including direct services from Brockenhurst to London. The designation of the Lymington branch line as a Heritage Line is a welcome intervention, offering greater security for the future of the service.
- 7.82** Work on access to hospitals, under the Accession Partnership (see paragraphs 5.34 to 5.35), will need to reflect this wider objective of maximising access to services.

4 – Addressing the negative impacts of traffic in the New Forest

- 7.83** Traffic volumes in the New Forest are relatively high compared to other rural areas, and are increasing. Congestion and the resultant air pollution, is a regular feature of summer life in Lyndhurst and at other hot-spots.
- 7.84** Consultation on the provisional LTP demonstrated considerable concern about the impact of HGVs on local communities. Residents are concerned about the effect of goods vehicles on the safety of vulnerable road users, especially children, pedestrians, horse riders and animals. HGV routeing strategies will be reviewed to reduce congestion and improve the overall performance of the local road network.
- 7.85** Initial investigations will take place in the first year of the LTP to manage congestion on the approaches to Lyndhurst through a demand responsive intelligent signing strategy (outlined in paragraph 7.126). The associated trial work will be undertaken in liaison with the Highways Agency.
- 7.86** An unfortunate side effect of the open nature of the New Forest and the existence of ancient grazing rights, is the high level of animal collisions. Extensive

work has already helped to reduce this problem although it remains a significant issue.

- 7.87** The New Forest Transport Strategy Officer has developed an animal collision reduction strategy, in agreement with the Commoners' Defence Association and the Agisters of the New Forest. It aims to reduce the current number of animal collisions relating to stock animals on unfenced Forest roads. The following range of measures and initiatives will help support the reduction strategy:
- Increasing driver awareness.
 - Reducing speeding across the New Forest.
 - Looking at high risk areas to establish need.
 - Ensuring pony reflective collars are available.
 - Introducing a publicity campaign in the local and national press.
 - Supporting the work of the road safety committee.
- 7.88** Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) form part of this strategy and aim to raise driver awareness and reduce the speed of traffic in the most at risk areas. The partnership project involving Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Hampshire Constabulary, the Forestry Commission and the Verderers, started in January 2006. The SIDs are mobile and are used for up to two weeks in one area then moved on to a new location. The data is interrogated and speed enforcement follows if appropriate. Quarterly reports will provide updates on the results achieved as well as monitoring the outcomes.
- 7.89** The project is mainly being funded by the European Union Leader+ grant and New Forest District Council. Hampshire Constabulary, the Forestry Commission, the Verderers and Agisters and the Commoners' Defence Association have also contributed.
- 7.90** Hampshire County Council log the accident data onto a GIS map to provide detailed information on the location of each incident. This information is used to support casualty reduction work and identify high risk routes.
- 7.91** Sign clutter can negatively effect the aesthetic quality of the New Forest and negate the effectiveness of routeing strategies established during the first LTP. In this LTP, the New Forest Transport Strategy will continue to develop an effective Forest-wide routing strategy through improved signing and work towards overcoming the proliferation of sign clutter.
- 7.92** The New Forest's location between two major conurbations generates problems of its own. The impact of planned business development at Bournemouth Airport, combined with additional passenger numbers is of concern. The potential for substantial further development under the South East and South West Regional Spatial Strategies, in South East Dorset and the Solent area will be carefully assessed.
- 7.93** At the more local level, the A326 causes significant severance problems between the Waterside communities and the National Park. Similarly the rail line at Lymington causes severance for pedestrian and cycle access at the new hospital site at Ampress. Implementing a cycle and pedestrian route will help to overcome

