



# A326 Waterside Improvements

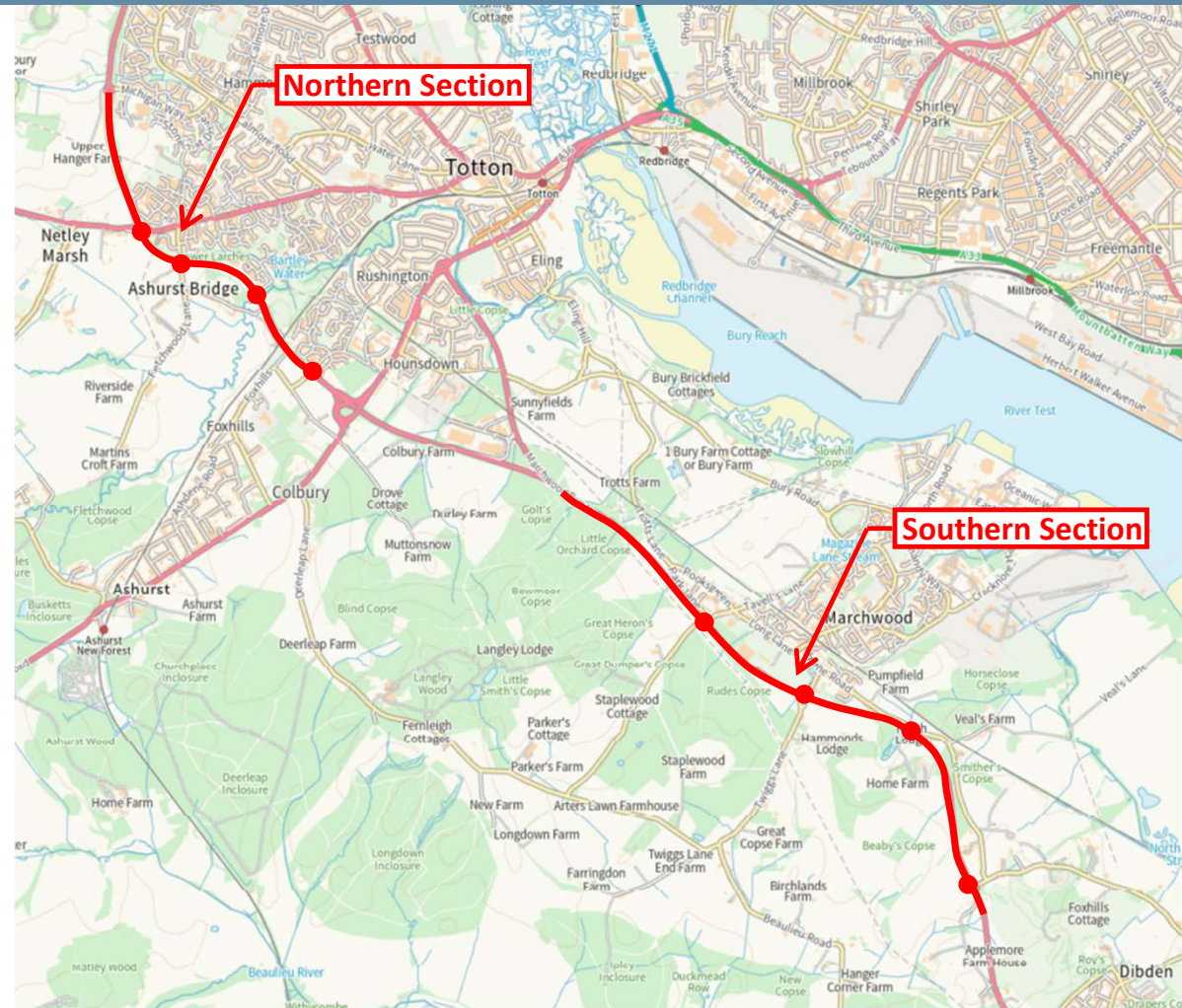
New Forest Consultative Panel Briefing  
11 June 2026