Figure 7.95b: Long-term strategy for Lyndhurst

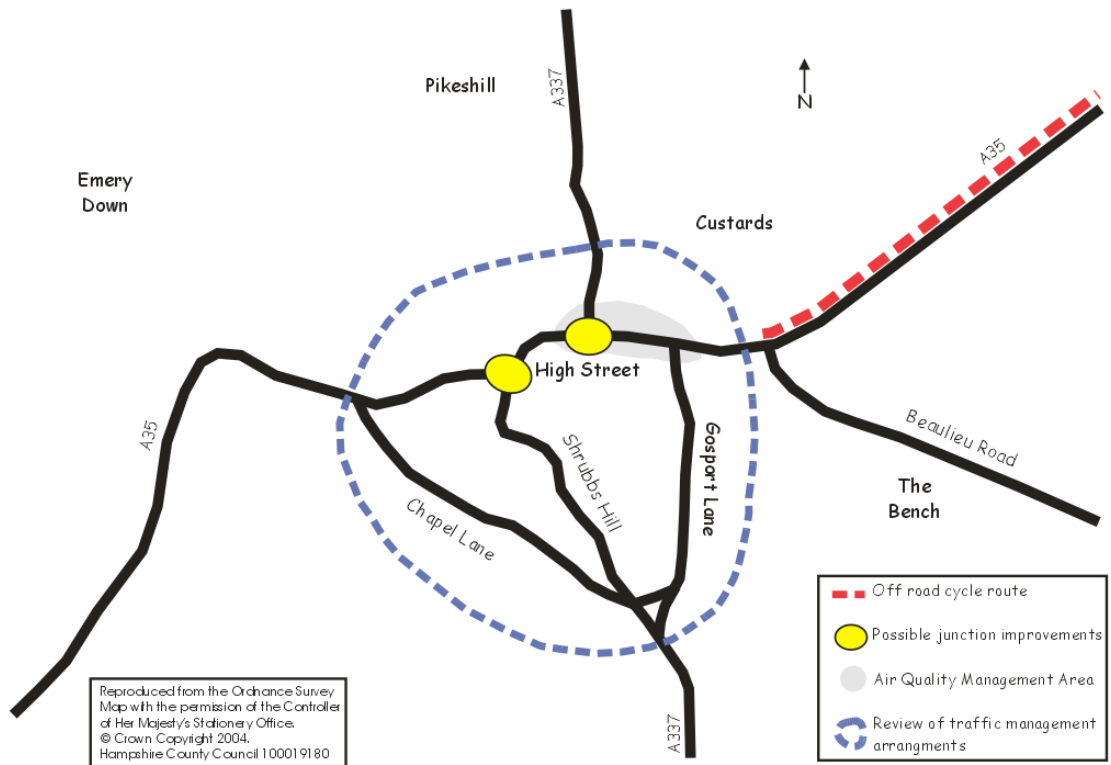
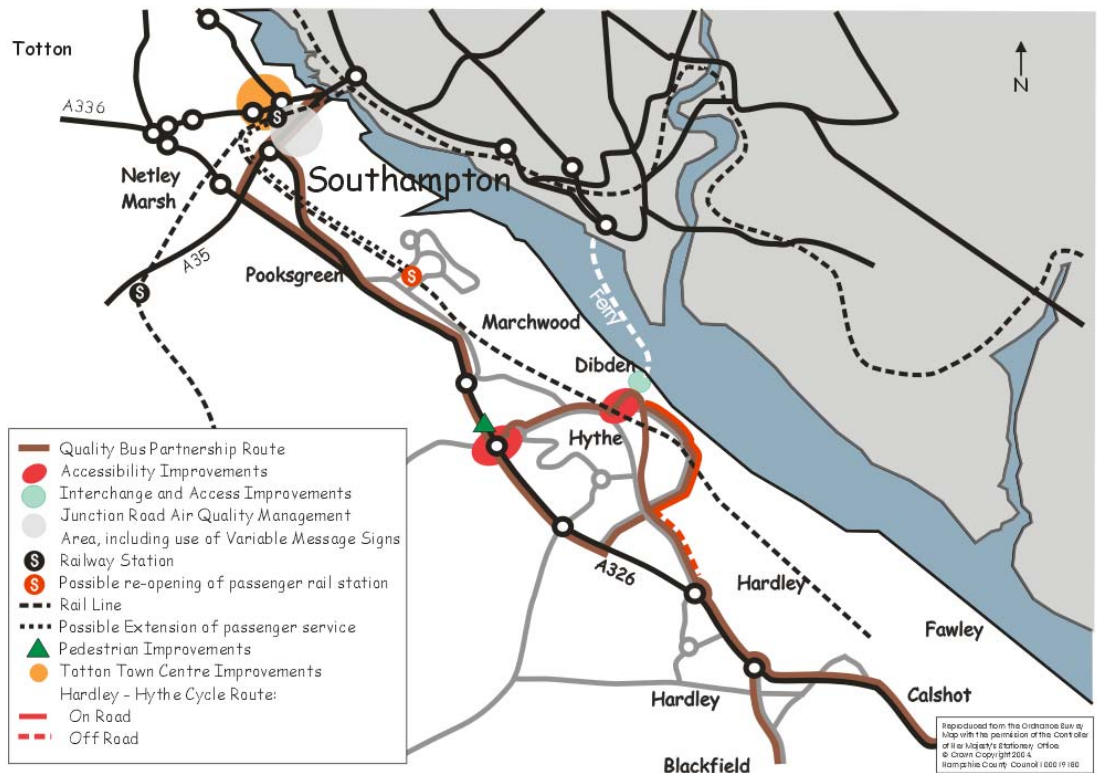