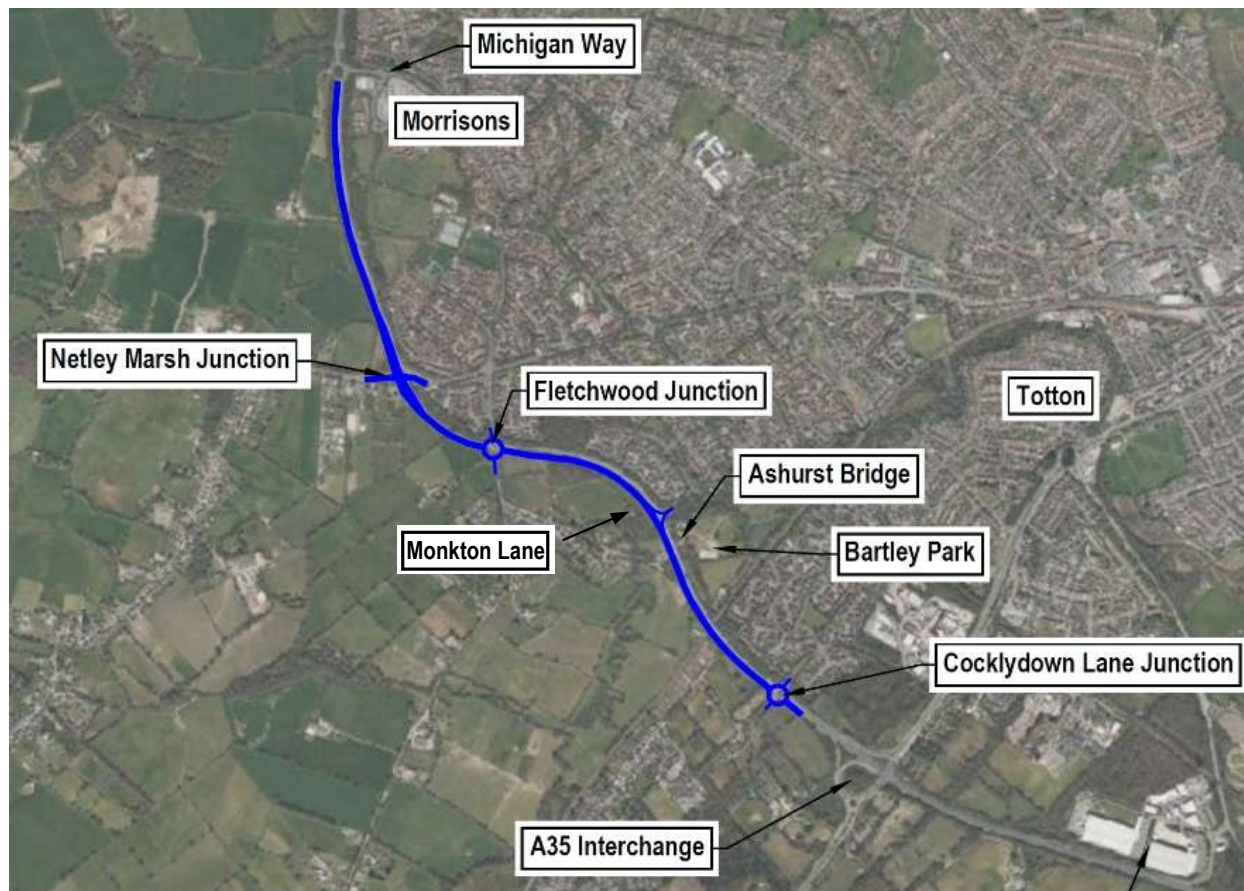
Hampshire  
County Council

# A326 Waterside Improvements Scheme

- Preferred scheme submitted includes:
  - Junction Improvements at eight locations
  - Two sections of dualling / road widening
  - New Junction at Pilgrim Inn to facilitate better access to Marchwood and port sites
  - Seven new controlled crossings, three modal filters.
- Programme:
  - Planning Application and OBC have been submitted
  - OBC outcome **Autumn 2026**
  - Determination of Planning assumed **Spring 2027**
  - Detailed design **Summer 2027 to Autumn 2028**
  - Main works to commence **March 2029**