Figure 7.95c: Long-term strategy for Totton and Waterside



Five year strategy

New Forest Transport Strategy

- 7.96 An indicative set of proposals has been developed on an area-by-area basis to form a five year transport strategy. This is an aspirational programme funded from a range of sources. In addition to the LTP, external funding will be deployed where appropriate, with this five year strategy acting as a guide for negotiating future financial contributions with developers.
- 7.97 The key schemes from the five year strategy are identified in this section. Where funding has been allocated the particular scheme is highlighted in chapter 10 in terms of where it appears in the specific capital programmes. Progress on these may be affected by future budgetary constraints, priorities across the county, and progress on the technicalities of implementation.

Lyndhurst

- 7.98 The five year strategy for Lyndhurst focuses on reducing localised congestion, improving accessibility by non-car modes and road safety. Long periods of high volume, queuing traffic cause an air quality problem in Lyndhurst High Street. The district council has recently declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A joint working group of County Council and district council representatives investigating the 'Operation of the New Forest Road Network' is currently reviewing possible options to address issues within and around the village (including traffic management measures and road building options). The outcomes of the working group will help to guide the ongoing development of the strategy for Lyndhurst.
- 7.99 The key elements of the strategy are:
- Managing local congestion on the approaches to Lyndhurst village by intelligent traffic routing (utilising Variable Message Signs on a demand responsive basis). A joint project between the County Council and the Highways Agency will be established to route traffic from the M27 at an earlier junction to utilise the A326 and A35 (via the new Colbury right turn junction). This will help relieve the traffic queues on the A337 southbound and potentially on Lyndhurst High Street at the busiest times. The strategy's impact on the AQMA will be assessed.
 - Improvements to traffic control within the village with revised traffic signal operations and trials with selective vehicle detection, focussing on long vehicles and the constrained capacity at the A35/A337 junction.
 - Improvements to traffic flow from the south by altering junctions where possible – review of existing traffic signal operation and investigating the possibility of a new additional signalised junction.

- AQMA – traffic based network improvements, based on the previously mentioned schemes will be modelled to determine their impact. The modelling may also identify additional measures needed to reduce the air quality problems.
- Part of the terms of reference for the Operation of the New Forest Road Network group is to investigate a bypass for Lyndhurst. Given the potential costs of such a project and the impact on areas of important nature conservation, a scheme of this nature will not be approached within the scope of this LTP. The investigation of a bypass will still remain part of the long-term strategy for Lyndhurst.

Ringwood

7.100 The key elements of a strategy for Ringwood are:

- Improving town centre accessibility in terms of pedestrian and cycle links by continuing and enhancing the Ringwood pedestrian and cycles project. This will include a road closure at Quomp, a narrow residential road used as a short cut between Hightown Road and the town centre. Traffic will be removed to aid and enhance pedestrian and cycle movements and increase safety for the local schools.
- Investigating leisure cycle links into Dorset to create a hub of leisure cycling for the New Forest area.
- Working with the appropriate organisations and agencies to overcome the problems associated with long-stay commuter parking and the informal park and ride practises that have occurred in the Furlong car park.
- Review the case for the south east link road from Christchurch Road to the A31, in conjunction with land reserved for employment use west of Crow Lane.

Fordingbridge

7.101 The key element of a strategy for Fordingbridge:

- Investigate town centre improvements for pedestrian and cycle links to promote town centre accessibility.
- Areas of improvement will be identified through a community street audit, but early indications suggest that pedestrian links can be improved from the car park adjacent to the A338 off slip, towards the town centre.

Lymington

7.102 The strategy for Lymington focuses on improving local accessibility and recognises the importance of the thriving street market. The key elements are:

- Improving accessibility and safety in the High Street and considering reallocating road space in favour of pedestrians.
- Improving accessibility from the Emsworth Road car parks via New Street. Important measures will be implemented to improve this key route, including better pedestrian facilities to improve accessibility to the High Street.
- Implement access to the new Lymington Hospital through a cycle and pedestrian link from the Ampress site to the town centre. This will incorporate crossing facilities where necessary.
- A feasibility study will consider the possible re-opening of the Ampress rail halt. Implementation, if considered practical and value for money, will fall outside of the scope of this LTP.
- Investigating a valuable connection for cyclists and pedestrians from Lymington to Pennington.

Brockenhurst

7.103 The key elements of a strategy for Brockenhurst relate to local access and safety:

- Investigating possible traffic management and road safety improvements or initiatives to improve traffic circulation and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists within the village.
- Provision for utility and leisure cycling where it represents good value for money.
- Investigating the effects of the level crossing on air quality and the environment.

New Milton and other coastal towns

7.104 The key elements of a strategy for New Milton relate to local access:

- Reviewing the town centre transport improvements that have taken place through the first LTP. This will identify if any further junctions in the town centre need to be signalised or improved and consider other accessibility issues such as pedestrian and cycle links.

- Implementing local town centre improvements for pedestrians, paying particular attention to the demographic make-up of the town through the Country Towns Initiative. This will follow on from works already undertaken in Station Road North. Continuation of the scheme into Station Road South will depend on the availability of funding.
- Investigate improving accessibility and safety at the junction of the A337 and B3058 (serving Milford-on-Sea). The objective is to assess the various junction options to improve the egress and journey times for vehicles joining the primary route from Milford-on-Sea.

National Park and wider New Forest

7.105 The County Council and district councils will work in partnership with the National Park Authority to develop a strategy to promote and protect the environment through transport initiatives including:

- Development of demand management strategies through signing and other techniques.
- Development of guidance for coach drivers in terms of suggested routeing, setting down and parking facilities. This will take the form of a 'Coach Driver's Handbook'.
- Planning for the development of a coach parking strategy for Lymington where currently there are few opportunities for safe setting down places. This will involve land acquirement to realise the strategy.
- Reducing the impact of HGVs through the New Forest, especially the National Park. This will be achieved by implementing weight or width restrictions where necessary and appropriate and beneficial to local communities, while aiming to maintain the economic vibrancy of rural enterprises or businesses. A specific 7.5 tonne weight restriction for the north of the New Forest (B3078/B3079/B3080) will be implemented subject to the results of the consultation.
- Improving cycle routes and links within and between settlements in the New Forest area in general, particularly focussing on the strategic links.
- The introduction of Decriminalised Car Parking Enforcement across the entire NFTS area and New Forest district .
- Introducing commuter/long-stay and shoppers/short-stay parking 'clocks', together with a specific version for Hythe Ferry users in January 2006, to better manage parking within the district and town council car parks. Specific variations of the clocks are also in place for Lyndhurst and Beaulieu community centres. The performance of the clock system will be reviewed through a parking charges working group, including district council and County Council officers.

- The Forestry Commission will look at their existing car park provision as a pilot action under the European funded PROGRESS (PROmotion and Guidance for Recreation on Ecologically Sensitive Sites) project. It aims to reduce the impacts arising from the increasing demands of recreation on protected conservation areas in the New Forest. The current car park situation needs to be reviewed together with the potential mitigation to verge and gateway parking if new measures lead to overspill parking in the immediate vicinity.

Demand management: car-free tourism

- 7.106** The New Forest Tour is the main car-free tourism initiative serving Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu and Exbury with journeys starting and finishing each day at Hythe. Its operation has been secured for at least the next three years. For the past two years, it has run with one bus and a cycle trailer on a two hourly schedule. From April 2006, the tour will operate on a hourly schedule, thus improving frequency and customer confidence. However, to move this forward and meet expectations for sustainable transport alternatives, a three year agreement has been reached. The funding partners are the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council whose joint aim is to provide a five year strategy that looks at long-term sustainability issues.
- 7.107** Hampshire County Council is currently replacing finger post signs in Bramshaw to reduce the destinations shown. This form of demand management will help to reduce the impact of visitors by encouraging drivers to use the strategic road network and avoid the minor roads within the Forest when they are not part of their direct journey. This will be carried out in conjunction with a wider initiative to reduce general sign clutter where practical. Further consideration of initiatives of a similar nature will be made during the next five years.