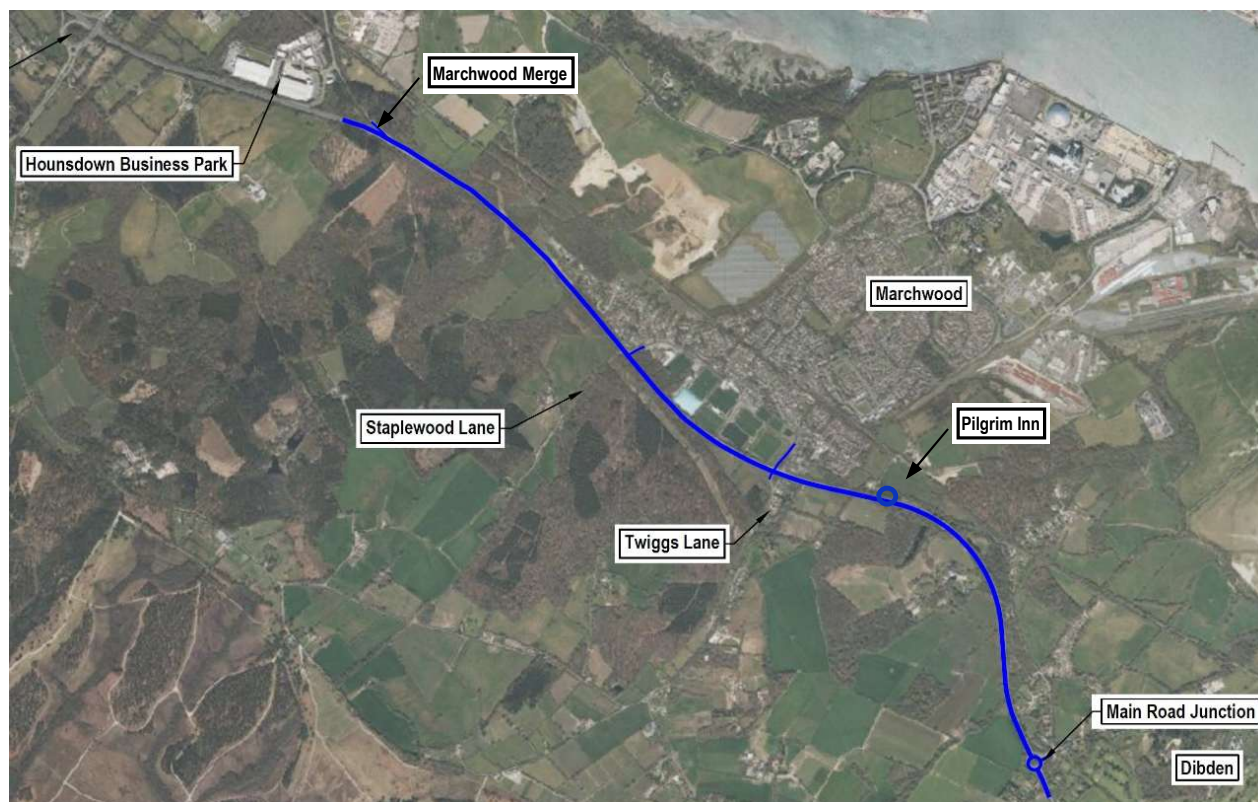
# A326 Overview – North Section



2.6km of new dual carriageway between existing dual carriageway sections to the west of Totton, plus:

- Three new controlled crossings at two locations.
- Four new or extended structures, including two new bridges.
- Retention of the trees between the A326 and houses in Totton to the east of A326
- Strip of 3<sup>rd</sup> party land needed in National Park along the western side of the A326 due to maintaining buffer towards Totton

# A326 Overview – South Section



1.5km of additional southbound lane between the A326 merge and Marchwood, plus:

- Two new roundabouts at Pilgrim Inn
- Four new controlled crossings at three locations, and one improved crossing.
- Proposed new 'Greenway' via modal filter on Staplewood Lane
- School street on Twiggs Lane via modal filter
- Modal filter / downgrading of Hythe Road between Marchwood and Dibden

# A326 – Engagement

We have done a lot of consultation and listening over the years:

- Many formal and informal meetings with County and District Councillors
- Many meetings with National Park and New Forest District officers
- Parish meetings, meetings with the Verderers, landowner meetings and meetings with businesses (Exxon, ABP, Freeport)
- Two formal engagement / consultation rounds with a number of events each time

And we have heard the following:

- People want the road improved as it is unreliable, with many wanting us to go further
- They don't want it to be improved if it damages the environment so we have reflected this in the design
- People living in the Waterside want improved crossings and they want to be closer to the Forest without having to drive
- Businesses want the scheme as it would help enable good growth of the port. However, Exxon Mobil reserve their position until they see the benefits for their site, weighing up construction delays
- Parishes have mixed feelings with southern ones concerned that they don't get the benefits as much as others, and scepticism about Solent Gateway 2. Northern ones see benefits, generally supportive.
- Those who care and look after the Forest have mixed feelings and feel the road improvement should be negative despite data showing reduced traffic impact on Forest roads. They would like more protection and more enhancement than we can realistically offer.

# A326 – Funding

What is the cost of the scheme?

- The preferred option submitted for planning and OBC is costed at £187m

How will the scheme be funded?

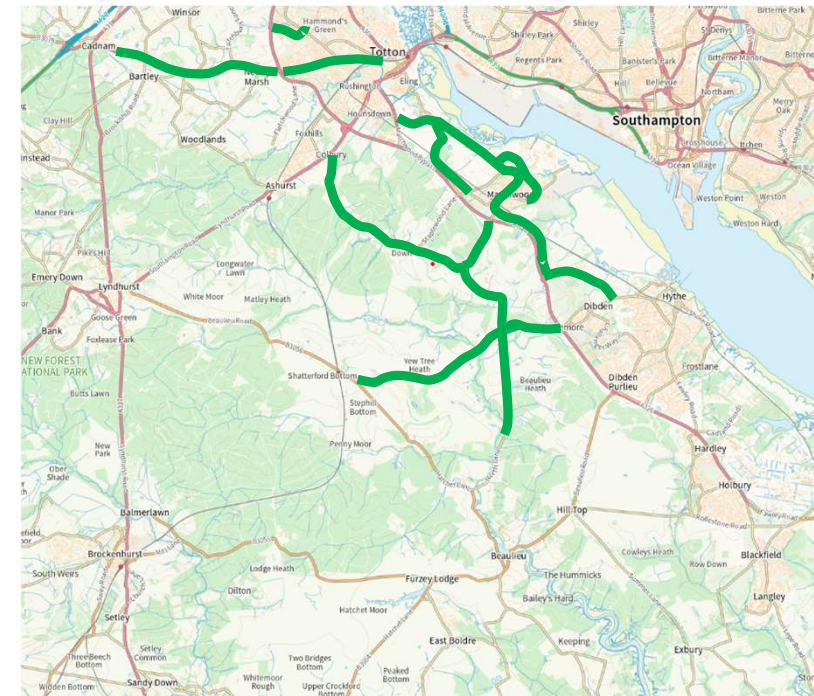
- If the OBC is approved, national government will fund 85% of the scheme. This equates to £159m.
- The remaining 15% (£28m) would need to be sourced locally.

# A326 – Strategic Scheme Objectives

1. Enhance accessibility for all users of the transport network, including non-motorised users:
  - Address severance and the barriers to walking and cycling posed by the A326
  - Support an increase in cycling and walking trips along the A326 and parallel routes.
2. Address congestion issues along the corridor
  - Address congestion issues on the A326 and surrounding local road network
  - Improve localised air quality issues and contribute positively to addressing issues causing the climate emergency
  - Increase resilience on the network thereby reducing the incidence of rat-running through the New Forest National Park
3. Facilitate economic development along the corridor
  - Facilitate, and improve access to/from housing and development sites, including the Port of Southampton expansion site, the Fawley Refinery and Marchwood Port.
4. Minimise the impact on the New Forest
  - Improve access to the New Forest National Park
  - Reduce the use of National Park roads as a through route by providing additional capacity on the main road in the area (A326)
  - Mitigate potential environmental impacts on the New Forest as much as possible, whilst also supporting the tourism and leisure economy in the National Park.

# A326 – Benefits for the New Forest

1. Reduce congestion on A326 – therefore attract additional vehicles onto A326 and divert these vehicles off the roads through the Forest and the Waterside communities:
  - A326 Journey time reduction of up to 10% northbound and up to 17% southbound in peak hours
  - Over 500 trips diverted from the Forest and Waterside area onto the A326 in peak hours (many more over the whole day)
  - Significant reductions on forest roads (A336 W, Twiggs Lane west, Dibden Bottom Rd, Deerleap Ln, Arters Lawn, Beaulieu Rd, Yew Tree Heath Road) and roads within the Waterside (Main Road, Michigan Way, A336 E, Jacobs Gutter Ln, Marchwood Rd, Trots Ln, Normandy Way, Hythe Rd)
2. Reduce severance and improve accessibility to the National Park
  - 4 new crossings across the A326 and 1 improved crossing
  - 3 new crossings across side roads
  - Shift from car-based access to the New Forest to walk / cycle access, to help reduce vehicle trips to/from the National Park.
3. Environmental benefits
  - Lower flows in the New Forest, reduced animal casualties, less vehicle noise
4. Enabling wider changes:
  - New Forest Movement Strategy
  - Consideration of speed reductions on certain forest roads
  - Potential CIL funding for crossings

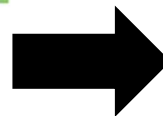


# A326 – BNG Strategy

**A** For onsite habitats of medium, high or very high distinctiveness:

1) first avoid adverse effects

2) where unavoidable, mitigate those adverse effects



Scheme design, scheme boundary, bespoke mitigations

- Landscape enhancement,
- Ecological mitigation,
- Specific BNG elements

Overall 10% BNG Gain in line with legislation  
Total budget allocation: approx. £15m  
(creation, maintenance, monitoring)

**B** Compensate for adverse effects to all onsite habitats by:

1) Onsite habitat enhancements

2) Creation of new habitats onsite



**BNG on-site**

Calculations suggest that over 50% can be gained on-site

3) Registered offsite biodiversity gain



**BNG off-site**

Enhance biodiversity on HCC Land, Specific Third-Party Land or Commercial Habitat Banks

4) Purchase of statutory biodiversity credits



**DEFRA credits**

# A326 – Design Considerations

During the preliminary design of the scheme, the impact on the New Forest National Park was carefully considered. The following design decisions were taken to minimise the impact of the scheme:

- Dualling in the southern section of the scheme was considered but not taken forward to minimise the impact on the National Park and Ancient Woodland (AW), based on overarching environmental considerations. Drainage was very carefully designed to avoid any direct impact on AW.
- Lane widths in the northern section were reduced to a minimum (from 3.65m standard to 3.4m) to reduce the scheme's land-take from the National Park and overall impact.
- In line with the reduced lane widths, the speed limit in the northern section is reduced to 50mph throughout from the current national speed limit in some sections. This will increase capacity, help traffic flow, reduce noise and improve air quality.
- A mammal tunnel is part of the design immediately to the south of Bartley Water.
- Flood alleviation culverts will be provided at Bartley Water.
- A comprehensive package of landscape planting will, once established, help screen the road from views from within the National Park.
- Over time scheme objectives have moved from simply mitigating environmental impact to enhancing and “furthering the purposes” of National Park as per legislative changes

# A326 – Approvals and Future Decision Points