Capital programme

- 7.108** A programme and set of proposals have been developed. The proposals for 2006/07 and 2007/08 are unlikely to change unless there are revised financial constraints and/or difficulties with feasibility or implementation. The key schemes for the remaining years of the five year programme are then identified in general terms.
- 7.109** Progress on any of the schemes outlined is dependent on future budgetary constraints, priorities across the county, progress on implementation and final funding allocations from Government. Where possible and appropriate, contributions from development will be used to help fund proposed schemes, bring forward their implementation or enable new schemes to be implemented.

2006/07 programme: description of schemes

New Milton, Market Town improvements: Country Town Initiative

- 7.110 New Milton has a high proportion of elderly people and it is recognised that it is important to improve pedestrian links, crossing facilities and the quality of such features for the resident population. The first phase of the initiative, implemented under the first LTP, involved the improvement of existing paving on Station Road North which, over time, was subject to damage by delivery vehicles parking on the footway.
- 7.111 The second stage of the scheme (2006/07 funded) will support works to the Mallard Centre and its links to the car parks and complete works from the first phase of Station Road North (carried out in 2005/6).

New Street, Lymington: town centre accessibility

- 7.112 New Street is a busy, well used pedestrian route from the town centre car parks to the High Street. The existing footway and crossing facilities are currently very poor; the footways are only wide enough for a single pedestrian and do not allow easy passage to and from the shopping area on the High Street.
- 7.113 The proposal involves improving the junction with the High Street by raising the carriageway surface and highlighting the desired crossing point. The remainder of the one-way section will be raised to a flush surface to improve accessibility and highlight the pedestrian priority. The resulting shared surface will reduce the dominance of vehicles, to the benefit of pedestrians.

New Forest car-free tourism: New Forest Tour

- 7.114 The New Forest Tour currently uses two 27 year old open top buses with only one in operation at any one time (the second is kept as a spare and used in the event of a breakdown or mechanical fault). These vehicles are now at the end of their life.
- 7.115 A large majority of the 2006/07 financial commitment is for the bus operator to secure two nearly new open top buses for the sole use on the New Forest Tour. This will mean that the service will double to an hourly tour thus increasing reliability and passenger confidence.
- 7.116 This scheme will provide alternative more sustainable transport options for visitors and locals wishing to travel around the Forest. It reduces the number of cars on Forest roads, including those that are transporting bicycles, as the tour bus has a cycle trailer and links to the extensive off-road network. It also provides additional rural bus journeys and helps to reduce social exclusion for those without a car and those wishing to access the main attractions and villages.

The newer buses provided by this allocation will have stricter and more efficient emission level control, thus reducing the impact on air quality.

7.117 The key benefits of the tour are:

- A car-free alternative for visitors to the New Forest.
- Serves Forestry Commission campsites.
- Provides integration with South West Trains from London and Bournemouth at Brockenhurst and Beaulieu Road stations and at Lymington Pier.
- Raises the profile of the New Forest and acts as a showpiece.
- Raises the profile and accessibility of visitor attractions on the route.
- Provides opportunities to access a greater range of cycling routes within the New Forest.

Northern New Forest: HGV restrictions (B3078/79/80)

7.118 A joint officer working group has been established between Hampshire and Wiltshire County Council's to investigate whether a 7.5 tonne weight restriction is practical on an area wide basis. This would essentially restrict HGVs (except for access), from the B roads bounded by the A338, A36, A31 and M27.

7.119 To date, an extensive survey of HGV movements within the area has been undertaken and both authorities are satisfied that there will be a noticeable benefit for Hampshire and Wiltshire residents in terms of a reduction in through-routeing HGVs. A number of HGV movements would remain to serve a waste management site within the zone that would be exempt from the restriction.

7.120 It is considered that the weight restriction will reduce HGV movements, noise and vibrations and verge degradation in the open forest. It will also help to protect the National Park environment.

7.121 The associated signing work will adhere to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 but, where possible, will take into account the impact of such signs on the open forest given the special nature of the environment.

Quomp, Ringwood: road closure

7.122 A large amount of local traffic has been observed using this route as a short-cut to the town centre and onwards to the A31 instead of using the local distributor route. Quomp joins Hightown Road at its southern end and the B3347 at its northern end. It has a high level of pedestrian and cycling activity (due to Ringwood Primary School being accessed from Quomp) on its short length to the town centre. It is proposed that accessibility by non-motorised transport

should be encouraged by closing the road to all through-traffic. This will include a physical closure as well as a Prohibition of Driving Traffic Regulation Order.

- 7.123** Two experimental road closures have been undertaken and the final consultations are now taking place. It is anticipated that the road closure, subject to the outcome of the consultation, will be implemented later in 2006/07. The design of the closure will take into account the local environment and in particular, will choose materials that blend well with the area's status as a Conservation Area.

Ampress to Lymington town centre: cycle and pedestrian route

- 7.124** Ampress to Lymington town centre cycle and pedestrian route is aimed at providing non-vehicular access to the new Lymington Hospital (currently under construction) at the Ampress site (former Wellworthy engineering) adjacent to the A337. In conjunction with the Primary Care Trust, it is recognised that the route could be used by employees, patients and visitors, where applicable.
- 7.125** A pedestrian refuge will be provided at Marsh Lane to aid cyclists and pedestrians to cross at this point and then proceed on the off-road residential route, northwards to the hospital. Improvements will be made to the pedestrian facilities at the Marsh Lane/A337 roundabout to aid movements across this junction. This scheme will be funded by developer contributions. Issues regarding access rights to the site need to be resolved as part of the development of the scheme.

2007/08 and future capital programmes

Lyndhurst and southern New Forest routeing strategy and traffic management

- 7.126** To address congestion problems in and around the Lyndhurst area, a demand responsive, or predetermined variable direction signing system will be put in place in conjunction with the Highways Agency. This will use electronic variable message signs on the M27, east of Cadnam, to advise westbound motorists to use the A326 Totton Western Bypass and the A35 from the M27 towards New Forest destinations, when there are congestion problems in the Lyndhurst area (namely the southbound A337).
- 7.127** It is envisaged that this will help towards the poor air quality in Lyndhurst High Street by reducing the impact of traffic accessing the A337 southbound. Currently, this traffic is forced to travel eastbound on the one-way section of the High Street where fumes from the slow moving traffic contribute towards poor air quality.
- 7.128** Associated traffic management measures at the junction with Lyndhurst High Street and Shrubbs Hill Road are also to be developed and implemented, subject to a comprehensive feasibility study currently underway. It is likely that such

measures will be in the form of a signalised junction, which will allow full use of both lanes of Shrubbs Hill Road. This will in turn reduce the length of traffic queues from the south of Lyndhurst, especially on the link from Goose Green and Shrubbs Hill Road where eastbound traffic currently uses the right hand lane only.

Accession Partnership: access to health care pilot

- 7.129** Access to health services in the New Forest area has been identified as a problem in the initial Accession analysis, particularly regarding access to hospitals (this has been discussed further in the accessibility strategy in paragraphs 5.8 to 5.138). The pilot study has analysed the area more thoroughly and a steering group has been set up with the New Forest Health Community Action Network to examine the issues.
- 7.130** The age profile in the New Milton and Barton-on-Sea areas show a high proportion of elderly residents with lower than average car ownership levels. Because of the older population, walking distance to public transport stops are more important and the threshold of 800m set by Accession in the initial accessibility audit is too far for many older people. Accession was used to re-evaluate the area using a maximum walk distance to the nearest public transport stop of 400m. This showed a relatively poor level of access to hospitals within this selected area.
- 7.131** Consequently, a comprehensive pilot, carried out within the LTP, will identify improvements that can be made in the New Forest for access to health care facilities. This will be tied in with the review of public transport services for the area which will, for the first time, consider access to health care, and in particular the new Lymington Hospital. Any interventions that are identified through the pilot will be implemented through an investment programme which will be funded by a number of budgets identified within the annual capital programmes.